



Leo Wilcox W8KR *1898-1973* Home of record Owosso, Mich. Leo was part of the spark era around 1920. Early his address appropriately on **Morse** Ave. Springport, Michigan. Owosso Michigan is steeped in Indian folklore and of course the name of the county reflects it all. (Shiawassee)

Leo was interested in Morse and telegraphic code at an early age. Being one of the early spark operators. He was a technical

person and loved to diagnose problems. A quality control worker at Wilcox-Gay in Charlotte Mich that made home radios, disk recorders, tape recorders and TV's. During WW2 when ham radio was QRT, Leo's license expired. His son Robert K8OMS earned his license in 58 after service in the Army and his father got interested again and obtained his ticket.

Leo was one of those gents who knew how to put out a fine signal with nominal power. He used tuned open feeders, a combination hard to beat on 80 and 40 meters. W8KR was potent in the region with his amazing commercial sounding transmitter. It had superb characteristics, a balanced back wave, pure DC note and just a slight amount of the thing we in the trade love, medium to hard keying. What was it?

Further, Leo was a good Morse operator and had a good personality over the air. His fist was outstanding and the main thing I would like to followup on is that wonderful note Leo had on CW.

We usually conversed on 80 Meters about his garden and the latest refinements about his transmitter. I had a personal affinity with Owosso as my XYL entered college there at the bible school.

Leo's son Bob (K8OMS) was influenced by the love for the hobby his father had. Post war period of the 50's Bob picked up a transmitter, dad began learning about it and modifying the VFO trying to make it stable and investigating the sequenced keying using reed relays. He also had the sideband adapter for the rig and rebuilt it too.

What was that commercial sounding transmitter Leo had? Simply a Heath Kit DX-100 - The Benton Harbor Kilowatt! Leo was very proud of his accomplishments with the Heath and when the modifications came out with timed sequence grid block keying, that was it! The mods are still to be found on the Internet. You just can't beat the quality and for today's ears, still at the top of the heap. Move over stations KLC, WCC & WSL, Leo Wilcox had a great one!

Leo told everyone he worked about the keying improvements he made to the rig and how he enjoyed making the changes. To this very day, I recall the note and how marvelous that rig of W8KR's sounded. In a recent communication with Bob K8OMS he said "In dad's last weeks he wanted me to remember all the details what he had done to the DX100 for posterity, his mind was pretty well gone but he had all the details correct." Bob said "I don't recall who got the DX100 but it was given away, the keyer was sold on Ebay and I donated dad's Johnson Matchbox to the radio club. "Thanks for remembering W8KR, Bob said." QSL www.w8jyz.com - W8SU 2007