

Introducing *Project HAM (Historic Albillo Materials)*

To commemorate the *2nd Anniversary* of my web site (*Sept. 20, 2021*), I'm scanning most of my *40-45 year-old vintage materials* still surviving (regrettably, many got lost) from the time I bought my very first *HP* calculator (an **HP-25**, back in 1976 or so) when I was but a teenager with very rudimentary self-taught English and very little money, but nevertheless I boldly joined *PPC (#4747)*. Now my goal is to upload to my site most everything I've kept stored since then, for interested people to download, read, and get an idea of that *Golden Age* when every calculator, no matter how plain, was an awesome, advanced piece of technology, let alone an *RPN* programmable *HP* calculator.

My surviving vintage materials consist of some 2,000 pages which I stored in boxes 40-45 years ago and left undisturbed since then. I've scanned most of the text pages as *greyscale* while the images (brochures usually) are in 24-bit color. The vast majority were scanned at 300 dpi, resulting in 2,552 x 3,508 PNG images, which have been kindly and expertly postprocessed by **Eric Rechlin** himself (for which I'm most indebted and thank him very much) and collected into multi-page *PDF* documents, which also include *OCR'd* text with variable quality ranging from *poor* to very *usable* (for copy/paste, etc.), and some of them additionally contain a text file with my very own *Notes* detailing the document's background and interesting trivia.

The selected **scanned** vintage materials (which I'll upload to my site on a regular basis) include, among others:

- The dozens of *programs* I wrote for the **HP-25**, **HP-67/97**, **HP-34C**, **HP-41C** (most of them submitted to *PPC CJ* but never published), for the **SHARP PC-1211** (*aka TRS-80 PC-1*) *Pocket Computer*, and assorted ones written for such machines as the *Series 80 HP-85/86/87* computers (including *binaries*), **Sinclair ZX 81** (including *machine-code* ones), etc.
- The assorted *materials* other than programs, which I first submitted to *PPC CJ*, including articles and plenty of routines and tips (many unpublished or heavily censored) and afterwards to Australian *PPC Melbourne Chapter's "Technical Notes"*.
- The original **Submittal Forms** for some of the many programs (most of them were lost) I submitted to the *HP Users' Program Libraries* (both Europe and Corvallis).
- Dozens of *complete*, hi-res full-color *brochures* of classical calculators released by *HP* (from the **HP-35** to the **HP-41C** and even the **HP-01** watch), *Texas Instruments*, *SHARP*, *Sinclair*, etc., as well as computer brochures (**HP-85**, **ZX 81**, etc.) and more.
- A 100-strong *selection* (about 400 pages) of the *letters* I exchanged in 1979-1981 with such people as Richard Nelson (unidirectional), Tom Cadwallader, Keith Jarett, John Dearing, John McGeachie, Bill Wickes, etc., detailing and discussing the pioneering findings on *41C Synthetics*, while also addressing everything *Synthetics* and various projects (e.g.: *PPC ROM*), as well as exciting *scoops* about new

hardware from *HP* (*top secret* back then), or simply helping lots of people who would send questions or report problems directly to me.

- Some very interesting *miscellaneous* documents (bulletins, booklets) which were sent to me back then, never seen by anyone for 40 years but now made available online for the very first time after spending those years carefully stored away.

I think the *letters* in particular might be of great *historic* value, as they correctly reflect and record the very early discoveries being painstakingly made about what we now call "*Synthetics*" or "*microcode*" (but which at those early stages seemed more like arcane black magic), and the time we spent in full dedication to uncover the mysteries of the *HP-41C* and create efficient tools to increase productivity and make synthetics easily and effortlessly usable by everyone, from *guru*-level to *average Joe*.

I specially remember the first time I unexpectedly saw my first **STO M** on my all-bugs early *HP-41C*. I was astonished, a real "*What the ... !*" moment. I'd never heard before about those instructions and promptly told everyone, joined *PPC* and went on to investigate and experiment 24/7, so to say. Such exciting times !! So many **MEMORY LOST** messages (and worse) until everything made sense and was reliably reproducible and deterministic !

I'm positive these materials might prove to have some historic value, since not everyone bothered to safely store for 40 years their own productions or mail exchanges, so they are long since lost by now (including lots of mine, sadly). Thus, perhaps both old and new generations of *HP* fans will find mine interesting and worthwhile, as they will help them understand (and for the old-timers, *relive* !) the immense fascination we felt 40 years ago when the field was brand new, and also the sense of community and achievement it gave us to develop programs and techniques and to talk non-stop about them and share our fondest experiences at the diverse *Clubs*, *Chapters* and *HP*-fans gatherings of all sorts and sizes.

Until now, the new generation of *HP* calc fans could only imagine the wonder and joy we had as we explored and tinkered with and hacked the *41C* system to make it do things that it was never expected to do (Eric's phrasing), but now you'll not be limited to just *imagining*, just have a look at these materials and you'll be *seeing* with your own eyes the wonder and the joy which enthralled everyone involved back then, yours truly included.

Well, that's the main idea, but if not, I hope that at the very least my surviving vintage materials will get disseminated online and offline, archived, and hopefully won't get lost forever (*Murphy* notwithstanding, of course ...)

Caveats:

- I wrote these documents 40-45 years ago, using a simple mechanical typewriter with inked ribbon on so-so paper. The ones intended for my own private use were handwritten on various notepads. In both cases, the printing quality is not great.
- I sent the originals out (letters and submittals to *PPC*, *PPC TN*, *HP Program Libraries*), so I no longer have them, but first I got *some* of them photocopied, not

always with the best quality. The ones not photocopied (regrettably I just hadn't the money) are sadly lost forever (unless the *receiver* kept them safely stored, unlikely.)

- I stored those photocopies and handwritten originals away as best I could, but after 40+ years have elapsed some of them have faded/degraded, though still readable.
- All materials not intended for submittal were *handwritten* and, though properly stored, they've faded/degraded somewhat more than the photocopied ones. Anyway, the mere fact that they still do *exist* and are readable is kind of a miracle in itself, and **Eric Rechlin's** postprocessing has done wonders in that regard.
- Last but not least, all programs written for my own private use (not intended to be submitted anywhere) are of course in my native language, *Spanish*. This also applies to the **HP-34C Solutions Book** which *HP* did publish in 1980 for the Spanish market.

However, as most programs are of a *mathematical* nature, with formulas and worked examples included, they're easily understandable by anyone who is familiar with the subject matter (say "*Funciones elípticas*", i.e.: "*Elliptic Functions*"). Some brochures and miscellaneous documents are also in Spanish but that's no big problem really and it doesn't detract much from their looks or usability.

Enjoy!

Valentin Albillo, 09/09/2021