

Ham operator discussed

A veteran Florida CBer and ham operator talked for 23 minutes last February with Jonestown, Guyana — site of the ill-fated Peoples Temple cult.

The topic of the conversation — verified by a QSL card — was the beauty of the country, and the “work” of the American colony.

Robert Boone (handle “Daniel Boone”), well-known to CBers in the Venice-Bradenton-Lakeland, Fla., area, had been listening to “Sarah” broadcasting from Jonestown on several occasions.

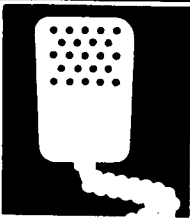
“It was for a period of several weeks on 20 meters, or about 14.300, and I decided to talk with her myself,” he explained.

“I was trying to pass the 100-country status in Amateur Radio, and the 8R3

prefix added a necessary country,” he said.

“When I put the call in, an Al Touchette answered with his call sign — WB6-MID, and added Portable 8R3 — which meant that, though the license had been issued to a California station, it

CB CONVAC



‘Ink Dipper’

was operating as a portable from a foreign country.

“Touchette then turned the mike over to a woman, ‘Sarah,’ and she carried on the conversation.”

Boone said “Sarah” had a pleasant voice and wanted to talk about the country where she lived, terming her surroundings “beautiful, vibrant with flowers and lush greenery.”

She urged Boone to tell his friends that they should come to Jonestown and help the Peoples Temple Agricultural Mission. She made no mention of communal living or her own background. She gave no indication of the mass suicide-murder tragedy to come.

“I had read about the ‘Moonies’ so I

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Guyana with ‘Sarah’

was somewhat familiar with the cult idea,” recalled Boone. “But I had no indication that Touchette or ‘Sarah’ were into this sort of thing.”

Bob Boone got caught up in CBing when he was a junior high student about 15 years old.

“I loved every minute of it, and then I started doing the skip bit,” he said. “Realizing that that was illegal, I decided I might as well get into amateur radio where I could be honest. I built my first ‘ham’ rig about five years ago. I’ve made contact with nearly 200 countries.

“As a matter of fact, that is how I came across the QSL card from Jonestown. The other night I was going through my QSLs so I could get my next award. As I got near the end of my stack, my wife noticed that I was look-

ing up ‘8R3’ and said that the card mentioned Jonestown. It was the day the mass suicide was reported.”

The QSL card from WB6-MID-8R3 has “Peoples Temple Agricultural Mission” commercially printed in fairly large type across the top of the card. Where the card makes space available for remarks, there is the following message neatly typed:

“Nice to QSO with u Robert, wld appreciate if u wld encourage ur congressman to aid this country, they are definitely becoming pro US and other forces are trying to pull Guyana down. Tnx for the QSL. Best wishes and DX-ing. cul 73’s. Al”

Boone pointed out that when a ham moves his station to another location, he has to signify he is “portable” and give

the prefix assigned to the location from which he is transmitting.

Boone, whose call is WBF-4-FNH, also has a license in the Cayman Islands. When he is broadcasting from there, he gives the call ZF2-BR. He believes the Peoples Temple broadcaster wasn’t licensed to Guyana, but was probably transmitting with the government’s approval.

Since they weren’t licensed there, they used their California call, adding “portable” and Guyana’s prefix 8R3.

Boone says that he is aware of about 20 or 25 other hams with whom Sarah talked because he listened in on these conversations.

“Sarah always talked about the jungle paradise, and the great things they were doing for the people there,” he recalled. “She sounded to me like a member of the Peace Corps or something like that.”