

Clayton (Clay) Abrams HHS Class of 1955



My Early Life

I was born in Hempstead, Long Island, NY to a middle class family in 1936. My father was a Plumber and my mother a house wife. I shared some of the same interests as my father like Electronics and Amateur Radio. My father built a "Spark Gap Radio" transmitter in the early 1900's and for a while used the call sign "NA" (his initials). At an early age I started to listen to Short Wave Radio and progressed to a point in 1954 where I passed a FCC Amateur Radio Exam in NYC and was issued a call sign of K2CVJ.

Prior to my Amateur Radio hobbies I had an interest in Astronomy and successfully constructed a number of Refracting Telescopes from scratch. My father helped a lot in this regard. During High School I made trips to NYC to the Hayden Planetarium where I heard many lecturers on Astronomy which caused this interest in astronomy.

I still keep in touch with a couple of childhood friends who shared the same interest as I have.

My Military Life

After my High School graduation (age 19) my father offered me a job in the Plumbers Union. This was a great opportunity in 1955, since the Union was only "Father and Sons". I decided to not take him up on this offer and joined the Air Force. In June 1955 I was sworn into the service on the stage of a local theater after showing of the movie "Strategic Air Command". In 1955 most of my friends from Hempstead High School joined the service, this was the thing to do. I was not interested in attending college at that time.

I spent the majority of my 4 year AF career at Cape Canaveral, Florida working on the [Snark Missile](#). I was in the [6555 Guided Missile Sq.](#) which was the first AF missile Sq ever formed. I specialized in the AF for maintenance of a Snark on board Analog Computer which was used for a range safety computer. These were exciting days from 1956 to 1959. I was at the Cape and witnessed the first US satellite launch with many successes and failures. After working in an environment like this I decided that being an engineer was a great way to make a living and in 1959 I left the Air Force to attend College.

My Education

In 1955 I graduated from Hempstead High School, Long Island, NY.

In 1961 I received a BSEE Degree from [Tri State University](#), Angola Indiana

My Professional Career

After graduation I worked for a couple of firms in NY, Florida and California for 4 years. In 1965 I decided to work in the computer field and joined IBM Corp, in San Jose, CA. I remained employed with that company for 28 years. In 1993 I retired from IBM and became a consultant in Silicon Valley. After IBM I worked at HP Santa Clara, CA, Lotus Development, Mountain View, CA and back at IBM San Jose, CA on software applications development utilizing [Lotus Notes](#). During most of my professional working career has had experience in the following areas:

- Computer Hardware development in many capacity's.
- Hardware Development Testing of complex computer systems.
- Micro Computer controller software development. Mostly using "C" and machine language programming.

- Software Development Management of hardware projects using Unix IBM AIX as a OS.
- Lotus Note Consultant for my years after retirement from IBM Corp.

I decide to retire from working in 1999 and moved to Lincoln, CA east of Sacramento where I now live.

My Hobbyist Activities

I have been an Amateur radio operator for the past 56 years. I now hold a FCC Amateur Extra License (K6AEP) since 1973. I am still involved in using computers for Amateur Radio transmission and reception. I have written many magazine articles, given many talks and even an International TV appearance on my home computer activities related to Amateur Radio.

I have been a computer hobbyist since the early 1970. I have constructed computer system using technology ranging for 8080 systems in the 1970's till today's modern microprocessors utilizing Quad Core (4 CPU's) in the 2009. In this capacity I have written considerable software and in the 1980's where I had a software business at home and had customers world wide. I attended the first ever [Home Brew Computer Club meeting](#) in March 1975. At this meeting many of the founders of well know computer companies were there. i.e Founders of Apple Computers etc. In the following years I was active in a [offshoot group from the Home Brew Computer Club](#) specializing in the Motorola 6800-6809 CPU based home brew computers. I presented papers at the [First, Second and Third West Coast Computer Fairs](#) in San Francisco starting in April 1977 to 1979 on Home Developed Computer projects for Amateur Radio.

In about 1991 I started using [Unix \(Coherent\)](#) at home, and in about 1999 I migrated to using Linux. In about 2003 I stopped using Microsoft Windows for most of my computing at home and started the exclusive use of Linux for my home computing. In the past 7 years I have been experimenting with various Linux Distribution and home and keeping track of developments in the Linux world.

My Family Genealogy

My family Genealogy was started by my Grandfather John D. Abrams , who lived in Hempstead most of his life. He died in 1945. He did a great job of collecting material our family history for many years. We were lucky in that our immediate family lived in the Town Of Hempstead NY for 10 generation. One of my ancestors Charles Abrams signed the Town of Hempstead Charter in the 1600's. Many of my ancestors were married at St. Georges Church, Hempstead in the 1700 and 1800's.

I had little interest in my family Genealogy till my later years. I was always reminded of this history by my parents. In 1967 when my father died I clear out his home in Hempstead and carried most the remaining history to California. In 1999 when I decided to retire I started to organize this material. One of my first tasks was to organize it into a computer database. This was easy. In 1999 I started a [Web Site](#) which still exists, and applied to join the Sons of The [American Revolution](#). To join was easy all I had to do was use my Grandfathers Application as a basis.

I was active in the [Sons Of The American Revolution Sacramento Chapter](#) for about 5 years. The commute to Friday meetings became unbearable due to traffic issues and I became inactive in 2004. I next decide to join the [Mayflower Society](#). This was far more difficult and in [2003 I became a member](#).

I am still active in Genealogy as a member of a group in our community. I find the subject very interesting but I do little with my family history currently. I feel it is so well documented that there is little I can add to what which is currently on my [Web Page](#).