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EXPERIMENTERS



## COLLECTING ANTIQUE RADIO LOGOS

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Microphones, loudspeakers, valves, old magazines and books are typical objects of today's search by collectors for antique radio memorabilia. This search is part of the perennial research work of radio historians and dedicated collectors. One such field, collecting and preserving antique radio logos and nameplates, is a fascinating and rewarding task.

Logo is an abbreviation of *logotype*: from the Greek "logos," knowledge, and "typos," an impression or type. It was originally a typographical term, a word or several letters cast as one unit, basically used for representing a trademark.

Logotypes flourished during the radio boom of the late Twenties and the Thirties when innovation meant market share. New industrial design techniques helped manufacturers improve the styling of radio cabinets to meet public demand. Soon logotypes became integrated parts of radio-set hardware, intended as a distinctive marketing touch of each brand.

Mass production induced the development of such new materials as plastic resins and light-metal alloys (aluminum, antimony, etc.) formed by several industrial processes (pressing, casting, stamping, engraving).

Where to find antique radio logos? Like such other small parts as knobs, escutcheons, and



Microphones, the symbol of the broadcasting age, generally display the manufacturer's logo, like this vintage RCA 44B.

chromed friezes, they are found at random. The places to look for them are old radio-repair shops and junk yards where scraps of radio cabinets can be found.

The plate or logo should be removed from the panel or chassis and carefully cleaned or restored if necessary. The appearance of plastic logos can be improved after cleaning by just rubbing with furniture polish. Black plastic logos where the white filler of the engraving is worn out, should be cleaned as above and then filled with new white acrylic lacquer, scraping off the surplus paint with a rubber knife and letting it dry.

Regarding metal logos, first clean them and then buff relief lettering and lining with a hardwood block. The plate should be placed on a hard surface to avoid damage.

After this restoration procedure, the plate surface should be painted with clear spray lacquer. Finally, as soon as the surface is dry, rub off

paint and buff it with a metal polish using the same hardwood block. When the lettering is bright, wash off the metal polish and buff the plate surface with furniture polish.

Shop chemicals such as metal and furniture polishes and spray paints are similar everywhere, differing only as to brands and trade names. To avoid confusion, the specific products used by the



Metal logos on radio panels or grilles.





Grouping the items by origin or nature is a practical way to organize a logo collection. Here is a group of metal logos related to audio equipment from American makers, with a replica of the famous Victor dog Nipper.



A group of metal and plastic radio logos produced by European manufacturers.



Radio from the early Fifties displaying at the bottom of the plastic cabinet attractive metal lettering indicating Philips as the brand.



Metal and plastic logos representing some vintage radio manufacturers, mainly American. Before modern letter-printing techniques, radio panels were equipped with identification plates like "PHONE."



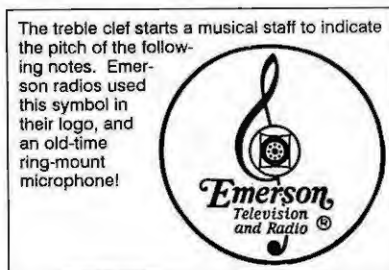
Attractive metal logos of Brazilian radio and TV makers of the '50s and early '60s.



The Western Electric logo for movie sound systems, generally displayed in theatre lobbies. This is a reproduction made by the Brazilian collector Luiz Carlos Rei.



Metal and plastic logos of American, British, and German hi-fi manufacturers.



The treble clef starts a musical staff to indicate the pitch of the following notes. Emerson radios used this symbol in their logo, and an old-time ring-mount microphone!

(Continued from p. 17)

author for cleaning and restoring antique radio logos are not indicated because they can easily be found on the market.

Different approaches can be used to organize a collection of antique-radio logos. According to the author's experience, the most direct path is to gather the pieces in sets or groups relative to their origin or nature. For instance: audio equipment, domestic and foreign radio manufacturers, a specific brand, novelty trademarks, etc.

For a neat display, the logos are fixed on soft, matte or neutral-colored boards protected by a cover of glass or clear plastic sheet.

Many other aspects of antique-radio logo collecting could be covered. The most interesting one is do-it-yourself logo reproduction, a very useful and often necessary practice to replace missing parts during radio restoration. Since a photograph is "worth a thousand words" the accompanying pictorial sequence illustrates a representative col-

lection of logotypes from antique radios and related equipment.

Photographs: Carlos A. Fazano, 1992; Edison de Freitas, 1988.

#### REFERENCE

Douglas, Alan, Radio Manufacturers of the 1920s, Vols. 1-3 (Vestal, NY: Vestal Press).

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#### HOMAGE TO A CRAFTSMAN FRIEND

As a radio historian and collector, I have collected and preserved antique radio logos for many years. My interest in this matter is well expressed in my personal letterhead illustration. It is a logotype designed by Mr. Jose Schernthaner, a joyful, skilled and creative designer and a dear friend of mine who passed away some time ago.

A radio logo of a different kind.



*Mr. Schernthaner in his studio back in later seventies.*