W9TO James B. Ricks *1913-2001* Born 23 Dec 1913 of Cobden, IL. I had the pleasure to work Jim a few times and the last QSO would be 10 Dec 1997 he would be 83 in two weeks. A grad of Purdue - Worked for Motorola in 1929 and was ex W9DHH.

During the QSO Jim mentioned his nifty invention marketed by Hallicrafters and noted that they sliced down the schematic making the unit a bit cheap, but it was a good seller. It also gets very good prices today at the hamfests and used market. I've noticed the premium prices are gotten on Ebay!

In our CW contact in 1997 Jim mentioned the death of his XYL and things were lonely around the QTH, in Southern Illinois near Carbondale. He had graduated from Purdue, worked for Motorola for many years. He was living in southern Illinois and liked it there. I made notes of the QSO, for a file one day. He had a good steady sure fist, no gyrations, good commercial sounding CW. That was a late fall radio CW contact on 80M, very pleasant, late night and enjoyable.

I logged Jim on the new 30 Meter band (10.105) in a QSO he had on Oct 30th 1987 at 2015 GMT, he was running a TS430S and mentioned he owned 100 acres in the Shawnee Natl. Forrest.

Jim was very active on 40M CW and was member number Nr. 1 in the famed "CFO Club" Chicken Fat Operators, mentioned at the end of our article. He was an inventor and design engineer, towards the end of his life he was living in the Seattle area and no longer active in radio. Pictured the neat layout of the Ricks station in the younger years. QSL cards still play a roll in our ham journey.

His obit from QST; Jim W9TO of Lake Forest, Wash died Oct 20, 2001 he was 86. He was a well known high speed CW op as well as in engineering circles, designed the popular morse electronic keyer that Hallicrafters marketed as the HA-1 T.O. Keyer (6 vacuum tubes and a multi vibrator) it was reviewed in the Nov 1960 issue of QST.

Jim was also founder of the high-speed CW group CFO. Rick was fondly referred the CFO as "The ultimate disorganization." Jim held CFO NR 1 and wad dubbed "Big Bird." At the time of his death, he was living in a retirement community and was not active on the air.

Mr. Ricks is survived by his daughter Carter Ricks Hawley and a son James Benjamin Ricks III . From W8AU Perry Ballinger. Perry advised me in a 80M rag chew he had visited the Ricks' many times on trips to Chicago Land and was very fond of Jim and wife. -QSL via W9MF collection.

W8SU 2005