



Dr. Reginald A. Fessenden VP9F *1866-1932* A Canadian radio pioneer, teacher and inventor. Holder of over 500 patents, he was considered an electronic marvel, with many honors too numerous to mention.

Our subject was the first of 4 children, To Rev. Elisha and Clementina Fessenden, East Bolton, Quebec, Canada. His father was a minister in the Anglican Church. An accomplished student, young Fessenden at the age of 18 departed Bishop's College and the next two years earned a position as principal and sole teacher at Whitney Institute in Bermuda. While teaching in Bermuda, he met Helen Trott who would be his future wife.

Dr. Fessenden's notable achievements; 1900 First voice audio transmission via radio; 1906 First two way transatlantic radio transmission & First radio broadcast of entertainment and music. He is credited first utilizing the words and method of continuous waves & heterodyne. Pictured at Brant Rock, Mass., the broadcasting and experimental laboratory radio call (BO).

Fessenden moved to NYC in 1886 seeking out Thomas Edison's operation in Llewellyn Park, Orange NJ. There were no immediate openings, but he persisted even though he did not have the required electrical background, impressing them in a broad range of projects, solving problems in chemistry, metallurgy and electricity. Then an appointment as professor of newly formed E.E. Department at Purdue Univ. While there Fessenden helped Westinghouse install lighting for the 1893 World Exposition in Chicago,. Shortly Geo. Westinghouse recruited him as chair of E.E. at Western Univ of Pa, the modern day Univ. of Pittsburgh.

In the late 1890s Fessenden began wireless experimentation and felt he could develop a better system than Marconi's spark-gap and coherer combination. The theory Marconi believed, electrostatic shock and whip waves, Fessenden believed in continuous waves and the electromagnetic spectrum of the radio realm, which proved the correct path in radio. The theory of shock and whip (electrostatic) waves set the craft back several years. Fessenden had great success on Cobb Island, Maryland in 1900 with the first voice transmissions and patented receiving circuits.

Issues with the U.S. Weather Bureau in 1902 and leaving NESCO in 1911, Fess then worked in other fields including hydro power, sonar and inventing the fathometer. He purchased Wistowe in Bermuda from RCA settlements. Then earned VP9F and enjoyed amateur radio there at Wistowe before his death in 1932.

Fessenden's son summarized this man, "By his genius, distant lands converse and men sail unafraid upon the deep."

Partially scripted from Wikipedia.com & VP9GE.com - Bill Champagne, N1HRA graciously supplied the QSL.

