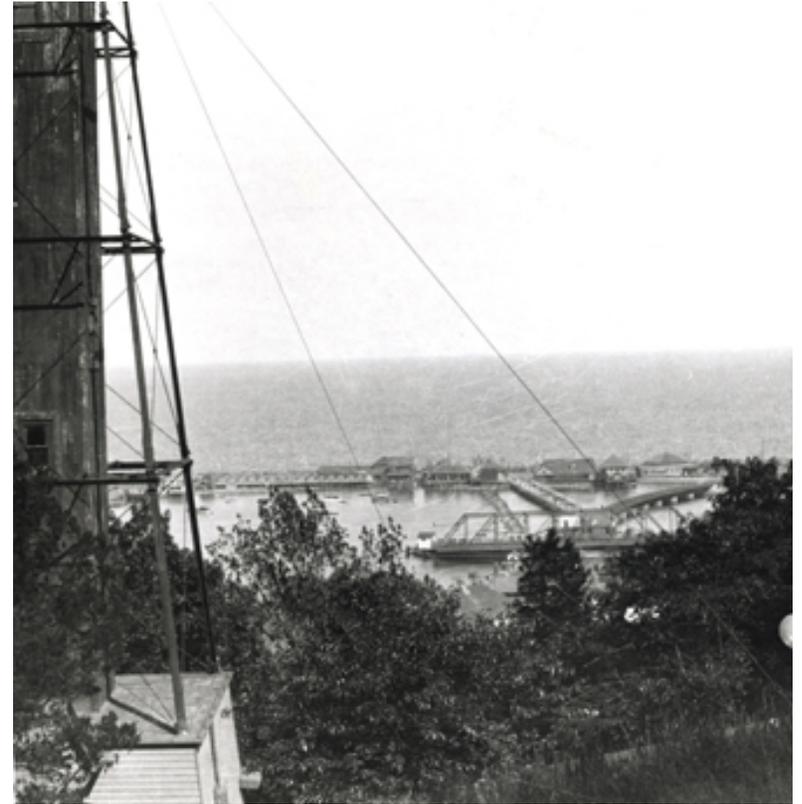


Marconi



POSTAL TELEGRAPH TOWER

Communication Station

Given its spectacular location and elevation, the Twin Lights became a vital communications link as soon as the original towers were erected. In 1829, the Merchant's Exchange—a commodity exchange for buying and selling goods located in New York—erected a semaphore tower here. The tower was used to relay messages between ships passing Sandy Hook and the Exchange's building in Manhattan.

In 1854, semaphore was out and electric wire was in. That year, the New York-Sandy Hook Telegraph Company, using magnetic telegraph equipment, set up the first telegraph station at the Twin Lights. Other telegraph companies including the Western Union, and the Postal Telegraph, would later compete from the Twin Lights location. Because this form of communication required hard-wiring, the telegraph operators were still limited to ship-to-shore signaling.



The Magic Box

That would all change in 1899 when Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi placed an antenna and receiving station at the lighthouse to demonstrate his Wireless Telegraph. At the time radio waves were still highly conceptual. No one was sure how they could be harnessed for commercial use.

James Gordon Bennett, publisher of the *New York Herald*, hired Marconi to attempt an unprecedented ship-to-shore report on the America's Cup yacht races, which were being held off Sandy Hook. Bennett knew that sporting enthusiasts would buy a lot of papers during the Americas Cup. He wanted to find out how many more they would buy if he could a) scoop his competitors and b) generate additional excitement by virtue of the fact that these would be the first wireless reports published in a newspaper.

Marconi arrived in New York on September 21st to a hero's welcome. Right behind him was Admiral Dewey's naval fleet, steaming into port after a victory in the Philippines during the Spanish–American War. The Americas Cup races were postponed so as not to conflict with this patriotic event. At Bennett's behest, Marconi set up his wireless receiver in front of the Twin Lights, then sailed out to meet the flotilla. On September 30th, Marconi radioed a report from the Atlantic on the progress of the approaching fleet. The transmission was a success.



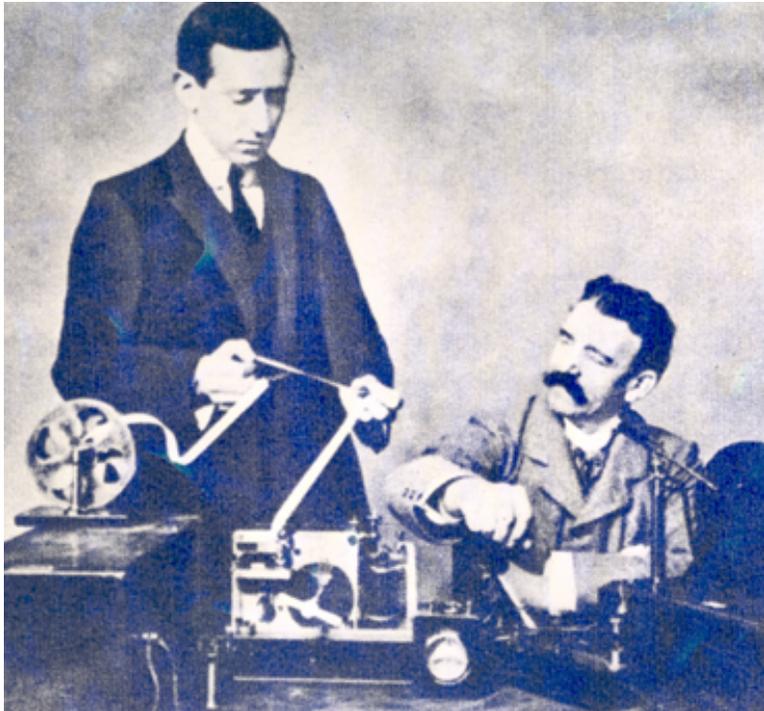
Off to the Races

On October 3rd, the Americas Cup began between the American ship Columbia (owned by J.P. Morgan) and the British ship Shamrock (owned and piloted by Sir Thomas Lipton). Each race was closely contested, and not until the 16th was the deciding event run. This provided the perfect stage for Bennett and Marconi to prove that their ideas would work.

Marconi radioed a report from the *SS Poncein* the waters off Sandy Hook on the race, which was won by Columbia. The message was received by the massive radio array set up near the North Tower, and continued to

New York on through hard-wired land lines. Almost instantly the *Herald* had a feature story, which could be published in the next edition of the paper—long before its competitors could report on the exciting race. Approximately 5,000 words were transmitted by Marconi that day. Marconi's two transmissions erased any doubt about the commercial value and viability of wireless communication.

Marconi's wireless demonstration exceeded all expectations. He quickly expanded his operations, making the Twin Lights the nation's first wireless telegraph station capable of sending and receiving messages on a regular commercial basis. Over the next decade, Marconi hired and trained radio operators to work his equipment, both on ships and on shore.



A Daughter's Memory

On December 12, 1901, Guglielmo Marconi succeeded in transmitting three dots, the Morse Code letter "S", from Poldhu, England to St. John's Signal Hill, Newfoundland. At twenty-seven Marconi had turned the revolutionary idea of transmitting Hertzian waves across thousands of miles, without wires, into practice.

There is no doubt as to how my father intended his invention to be used. Since the very beginning of his experimentations in the early 1890's and on throughout his lifelong pursuit of creating and developing a system of communication capable of operating with complete reliability from any point on earth. Marconi recognized that wireless communication would prove of tremendous value to all forms of maritime operations. "Safety at sea" was for him the primary application of his wireless system, with general communication a close second.

Father's many successes have been attributed to his outstanding experimental ability, to the courage he displayed in overcoming numerous obstacles, to his perseverance in the face of considerable setbacks, to the enthusiasm he was able to instill in his associates, and to his executive capacity as the head of his business enterprise.

He was a quiet, reserved person who recognized a spiritual force outside and above himself. He preferred to trust his own intuition rather than to accept too rigidly the limitations on his plans which might have been imposed by the science of his day. The underlying logic of a life that reveals such exceptional integrity of thought, of purpose and of action can be explained only by the fact that he had a clear objective in mind, a definite goal to reach he considered so important that he devoted all of his intellectual, moral, and material resources to its pursuit.

He accumulated an impressive array of honors during his lifetime. many of the influential personalities of his day could be counted among his friends, but his enthusiasm was kindled by the young scientists, engineers and radio amateurs, whose studies, experiments and research ran along parallel lines to his own. With them he enjoyed to compare notes, to offer encouragement, to volunteer intellectual and material assistance.

More than a century has passed since his birth in Bologna, Italy, on April 25, 1874, and yet the extraordinary interest aroused by his work still survives. “I would like to meet that young man who had the monumental audacity to attempt and succeed in jumping an electrical wave across the Atlantic.” remarked Thomas Edison after learning of the success of Marconi’s first trans-Atlantic transmission. The Marconi International Fellowship commemorates Guglielmo Marconi's genius, his invention, his audacity, his perseverance. The Fellowship recognizes that the highest and most significant recognition Marconi can receive from future generations is for the intellectual and spiritual forces of their minds to be directed toward the creation of a better world in which to live. *Ingenium Pro Bono Humanitatis*. —Gioia Marconi Braga