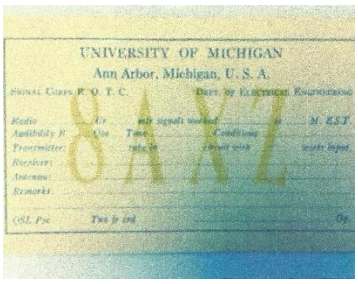
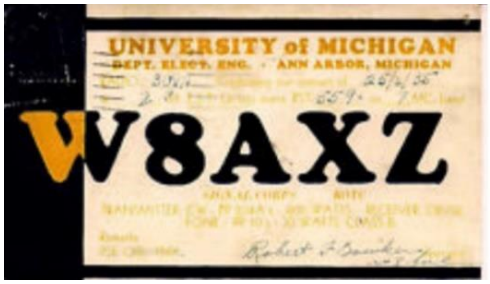
W8AXZ / W8UM: University of Michigan Amateur Radio Club



1926 QSL Card



1935 QSL Card



1940 QSL Card

During 1913, the University of Michigan was issued the experimental license of 8XA. Later, in 1926, the call was changed to 8AXZ, followed by NU8AXZ and finally W8AXZ. In November 1941, this call was abandoned until the re-application process of November, 2019. The "vanity" call for the University of Michigan Amateur Radio Club is W8UM.

Like its predecessor, 8XA, W8AXZ was instrumental with experimentation in distant radio communications. These efforts allowed for radio communications to occur directly between faculty at the University of Michigan with those working abroad. Some examples include;



W8AXZ Station; 1926

1. Easter Day floods, 1913. Distress calls received by B. N. Burglund at the UMich wireless station in Ann Arbor from D. A. Nichols in Wapakoneta, Ohio. Nichols, later a UMich graduate and screen play writer, would become a recipient of an Academy Award.

2. Professor Hobbs, University of Michigan, exploration of Arctic Greenland for purposes of national security to North America, establishing air routes to Europe, geologic formations, weather forecasting and prediction.

    a. Radio contact with pilots of the Greater Rockford while attempting air travel from Rockford, Illinois to Europe over Greenland.
    b. Radio contacts with pilots of the Untin Bowler while attempting air travel from Chicago to Berlin, Germany over Greenland.
    c. Frequent radio contacts with the New York Times and Chicago Tribune with reports from Greenland.
    d. Search and rescue of pilots lost while attempting air travel across the arctic regions of Greenland.
    e. Communications with the War Department.
    f. Monitoring of radio signals / foreign communications from within Europe.



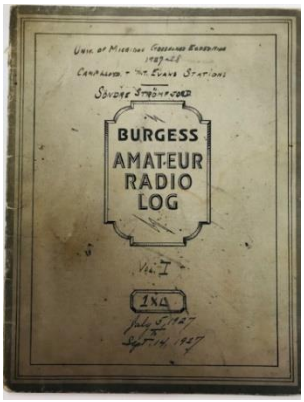
Station 1XL; Greenland, 1927

3. Radio contacts with Admiral Richard Byrd's 1929 Exploration of Antarctica
    a. Facilitating the first, direct, communications between Ann Arbor, the North Pole (Hobbs Exp.) and South Pole (Byrd Exp.) simultaneously.

4. Radio contacts with the MacMillan Expedition of the North Pole.

5. Development of the Intra-University News Agency; wireless exchange of campus news / events among universities using telegraphy. This included Chess Matches, Archery Competition, Track & Field Events among others.

6. Cold-weather testing of battery's for the Burgess Battery Company (1928; Greenland)



1927 Greenland Logbook

7. Code and Semaphore training classes were offered to prepare students entering the Military Services.


R.O.T.C. / W8AXZ Code Training Class

8. Establishing the first "portable" wireless station in Greenland (1925; UM radio operator Paul Oscanyan). Video. **https://bentley.mivideo.it.umich.edu/media/1_97jnbxsd**

    a. Possibly the first marriage proposal by wireless telegraphy (1926); Oscanyan's proposal to Ms. Founders, 7AO, wireless operator on-board the Greenland Expedition Vessel "Disco".

9. Experimentation with "wireless" telegraphy begins in 1898 originating in the UMich Physics Department. The first lectures on "Morse's telegraphy", by Professor Alexander Winchell, took place during 1868.

10. Radio contacts with U-M geologic / surveying camps located in Northern Michigan and Wyoming

11. W8AXZ contacts made with distant locations (1934); New Zealand, Australia, Philippines and Hawaii

12. Louis Hopkins, Jr., UM student, designed and built the 20-meter radio-telephone (1941)


THE MICHIGAN DAILY

Greenland Expedition Radio Operator Woos And Wins Wife By Aid Of Ether

Oscanyan Proposal via CW; 1928



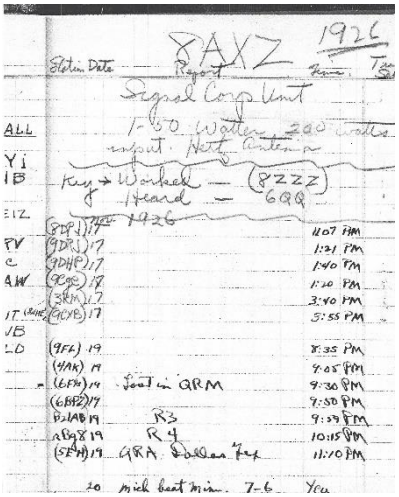
CW Training Class; 1941

13. Cooperative efforts with stations 8MK (WWJ) and WJBK with AM broadcasting stations. Eventually led to both AM and FM broadcast stations at the University of Michigan; WCBC and WUOM (NPR).

14. Radio contacts with faculty / researchers at the UMich Lamont-Hussey Observatory located in Bloemfontein, Free-State, South Africa.

15. Telegraph reports of away Michigan Football Games to students on campus and operation of the Football Grid-Graph display in Hill Auditorium. UMich student, Floyd "Jack" Mattice, was the "first" to broadcast a "live" athletic event; the Michigan vs Minnesota football game via the telegraph. Notably, this was the game where Michigan forgot their "Little Brown Jug" (1903).

    Notable individuals, who were members of W8AXZ during the years 1930-1932, include; John D. Kraus (antenna theory & design), Roy J. Purchase (local radio and camera store), Melvin Ivory and Gail Ivory (local photographers / camera store), and Emmett J. Kelly (Chief Engineer; Station 8MK, WWJ / The Detroit News).


8AXZ 1926

Signal Complaint

8AXZ Logbook; 1926

John Palmisano, KB8OIS

Content obtained from the *Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan*

For information on either W8AXZ or W8UM, please contact: W8UMBoard@umich.edu



W8AXZ; Original RME-69 Receiver



1936A T. R. McElroy Key