



The 1925 Arctic MacMillan/Byrd expedition has often been referred to as the first modern arctic expedition. It was conceived with three aims: to demonstrate how shortwave radio equipment could enable explorers to keep in touch over truly global distances, overcoming the magnetic and atmospheric conditions that made longwave transmissions impossible over long distances during daylight (and thus the entire Arctic summer) or from north of the Auroral Belt; to demonstrate the ability of airborne explorers to discover more, in Macmillan's words, "in a period of days than has been done by all the Arctic explorers with their dog teams in the past hundred years" (a pardonable exaggeration); and finally to use these new capabilities to conduct a reconnaissance of the million square miles of Arctic Ocean north of Alaska not traversed by anyone before, in order to discover, or rule out the existence of, new land in that region.



**E. F. McDonald Jr. in 1925**

Radio communications were the triumph of the expedition, and their use was masterminded by Eugene (E.F.) McDonald Jr, president of Zenith Corporation and a naval reservist who was second in command of the expedition. Not only did the new equipment allow real-time voice communication between the ships - especially valuable when navigating the icepack of Melville Bay - it also allowed virtually unlimited contact between the expedition and their sponsors at home: daily messages were exchanged with both the Navy and the National Geographic Society in Washington; several "concerts" of music performed by the crews and the local Inuit were broadcast to slightly bemused audiences gathered at Zenith's receiving station in Illinois; and McDonald was even able to carry on dealing with Zenith business through daily contact with his Chicago office. The expedition's radio transmissions were picked up by a detachment of the American fleet anchored in New Zealand, as well as many amateurs in Australia - factors that were strongly influential in the US Navy's decision to adopt shortwave radio as its standard of communication shortly thereafter.



In 1924, burgeoning Zenith moved to this factory at 3620 Iron Street.

**Zenith's receiving station was located in The Zenith building on Iron Street**

With the success of Shortwave radio McDonald decided he wanted a floating laboratory of his own and set out to find one. In 1926 a 185-foot ship was laid down by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company from the parts of an abandoned new destroyer. It became the pleasure yacht Savanarola . Owned by Mrs. Richard M. Cadwalader of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. It was acquired in 1927 by Mrs. Cadwalader's son, Mr. Richard M. Cadwalader, Jr., also of Fort Washington, and renamed the Sequoia.

In 1929 E. F. McDonald acquired the yacht and renamed it the Mizpah. He used it both as a Chicago residence and a floating laboratory on which to test the electronics company's new products. It was one of the largest yachts on the Great Lakes in its heyday. Shortly after purchasing the Mizpah Commander McDonald took her out for her first exploratory adventure. Having spent a good deal of time with Donald B. MacMillan during the 1925 expedition, McDonald turned to him for the Mizpah's first outing. In June of 1929 the Mizpah set out for a 3 month exploration of Newfoundland and Baffin land ((A) on the following map)

Little is known about this expedition other than four scientists from the University of Chicago joined the explorers during the 3 month journey.

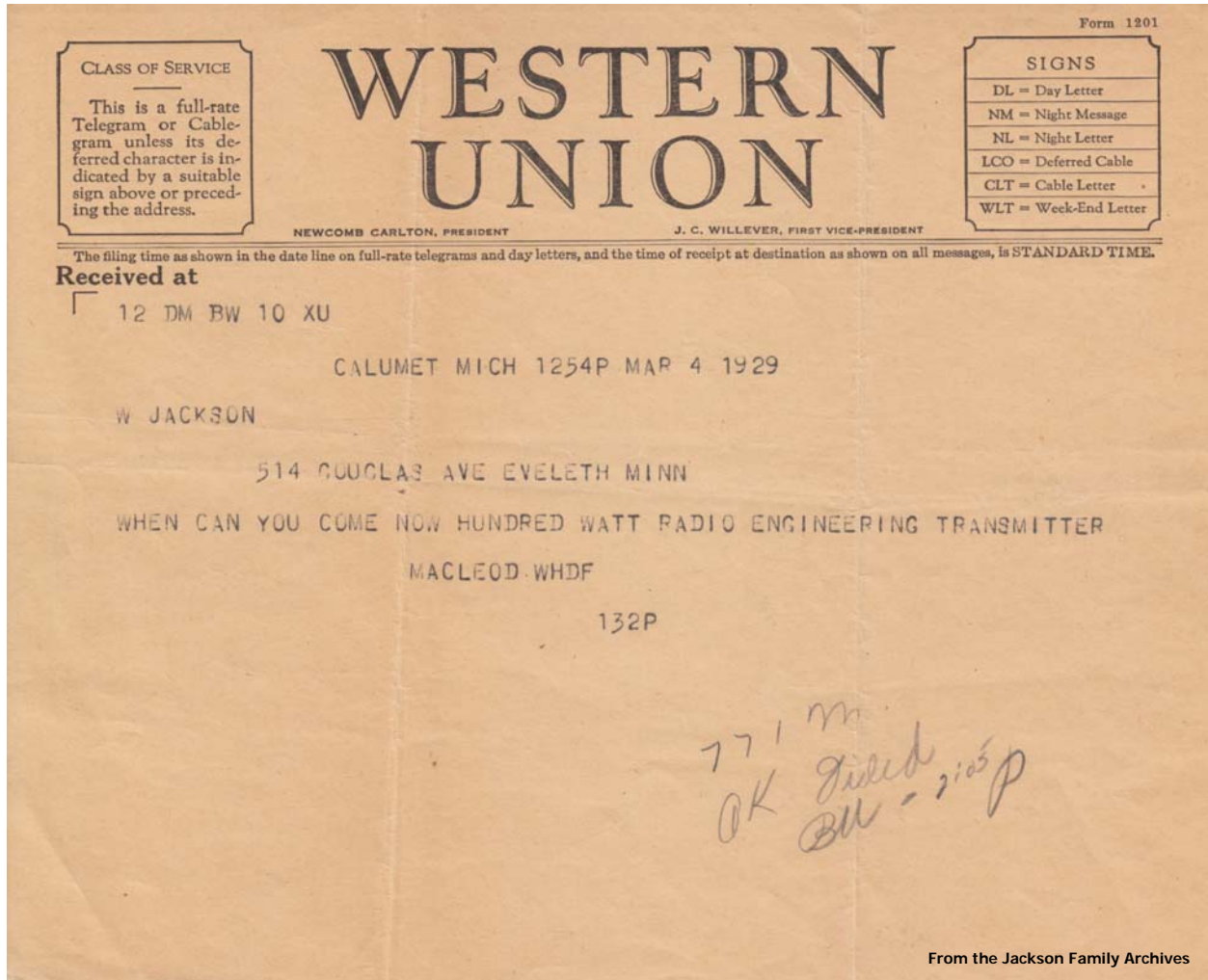


According to accounts given by William F Jackson (W9EGF) sometime before or during the early portion of the journey, the radio operator became sick and was unable to operate the station on the Mizpah. Commander McDonald reached out to the ARRL (American Radio Relay League) to see if any qualified radio operators were available. F.E. Handy, Communications Manager for the ARRL, sent a telegram to Zenith with two names on it: R.H Carpenter of Saginaw Michigan and W.F. Jackson of Eveleth MN. Stating both candidates had "Splendid amateur and commercial experiences" Jackson had left a station in Illinois early in 1929 and returned home to Eveleth MN. Jackson had told the ARRL that he was available for hire if there were any inquiries. Having almost 10 years of radio experience made him an appealing candidate.

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED		Form 1206-A	
DOMESTIC	CABLE	NO.	CASH OR CHG.
TELEGRAM	FULL RATE	CHECK	
DAY LETTER	DEFERRED	TIME FILED	
NIGHT MESSAGE	CABLE LETTER		
NIGHT LETTER	WEEK END LETTER		
Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise message will be transmitted as a full-rate communication.			
NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT		J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	
Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to			
COLLECT BLUE W U DAY LETTER		HARTFORD CONN JULY 13 1929	
E F MACDONALD JR			
% ZENITH RADIO CORPORATION			
CHICAGO ILLINOIS			
NO DATA ON STENOGRAPHIC ABILITY OPERATORS STOP			
MIGHT TRY R H CARPENTER 1816 SOUTH WASHINGTON AVE SAGINAW MICHIGAN			
OR W JACKSON BOX 612 EVELETH MINN BOTH AVAILABLE FOR EXPEDITIONS			
SOME TIME AGO BOTH WITH COMMERCIAL LICENSES AND SPLENDID AMATEUR			
AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCE			
F E HANDY			

Handy did not know at that time that Bill Jackson had already accepted a new position as operator of a 100 Watt station in Upper Michigan

Early in 1929 Abraham "AB" Blum (W9EFG) of Calumet Michigan had been a regular radio contact for W9EFG. AB had informed Jackson that there was a newly licensed station in Calumet Michigan, WHDF 1370khz. They were looking for a licensed operator. They were in dire straights. Charlie MacLeod the owner sent W9EFG a telegram requesting his assistance.



Jackson replied that he could be there by Monday March 11th. MacLeod was "Very pleased" that Jackson was heading to Calumet. Jackson once there realized how important a reliable radio station would be to the area. Calumet was the end of the rail line and had very extreme winters. In fact he joked later in life that once he got off the train and saw all the snow still on the ground that he should get right back on the train and leave.



From the Jackson Family Archives

The alley behind the WHDF Studios in the winter

**RADIO STATION WHDF**

**THE COPPER COUNTRY  
BROADCASTING STATION**

CALUMET, MICH.

March 6, 1929

Mr. W. Jackson  
514 Maple St.  
Eveleth, Minn.

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Very pleased to know that you will be in Calumet on Monday. I will meet you and have arranged a room close to the Studio for you, with board at \$1.25 per day. I think it is a good place but will at least suffice until you get acclimated yourself.

WHDF has a new 100 watt crystal controlled transmitter and we have very good reports so far. Reached Middletown, Iowa the other day, also Chicago, Detroit, Flint, and the whole of the Upper Peninsula. The Station is owned by the writer and fully paid for and should result in a very good paying proposition.

Will meet you at 6:30 A.M. on Monday and hope your associations here will result to our mutual benefit.

Yours truly,

Radio Station WHDF

*Chas. C. Macleod*

GM:PM

YOUR MESSAGE ON THE AIR GOES WHERE?

From the Jackson Family Archives

Macleod's Letter to Jackson confirming his Calumet visit.

Not knowing that Jackson no longer was looking for a radio position, McDonald sent him a telegram to offer him the position

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED		CLARENCE H. MACKAY, PRESIDENT.		RECEIVER'S NUMBER	
Telegram	Full Rate	TELERAMS		CABLEGRAMS	CHECK
Day Letter	Deferred	TO ALL AMERICA		TO ALL THE WORLD	TIME FILED
Night Message	Cable Letter				STANDARD TIME
Night Letter	Week-End Letter				

Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise message will be transmitted as a full-rate communication

Send the following Telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to. Form 2

CHICAGO JULY 18 1929

MR W JACKSON  
BOX 612  
EVELETH MINN

AM DESIROUS SECURING SERVICES OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSED RADIO OPERATOR FOR SERVICE ON SIX HUNDRED TON YACHT REQUIRE EX AMATEUR OR HAM WHO IS ALSO SHORTHAND STENOGRAPHER IF AVAILABLE WIRE QUALIFICATIONS STATING WHETHER OR NOT FAMILIAR WITH SHORT WAVE EXPERIENCE SALARY ETCETERA

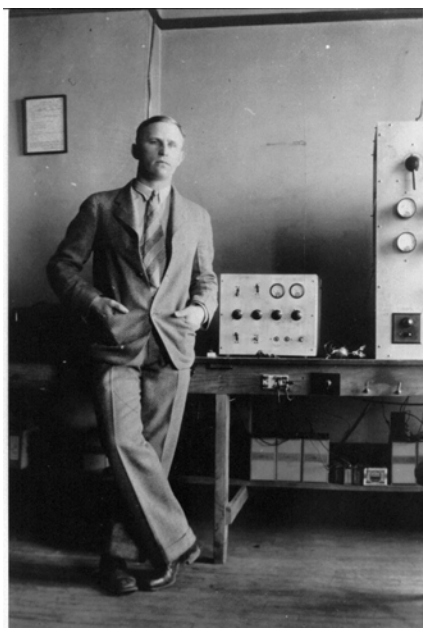
E F MC DONALD JR  
ZENITH RADIO CORPORATION

EFM'HC  
CHGE. ZENITH RADIO CORP  
EFM PERSONAL  
3:10 PM

(Received by mail ....Art.)

From the Jackson Family Archives

McDonald sent the telegram through his Chicago receiving station to Bill Jackson at his former Eveleth address. This was forwarded by mail to Bill Jackson by his brother Art Jackson.



From the Jackson Family Archives

Jackson in front of the WHDF transmitter in 1929

I talked to the Yacht owned by McDonald of Zenith Corp in 1929 by Morse code in 1929-His call was KFZT add I was W9EGF (Calumet, Mich) I had been offered a radio Operator job on this Yacht.

Bill Jackson W9EGF-W8EGF

*W. F. Jackson*

From the Jackson Family Archives

This is a note typed by Jackson confirming his contact with KFZT. KFZT was the station ID for the Mizpah radio room.

Jackson wrote a letter to the ARRL on 8/2/29 to tell them that he had taken a position with WHDF he received this letter in response. .

HIRAM PERCY MAXIM, PRESIDENT  
CHAS. H. STEWART, VICE-PRESIDENT

F. E. HANDY, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

A. A. HEBERT, TREASURER  
K. B. WARNER, SECRETARY



# THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE



INCORPORATED

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO AMATEUR RADIO

EXECUTIVE HEADQUARTERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, U. S. A.

August 5, 1929

CABLE ADDRESS  
QUIST, HARTFORD  
OFFICIAL ORGAN: QST  
KENNETH B. WARNER, EDITOR.

Mr. W. Jackson, WHDF-W9EGF  
Calumet, Michigan

Dear Jackson:

Many thanks for your letter of August 2nd telling us of your position at WHDF. Glad that you have a satisfactory and enjoyable job where the pay comes regularly and you have the leisure and opportunity to pound brass from your own station when off duty. FB!

The only names I gave McDonald were those of yourself and Mr. Carpenter and I do not know for sure just who was chosen for the position. McDonald wanted a fellow with stenographic ability in addition to radio operating ability if possible. Every good wish. 73.

Sincerely yours,

*F. E. Handy*  
Communications Manager

FEH\*DEM

*Hope work station on xmts for MK so much at*

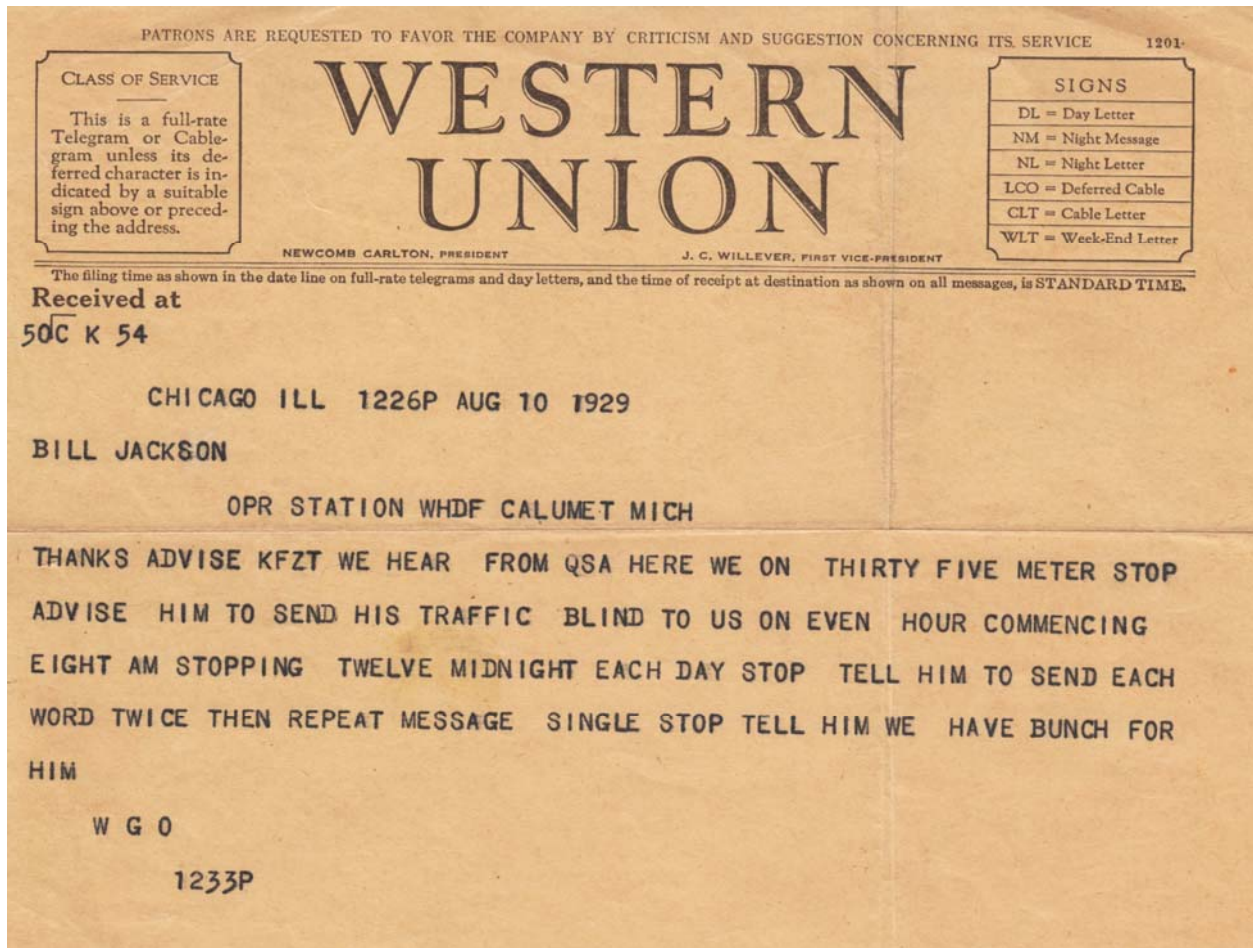
*sometime from my own Busy fixing new now so not operating moment.*

From the Jackson Family Archives

Little did either Jackson or Handy know at that time, having KFZT make contact with W9EGF and his previous acceptance of a job in Calumet would impact the future of the President of the Zenith Radio Corp. Soon after this letter was written communications with the Mizpah dramatically changed.

# Trouble Communicating on the High Seas

On August 5th the expedition became stranded in an ice pack off Frobisher Bay (A on the map). They remained stuck until August 19th. It was during this period that the Mizpah lost the ability to receive messages from Zenith's Chicago base station. Jackson, having previously communicated with the ship, continued monitoring and contacting them. As any HAM operator would know, contacting a ship on an exciting Arctic adventure is a QSO you simply don't walk away from. Jackson was located 430 miles north of Chicago and surrounded by Lake Superior. The conditions were just right to maintain contact. The Zenith offices could hear W9EGF's contact with the Mizpah and hear the Mizpah but they could not make contact the ship themselves. The commercial land station, WGO in Chicago sent a message to Jackson via a telegram instructing him to send a message to the Mizpah



They want W9EGF (Jackson) to tell KFZT (The Mizpah) that they can receive enough of the Mizpah's signal "QSA" on the 35 meter band (approximately 8.5MHz). They want the Mizpah to send the messages blind, without acknowledgement. Sending each word via Morse code twice and then the message a third time complete without repeating each word.

The exact nature of these relays or how long Jackson acted as a go-between will probably never be known, but family legend has it he helped McDonald relay stock portfolio sales during the impending market crash that took place over the next 30 days. What we do know is that according to newspaper accounts the Mizpah was back in Chicago by October 18 1929. That day it took part in a \$10,000 race from Chicago to Milwaukee. In the years to come McDonald and the Mizpah went on to circle the world experimenting with shortwave radio. The war department finally seized the Mizpah in 1942 for use in the war effort and was finally sunk off of Florida for use as a manmade reef in 1968 . Zenith went on to being a major manufacturer of radios and eventually color TVs, becoming the largest color TV manufacturer in 1971. McDonald passed away suddenly in 1958 leaving a legacy as a real pioneer in Shortwave radio communication.



From the Jackson Family Archives

W9EGF's Shortwave set used to contact the Mizpah. Hand built by W9EGF and located at WHDF's transmitter site.

**MacMILLAN STARTS ON CRUISE IN ARCTIC**  
*Famous Explorer Leaves for Baffin Land*  
**WISCASSET, Me., June 22—(UP)**  
 —The call of the far North was heeded for the 21st time by Commander Donald D. MacMillan today. Out of this tiny harbor sailed the sturdy schooner *Bowdoin*, veteran of many an Arctic cruise, to carry another MacMillan group on a three months' exploration of mysterious Baffin land.  
 A few minutes after the *Bowdoin* started down the 12 miles of Sheepscott river between her and the sea, the Mission schooner *Maraval*, with Sir Wilfred F. Grenfell and Lady Grenfell aboard weighed anchor and followed in its wake.  
 Besides MacMillan, eight persons sailed aboard the *Bowdoin*. There were 13 aboard the *Maraval*, whose crew included two sons of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.  
 In the *Bowdoin's* cargo were materials for the erection of the first schoolhouse for eskimo children in Labrador. The school will be built at Nane, an eskimo settlement of about 200.

Charleston Daily Mail June 23, 1929

## Yacht Crashes in \$10,000 Lake Race

Doris? Hits Obstruction Near Kenosha; 25 Escape Injury

**KENOSHA, Wis. —(AP)—** The yacht *Doris*, competing with the yacht *Mizpah* in a \$10,000 race from Chicago to Milwaukee and return, was forced out shortly before noon today when it struck an obstruction in Lake Michigan, off Kenosha, and damaged its propeller. The *Doris* put into the Kenosha harbor while the *Mizpah*, commanded by Eugene McDonald, Chicago sportsman, continued on toward Milwaukee. Capt. Roy Allen of the *Doris* said the yachts were speeding along at 20 knots an hour off the Kenosha harbor when the *Doris* suddenly hit an obstruction. Twenty-five persons aboard, all prominent in Chicago, were thrown from their feet, he said. None was injured, however.

Capital Times Madison, Wisconsin  
 Saturday, October 19, 1929,

Oakland Tribune December 1, 1929



1929: The following summer the Bowdoin, under temporary command of J. T. Crowell,

<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Auk/v063n01/p0001-p0024.html>