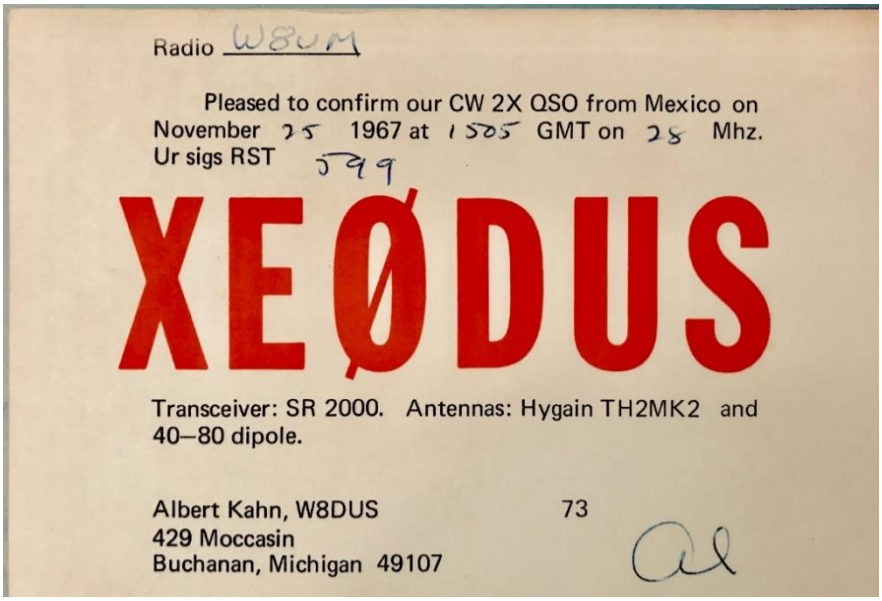
Albert Kahn: Postcard from a Noted Architect and Amateur Radio Operator?

Preface: Radio W8UM is the FCC identification for the University of Michigan Amateur Radio Club. This club was originally licensed as 8XA in 1913. The postcard, shown below, is commonly referred as a QSL Card. These QSL cards are often exchanged among ham radio operators as a means to acknowledge and confirm their radio contact on the date, time, mode and frequency noted. In this case, the communication occurred between XE0DUS and W8UM using Morse code (Continuous Wave or CW) on November, 25, 1967 at 1505 GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) on the 28 MHz frequency. The signal report was RST 599 (Readability of 5/5, Signal Strength 9/9 and Signal Tone 9/9; an extremely strong signal was received in Mexico).


Radio W8UM

Pleased to confirm our CW 2X QSO from Mexico on November 25 1967 at 1505 GMT on 28 Mhz.
Ur sigs RST 599

XEØDUS

Transceiver: SR 2000. Antennas: Hygain TH2MK2 and 40–80 dipole.

Albert Kahn, W8DUS 73
429 Moccasin
Buchanan, Michigan 49107

Having the opportunity to organize the collection of W8UM QSL cards, I was drawn to the name Albert Kahn of Buchanan, Michigan. Those from southeast Michigan will immediately recognize this name as the "Architect of Detroit". Kahn designed many of the buildings in Detroit using modern reinforced concrete. This approach allowed for large windows to be added into the design. Adding windows was critical since electricity did not exist at that time. Some of Kahn's buildings include the Fischer Building, Cadillac Place, Packard Automotive Plant, Ford River Rouge Complex and the Detroit Athletic Club. Additionally, Kahn designed Hill Auditorium, Angell Hall and the Harlan Hatcher Graduate and William Clements Undergraduate Libriaries on the University of Michigan campus. However, the architect Albert Kahn passed away on December 8, 1942; 25-years before this radio contact occurred. Coincidently, this Albert Kahn, referenced on the QSL card, would also have ties to the University of Michigan.

Kahn had several amateur radio callsigns, XE0DUS, W8DUS and K4FW and enjoyed communicating using Morse code. His interest in radio began when his Boy Scout Troop acquired a non-working "wireless receiver". Without much difficulty, Kahn was able to repair the radio. A few years later, Kahn obtained his radio license from the Department of Commerce. Excitement in the radio industry was just begining during the 1920's andKahn decided to open a radio repair store in South Bend, Indiana. In a fortunate turn of events, Knute Rockne, the Notre Dame football coach, sought advice at Kahn's repair store. Rockne described the need for a system having a microphone, speakers directed towards each of the four football practice fields and a switch to turn each of the speakers on and off. Kahn and his business partner, Lou Burroughs, would create the public address system for the Coach. Rockne was so pleased with this speaker system that he said that Kahn had made his voice electric. Kahn and Burroughs would then change the name of their repair store from Radio Engineers to Electro-Voice.

Kahn and Electro-Voice also developed the stereo phono cartridge; receiving the first Academy Award for an audio product. Kahn is also credited for contributing boxcars of surplus electronics components to the Heath Company, St. Joseph, Michigan (Heathkit); a manufacturer of electronic test equipment, television receivers

and amateur radio equipment that could be assembled by the purchaser. Electro-Voice also had the groundbreaking invention of the humbucker coil and the noise-cancelling microphone.

Located nearby in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Seth Lover, an engineer at Gibson Guitar Corporation, was aware of this Electro-Voice technology and applied its principles for use in Gibson's electric guitar pickups (Gibson Les Paul). This same or a very similar humbucker coil is also found on Gretsch and Fender guitars. These photos show the similarities between the Electro-Voice and Heathkit desk microphones.





Photo: Electro-Voice Desk Microphone (Left), Heathkit Desk Microphone (Right)

An employee at Electro-Voice was Jack Birchfield (K4JU), Chief Engineer for Consumer Products and an University of Michigan Alumnus. Using holographic interferometry (laser technology) at the University of Michigan, changes were made to improve the motion in the Electro-Voice microphone diaphragm.

Soon thereafter, Kahn and Birchfield would leave Electro-Voice and form TEN-TEC Corporation; an American manufacturer of amateur radio equipment. While at TEN-TEC, Jack led the design and production in both the amateur and commercial radio communications divisions. Jack would later serve as its President until his retirement in 2014.

In this employment ad from the December 9, 1968 Michigan Daily, musicians Bruce Springsteen, jazz bassist Stanley Clark and Steve Lukather of the musical group TOTO are referenced as those using the high-quality sound products manufactured by Electro-Voice.

Africa by TOTO: [(488) Toto - Africa - YouTube]

All of this was from a single postcard.



wanted: a writer by trade,
a musician at heart

We know you're out there . . . somewhere between a Saturday night gig and Advertising Copywriting 450. A talented, conceptual copywriter who is also a player, able to speak the language of the working musician.

We're a major manufacturer of high-quality sound reinforcement products. Bruce Springsteen never steps on stage without our DS35 microphone. Our EVM® music speakers are preferred by professional guitarists everywhere, from Steve Lukather to Stanley Clarke. Our new, high-level MT-4 Manifold Technology™ concert sound system is well beyond state of the art. And we're in need of a writer that can make the words and music go together . . . in print advertisement, POP, direct mail and related collateral materials developed by our in-house team.

An interest in things technical is another essential. You'll interface with the most qualified engineering group in the audio industry, bar none. And write about a variety of products in the pro sound marketplace. It's our gear that sounds so good in the Pontiac Silverdome, the Hoosier Dome, B.C. Place in Vancouver, Canada. And our RE20 microphone is a standard in broadcast and recording studios worldwide. From psychoacoustics to holographic interferometry, you'll stress the technological leadership that is Electro-Voice.

So between sets or between classes, let us know about you. We'd prefer a degree in advertising and credentials that reflect your interest in music. As well as a sample of work that reflects your ability. Most important, we require the enthusiasm to become expert in the markets we serve.

Write Ron Graham, Vice President, Employee Relations, Electro-Voice, Inc., 600 Cecil St., Bucharan, MI 49107

20 minutes from South Bend • 60 minutes from Kalamazoo • 90minutes from Chicago . . . and just an apple orchard away from the Lake Michigan shore

An Equal Opportunity Employer
m/f/h/v

Electro-Voice EV

John Palmisano, KB8OIS
University of Michigan Amateur Radio Club & the W8UM / W8AXZ History Project. 2021

1. Electro-Voice Timeline: http://proaudioencyclopedia.com/a-historical-look-at-electro-voice/
2. Heath Company: Heathkit - Wikipedia
3. TEN-TEC Corporation: Home - TenTecWiki (eqth.net)