



Meet the Collectors



COLLECTING ARRL AMATEUR HANDBOOKS

by Morris Rosenfeld, KA2JAJ

In 1925, F. E. Handy, Communication Manager for the American Radio League, decided to write an operating manual for the radio amateur. When the book was completed and published in 1926, Mr. Handy would not have believed that his little book of 176 pages, plus advertising, would grow in 58 years to over 1000 pages. In addition, the format would grow from 6½" x 9½" to over 8 by 10" and have a new name: *The ARRL 1985 Handbook*.

First Edition, November, 1926	5,000 copies
Second Edition, First Printing, January, 1927	5,000 copies
Second Edition, Second Printing, April, 1927	10,000 copies
Third Edition, First Printing, October, 1927	10,000 copies
Third Edition, Second Printing, April, 1928	10,000 copies
Fourth Edition, December, 1928	10,000 copies
Fifth Edition, May, 1929	10,000 copies
Sixth Edition, First Printing, November, 1929	10,000 copies
Sixth Edition, Second Printing, March, 1930	10,000 copies
Sixth Edition, Third Printing, June, 1930	7,000 copies
Seventh Edition, October, 1930	25,000 copies
Eighth Edition, April, 1931	25,000 copies
Ninth Edition, First Printing, January, 1932	30,000 copies
Ninth Edition, Second Printing, September, 1932	10,000 copies
Tenth Edition, First Printing, January, 1933	30,000 copies
Tenth Edition, Second Printing, July, 1933	8,750 copies
Eleventh Edition, First Printing, January, 1934	30,000 copies
Eleventh Edition, Second Printing, May, 1934	13,000 copies
Twelfth Edition, First Printing, November, 1934	40,000 copies
Twelfth Edition, Second Printing, July, 1935	8,000 copies
Thirteenth Edition, First Printing, October, 1935	40,000 copies
Thirteenth Edition, Second Printing, February, 1936	33,200 copies
Fourteenth Edition, First Printing, October, 1936	40,000 copies
Fourteenth Edition, Second Printing, February, 1937	28,300 copies
Fifteenth Edition, First Printing, October, 1937	40,000 copies
Fifteenth Edition, Second Printing, January, 1938	25,000 copies
Sixteenth Edition, November, 1938	60,000 copies
Seventeenth Edition, First Printing, November, 1939	40,000 copies
Seventeenth Edition, Second Printing, January, 1940	25,000 copies
Eighteenth Edition, First Printing, November, 1940	40,000 copies
Eighteenth Edition, Second Printing, January, 1941	20,000 copies
Eighteenth Edition, Third Printing, June, 1941	10,000 copies
Eighteenth Edition, Fourth Printing, September, 1941	5,000 copies
Nineteenth Edition, First Printing, November, 1941	60,000 copies
Nineteenth Edition, Second Printing, March, 1942	15,000 copies
Nineteenth Edition, Third Printing, April, 1942	25,000 copies
Nineteenth Edition, Fourth Printing, August, 1942	20,000 copies
Twentieth Edition, First Printing, September, 1942	75,000 copies
Twentieth Edition, Second Printing, November, 1942	75,000 copies
Twentieth Edition, Third Printing, April, 1943	60,000 copies

The first book catalog section (in the back of the book) listed many familiar names such as Pyrex, Eveready and Weston. It was one of the first books available for the radio amateur to learn basic amateur operation. The early books kept the 6½" x 9½" size until 1977 but the number of pages increased to over 600.

In 1978, the size changed to 6½" x 9". This increased to 8¼" x 10¾" the following year (1979) and remained until 1984. I do not have a 1985 book so cannot give the new size.

Comments:

-- The 1943, 20th Edition, is the last book to list the number of editions and quantity printed. This information is valuable to the collector.

-- I have found that some years have more than one printing. As an example, 1927 had two printings: one in January and a second in April. After 1943, the books had only the number printed for a particular year and the edition number. 1948 was the last year that identifies the edition.

-- I have found three types of covers: paper, buckram (hard cover) and a paper cover that looks like buckram. The latter was used between 1959 and 1964.

-- There was a war-time edition titled: "*The Special Defense Addition*", printed in February, 1942. I have found three printings of this book which was used for training purposes during WW2. This book did not have a catalog advertising section.

-- 1949 was the last year to list the total number of handbooks printed from 1926 to date. The quantity was 1,928,250 copies. I have been unable to determine quantities after 1949.

I have sixty-three (63) editions in my collection. The total number of possible editions that I could identify is 89. Of interest, the book was also printed in Spanish. The information for this short article came from old handbooks, QSTs and the ARRL. If anyone has questions or information on the subject, I would like to hear from them.

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Ed. Note: The original Handbook copyright is framed and hanging in the AWA Museum.

This historical document was presented to AWA by ARRL co-founder Clarence Tuska.