

The J.G.White engineered buildings are shown as they were in 1914(and remain today). This Marconi site is unique as all buildings remain intact and none have been added over the existence of this Chatham jewel. Property was acquired from John Smith by the Marconi Co. of America in 1914 and this complex of buildings was completed within a year, including the 365' antenna tower (one of 6 that spanned over a mile between the Ryder's Cove site and Schoolhouse Pond in West Chatham). The property history is vividly detailed in "Marconi and Chathamport's Old Comers" published April, 2003 by Roslyn Bayha Coleman.

Marconi intended to use this station in competition with the Transatlantic Cable that came ashore in Eastham and was monitored in Orleans. WWI and the Neutrality Act prevented Marconi from using the WCC and in 1917 it was occupied by the US Navy to be used as an experimental antenna testing location also as a backup to the Belmar NJ listening station. The WWI Chatham Naval Air Station, in operation a mile East of here with its own transmitters communicating with patrolling blimps and seaplanes, generated signals that precluded reliable use of Chatham WCC as a listening station.

RCA, after acquiring this station from the Marconi Corporation in 1921, initiated operation as a point to point station communicating with Norway but soon re- commissioned the station as a commercial Ship to Shore station. It eventually became the busiest Ship to Shore station in this hemisphere, and possibly worldwide, as it was sufficiently sensitive to hear ships messages from around the world. The companion transmitting station was initially in Marion to prevent interference with reception, and was run remotely from here in Chatham. In 1948 the transmitting portion was moved to Forest Beach in South Chatham where the Tower Bases can still be seen.

The antennae and equipment at WCC/Chatham Radio were always among the most advanced in the world. Marconi built the six mast, one mile long, 400 foot high antenna in 1914. Five of the masts were removed in 1919, the last was removed in 1956. During WWI the Navy built a pair of orthogonal goniometer coupled loop antennae which were state of the art until the early 1930s. Huge Rhombic antennae, invented by Bell Laboratories in 1930, were implemented here in one of the first commercial applications (parent company AT&T was one of the major owners of RCA) and were key to the success of this station. The largest rhombic (upper left) was built by the Navy in WWII to listen to transmissions from Berlin.

November 2008, J.R.Kraycir, Chatham Marconi Maritime Center