

# Jackson-Bell Goes Small in a Big Way

## New Look, New Chassis, New Features

*by Richard Gray & Jim Ryan*

The article “Jackson-Bell Goes Super” in the previous SCARS Gazette (Volume 47 Number 2) recounted Jackson-Bell’s successful move to superheterodyne radios. This article covers their further penetration of the radio market with the very popular Peter-Pan and other small sets.

**A**t the beginning of 1931, Jackson-Bell had the wildly successful model 62, priced at \$59.50 with many packaging variations. The price point was well above what many customers could afford.

With the acquisition of the Flint Radio Company, Jackson-Bell acquired superheterodyne and midget technology that allowed them to stay at the forefront of Los Angeles radio manufacturing.

In June 1931, Jackson-Bell introduced a new line of cathedral midget sets based on the Flint acquisition. They marketed the midget four-tube T.R.F. chassis and cabinet design as the Jackson-Bell brand model 84 Peter Pan.

The performance of this set was adequate for local reception. The price point of \$29.95 opened a vast new market for Jackson-Bell.

The “Peter Pan” brand sold well throughout the United States and in their overseas markets. Model 84 chassis and cabinet variations were also very successful with other brandings.

Jackson-Bell experimented with several packing options, including one in a leather carrying case. The last version was in February of 1932, with an ornate cabinet shown on the back cover of the spring /summer 2022 Gazette.

In April 1932, a new chassis and cabinet style expanded the Peter Pan brand. These cabinets are small and straight-sided (now referred to as tombstones). Many have a faux burl front, with various grilles and adornments. All Jackson-Bell branded versions have a Peter Pan in the grille and most have a Peter Pan sticker on the cabinet side.

Jackson-Bell also marketed similar midget radios with many cabinet variations and brand names, including jewel box designs. These radios offered new performance standards at a lower price point that once again expanded Jackson-Bell’s marketing advantages.

### Three Basic Models

There are three chassis models with several versions listed in the date order of their introductions:

- Model 25 - Five-tube superheterodyne chassis (May 1932)
- Model 4 - Four-tube T.R.F. chassis (June 1932)
- Model 24 - Four-tube superheterodyne chassis (September 1932).

All shared the same chassis size, knob pattern, and speaker plug. Jackson-Bell thus could mix and match cabinet variations — another cost saving.



*Jackson-Bell /Flint Model 84 Peter Pan*

## Model 25

The Model 25 is a small, five-tube superheterodyne set available in four variations. The first versions came with a tone control switch. Later models have full-range (potentiometer) tone controls. The last version introduced in September of 1932 has automatic volume control.



*At Left: Jackson-Bell Model 25 With No Logging Drawer - Dial Calibrated 00 - 100*

The dials have a 0 - 100 logging scale, which requires remembering where to set the dial for each station. After the first introduction, Jackson-Bell added a new feature - a logging card on a slide-out drawer!

*Below: Jackson Bell Model 25 Ad - The Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, CA May 20, 1932*



Just Released! **Powerful**  
**5-Tube**  
*Super-Heterodyne*  
*Jackson-Bell*  
**\$29<sup>95</sup>**

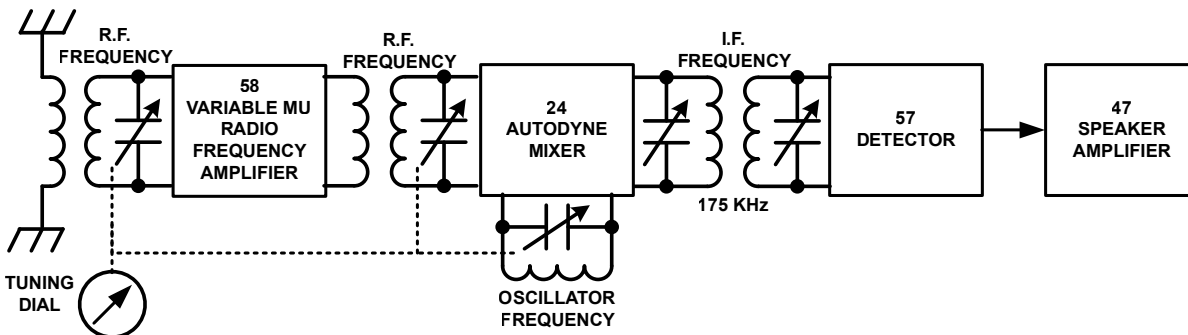
**CONVENIENT TERMS**  
**\$1.25 A WEEK**  
**No Interest or Carrying Charge**

JUST RELEASED by JACKSON-BELL—pioneer developers of the compact radio. Now a 5-TUBE SUPER-HETERODYNE at this money-saving price! DISTANCE—POWER—PERFECT TONE CONTROL—the equal and even the superior of large, bulky sets costing many times as much! If you already own another set, you'll want this big-performing, small-size set for bedroom or den. Has rich burl-walnut effect cabinet. R. C. A. licensed circuit; Cunningham Tubes, including newest Pentode and Variable-Mu. A super-1932 special at \$29.95. Convenient terms, \$1.25 a week. FREE APPROVAL. Price is the same cash or credit. See it at our store. Mail and phone orders filled. Sent prepaid anywhere, on free approval!

**GENSLER-LEE**  
716 K STREET, SACRAMENTO  
32 Years of Service, 16 Stores in America

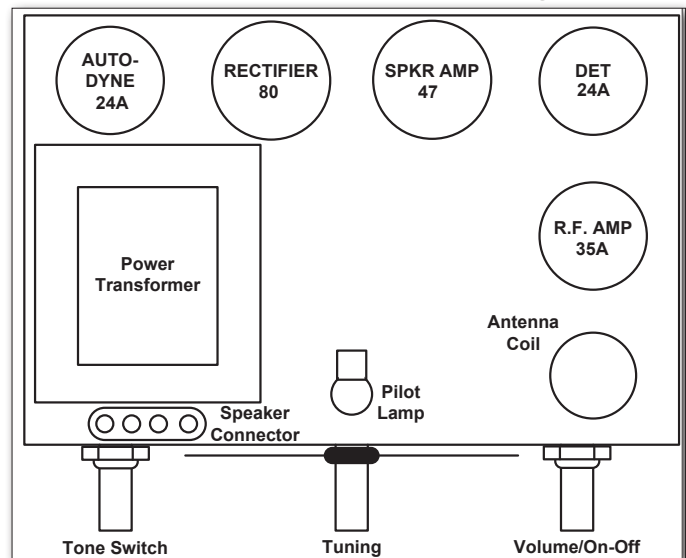
*At Left: Jackson-Bell Model 25 With Logging Drawer Opened*



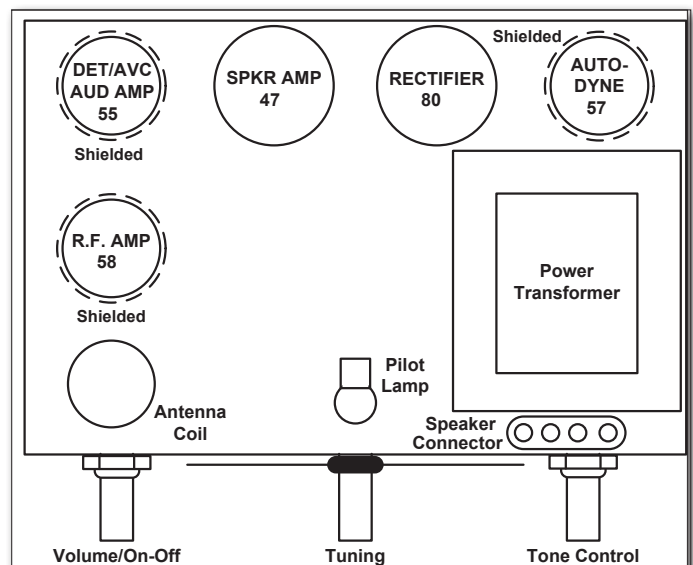


Jackson-Bell has an unusual circuit; there is no I.F. amplifier. However, there is an R.F. amplifier for image rejection. Local performance is decent. Tracking is poor. Jackson-Bell did not attempt to calibrate the dial and used a logging scale instead.

Model 25 - First Version Block Diagram



Model 25 - First Version Chassis Diagram



Model 25 - Last Version Chassis Diagram

MIDGET in size—GIANT in performance!

**Super-Heterodyne**

JACKSON-BELL  
Latest Model

**5** Newest  
Type  
Tubes

**\$31.45**

SLIDE WITH  
STATION LOG

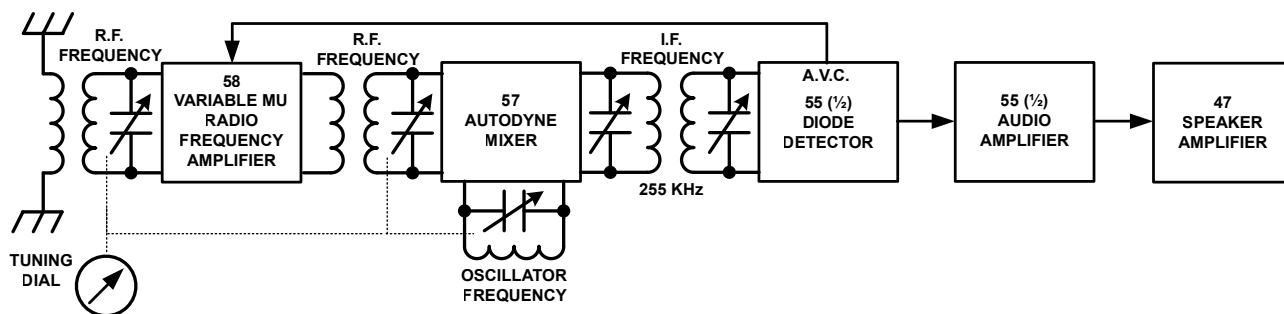
**\$1.00 A WEEK**

GREATER performance and added refinements! Leader since pioneering the midget radio, Jackson-Bell now offers further improvements, including: graduated tone control, slide with station log (illustrated above) for listing dial settings of favorite stations, and the latest type tubes by Cunningham. Superior in picking up broadcasts; no interference from other stations. Reception guaranteed even in far distant sections. Powerful volume; clear, natural tone. FIVE tubes, including pentode, screen-grid, and variable-mu features. SUPER-HETERODYNE! Perfected circuit, licensed by R. C. A., to be had in no other set near this low price. Cabinet, of burl walnut effect, is small and compact. A super-1932 special at \$31.45. Convenient terms, \$1.00 a week. See it at our store. Mail and phone orders filled. Sent prepaid anywhere for free inspection.

**GENSLER-LEE**

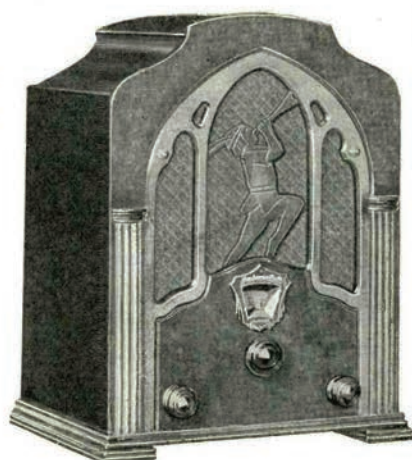
920 FULTON STREET, FRESNO,  
32 Years of Service, 16 Stores in America

Jackson Bell Model 25 With Log Drawer Ad -  
The Fresno Bee, Fresno, CA August 19, 1932



The last chassis version uses a dual-function 55 tube with a diode detector and audio amplifier. Performance is decent on local stations. The automatic volume control is also reasonably effective.

*Model 25 - Last Version Block Diagram*



**TRY** a new one, and  
see what a difference . .

New 1933  
Jackson-Bell  
Model 25

EASY  
TERMS

HOW long since you have had a new Radio? Have you tried the new 1933 Models? Just for curiosity, next time you are near a radio store drop in and ask the dealer to let you take one of these new JACKSON-BELLS home on trial. See for yourself what the difference is. Special handy drawer to contain logbook, new type tubes, Automatic Volume Control, and many other latest features. Tuck it under your arm, and have radio wherever you go. Enjoy it in any room in the house and on trips. All for less than 10 cents per day, the price of two packages of chewing gum. Long winter evenings will soon be here. Prepare now to fill them with the unmitigated delight that comes with perfect reception.



**\$31<sup>95</sup>**  
Complete with  
Cunningham  
Tubes

Other new 1933 JACKSON-BELLS include new 12-tube Model 1260 Super-Heterodyne, at \$59.95 complete; new 7-tube Model 27-AZ Super-Heterodyne, at \$46.95 complete; and new 5-tube Pandora Super-Heterodyne Treasure Chest, at \$34.95 complete. All these models have Automatic Volume Control, newest type tubes, and other latest features.

Ask your Dealer  
to let you take  
one home on trial  
**TODAY** and notice  
the difference . .



H. R. CURTISS CO., Distributors, 895 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco

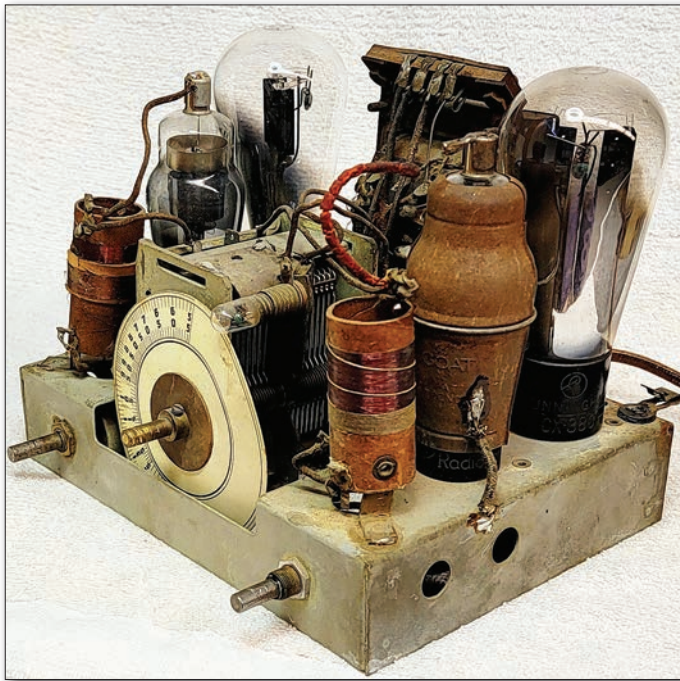
*Model 25 - No Log Scale Drawer Advertisement - Broadcast Weekly November 13, 1932*

This November 13th advertisement above was probably created in October 1932 or earlier due to publication lead-time requirements. Note that Jackson-Bell was promoting new 1933 models but was in receivership by December 2nd, 1932.



## Model 4

The model 4 chassis is an updated replacement for model 84, introduced a year earlier. The circuitry and chassis layout are similar, with the 24A tubes replaced with higher gain 57 pentode tubes. This radio, like its predecessor, relies on feedback to achieve sensitivity and selectivity with lots of squealing at high-gain settings. There is a reasonable level of performance for local reception. The translucent and back-lighted dial is calibrated in Kilo-cycles; most also have a 0 - 100 logging scale.



**Jackson Bell Model 4 Chassis**

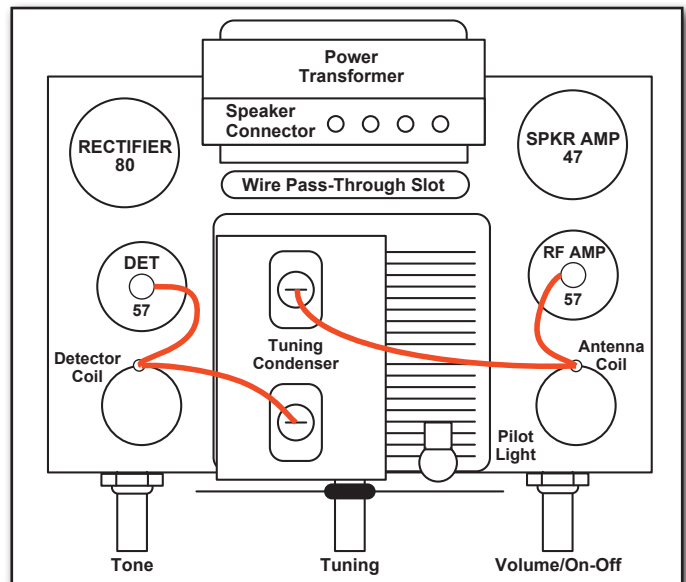
The chassis shown above was modified long ago. Someone installed a Goat tube shield on the R.F. amplifier tube, with a soldered wire connected to the chassis.

The radio works great, with no whistling. It is easy to tune and sensitive enough for local stations. This modification also works on model 84 chassis with less sensitivity, making it easier to operate.

Jackson-Bell must have known they could improve the set's performance but chose not to. Perhaps they wanted to up-sell their customers to a more expensive radio.

### Speaker Wiring

The speaker wiring is the same for all models. Speakers are interchangeable between models allowing Jackson-Bell to keep only one subassembly in stock.



**Jackson Bell Model 4 Chassis Diagram**

### Model 4 Cabinet Variety

Jackson-Bell utilized the model 4 chassis in numerous cabinet styles. The radios shown on these two pages are a representative sample.

The Peter Pan model 4 tombstone cabinet style is the same as the Jackson-Bell model 25 Peter Pan (both with no logging drawer).



**Model 4 - Willard Tombstone Radio**





***Model 4 - V2 Peter Pan Tombstone***



***Model 4 - Unusual Cabinet Design***



***Model 4 - Willard Midget Cathedral***



***Model 4 - Peter Pan with unique Combination Log Drawer and Calibrated Dial***



## Model 24

The model 24 is a small four-tube Superheterodyne radio. There were at least three chassis versions, with various layout and component options. All versions had a log card drawer. The later chassis versions with a regenerative detector work amazingly well for a four-tube set. They have good adjacent channel and image rejection.



**Model 24B - V5 Peter Pan**



**Model 24 Packard Radio**



**New 1933 model 24-U "Peter Pan"**



# JACKSON-BELL

## Super-Heterodyne

If you have been wanting a really *modern* radio, here is your opportunity. This fine new 1933 JACKSON-BELL is yours to enjoy during the long winter evenings for \$19.95 complete . . . 4 new tubes, tone control, short wave switch for police calls, dial light, handy log drawer, and other latest features in attractive new "Peter Pan" cabinet. Ask your dealer to demonstrate the marvelous value in this wonderful little 1933 set.

# \$ 19.95

COMPLETE WITH CUNNINGHAM TUBES



**New 1933 Model 25  
"Peter Pan" JACKSON-BELL**

Though somewhat resembling Model 24-U described above, Model 25, shown at right, is larger, has 5 latest type tubes, and the additional advantage of *Automatic Volume Control*. Ask your Dealer to demonstrate the two side by side.

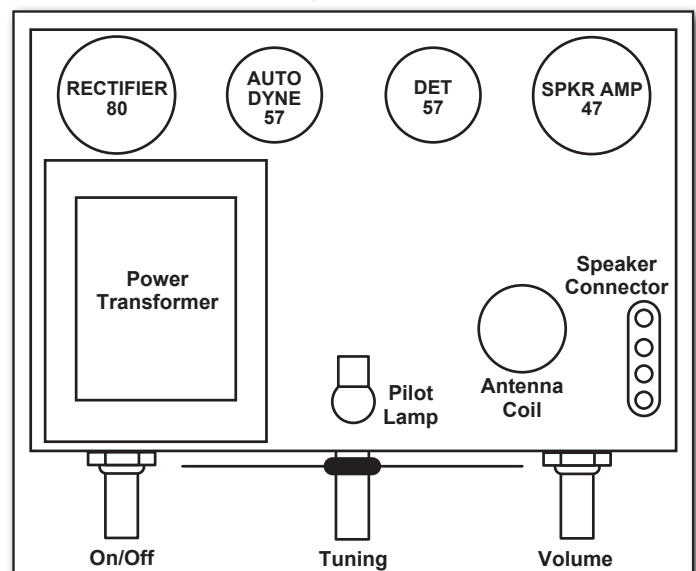
# \$31.95

Complete with Cunningham tubes



H. R. CURTISS CO.—Distributors—895 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco

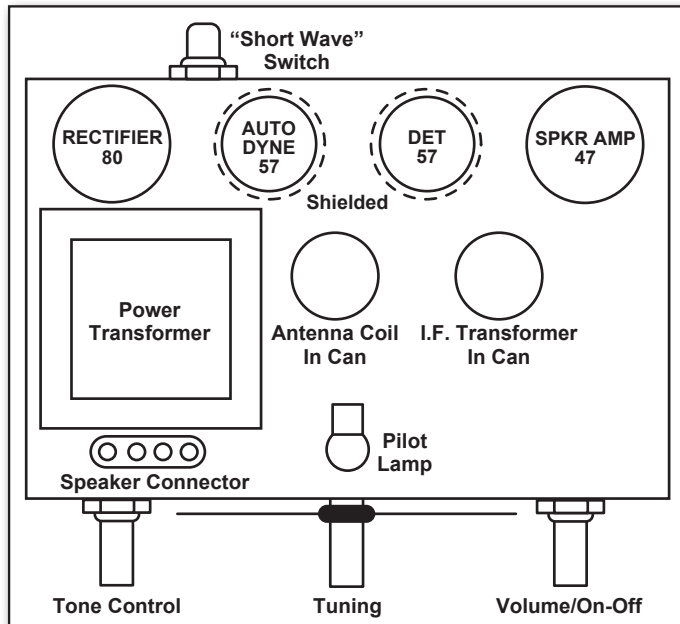
**Broadcast Weekly - November 20, 1932**



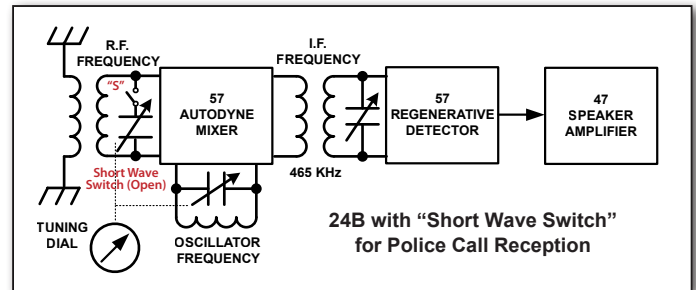
**Model 24 Early Version Chassis**

## The Last Chassis Version

The Broadcast tuning Range is from 550KCs to 1550KCs, with the local oscillator operating on the high side. This last version, introduced in November of 1932, has a short wave switch on the back of the chassis. Its function is to disconnect the R.F. tuning condenser to receive police calls with the tuning dial set in the mid-range. The "Short-Wave" tuning range is from approximately 1800 to 2000KCs with the local oscillator operating on the low side.



**Model 24 - Last Version Chassis Diagram**



**Model 24 - Last Version Block Diagram**

**New!**  
**JACKSON-BELL**  
**Compact Radio!**

**22.50** A Small Deposit  
Easy Monthly  
Payments Next Year!

**Our Latest Compact Radio!**  
Short-wave switch for police calls!

Here is a timely suggestion for a Christmas gift! This compact Jackson-Bell with "big" radio performance can be moved from place to place with little effort. A radio for "over-the-week-end" trips—for the student away from home—for the office—for the bedroom. Hear it at Jackson's today!

**Ad for "Short-Wave" Switch Model 24B**  
**Oakland Tribune, Oakland, CA - Dec. 9, 1932**

**At Left: Model 24B V5 - with "Short-Wave" Switch on the Side of the Cabinet**



## Other Notable Varieties...

The chassis covered in the preceding pages can also be found in other Jackson-Bell sets that did not use the cathedral or midget styling. The popular box or chest designs are covered below.

### The Pandora "Box"

Jackson-Bell heavily merchandised their Pandora chest radio in late 1932. The set used a version of the model 25 chassis with automatic volume control.

What sets Pandora apart is its decent performance and ornate novel cabinet design. The outside of the case has a sand-blasted pattern unique to Jackson-Bell. Open the lid and the fun begins! There are three radio knobs as you would expect, plus a log card and a cigarette box.



1933 Radios are Better . . . Hear Them!

NEW 1933  
**JACKSON-BELL**  
"Pandora"

Complete with Cunningham Tubes

**\$34<sup>95</sup>**

EASY TERMS

JACKSON-BELL has never attempted to dazzle or impress a purchaser with a long list of meaningless technical terms. It is not the list that counts, but the facts. So, of this little treasure chest of melody we merely say in all simplicity and sincerity—we think you will like it. The unique styling of its cabinet. Its handy size and shape. Its fully clear, deep-throated tones. Its satisfying Super-Hi-Fi power and sharp tuning. Automatic volume control, latest type tubes, and other standard improvements—yes, but no "tricks" mechanisms or combinations to get out of order and cause you trouble. Dials in top panel give complete control at all times, and speaker in end of cabinet permits operation with cover either open or closed without muffling reception. A product of JACKSON-BELL, the largest manufacturer of radios west of Chicago. Wouldn't you like to hear it?

H. R. CURTISS COMPANY, Distributors . . . San Francisco

Ask Your Dealer to Take One Home on Trial TO-DAY!

Overall dimensions: 18" x 11" x 11" (H x W x D)

**Jackson Bell Pandora Advertisement  
Broadcast Weekly - October 15, 1932**



**Pandora Open Lid View**

If you don't smoke, no problem. Lift the lid of the cigarette box to see a little mural explaining the Pandora brand! The speaker in the side of the box allows you to listen with the lid shut.

We see many Pandora radios today in excellent condition, which is perhaps surprising because Jackson-Bell ceased business shortly after the Pandora's introduction. The authors believe folks kept this radio because it worked adequately, but mostly because it is novel and attractive.

### Interior View of Chassis and Speaker

The model 25AV chassis is mounted on a board that slides in on guides built into the cabinet side wall. In an unusual design, access to the chassis and tubes is from the bottom of the cabinet.

The schematic attached to the slide-out board is a bit difficult to see in this image, but a welcome addition to owners and technicians who might have to work on the set.



## Cigarette Box Card And Readable Text



### ***The Mythology Legend of Pandora's Box***

*In classical mythology, Pandora was the name of the first mortal woman, on whom the gods and goddesses bestowed gifts. Pandora's Box was fabled to have been brought by her from Heaven and contained all the blessings of the gods, which would have been preserved for the human race had not Pandora opened it, so that all the blessings, with the exception of Hope, escaped.*

*Excerpt...The Century Encyclopedia*

## **The Model 4 Peter Pan Chest**

Jackson-Bell offered a Peter Pan radio in a chest style cabinet using a model 4 chassis. The set was not a great performer, but adequate for local stations. There was no need for a logging card since the chassis featured a calibrated dial.

The set is simple with just the radio controls and a speaker with Peter Pan in the grille. You should listen with the lid open unless you like muffled sounds! The outside has a routed geometric design, featuring toning lacquer pattern accents, which is unusual and cheap to manufacture.

Few of these radios survive today, perhaps because they were not great sellers. They may not have been kept due to the modest performance and the lack of exterior appeal.



***Model 4 Peter Pan Chest***



## **The Model 24 Packard Radio Co. Chest**

The Packard Radio Company offered a chest radio with a Jackson-Bell model 24B Chassis. The performance of this set is decent for local reception.

This radio uses the same cabinet as the Jackson-Bell Peter Pan chest but with a plain speaker grille. Since there is no logging card, you must remember the dial number corresponding to the desired station, not the broadcast frequency.



## Epilogue

The Jackson-Bell company was expert at creating multiple models and brandings from a minimum of subassemblies. For example, model 62 was the true "Swatch Radio." With one chassis, two cabinets, and myriad grilles and adornments, they penetrated many markets worldwide.

They used this experience to design a system of midget radios from three interchangeable chassis, and several interchangeable cabinets. This resulted in small radios in many cabinet styles including cathedrals, tombstones, chests, and even a little bookcase radio.

With three interchangeable chassis versions at different performance and price points, Jackson-Bell could offer customers combinations that met their needs. These radios carry the "Peter Pan" brand or the brands of other merchandisers.

With the introduction of the new chassis and cabinet designs, Jackson-Bell was not done with the model 84. Here is another variant of note.

### The Pollyanna Radio

Peter Pan was all right for the boys, but what about a style that would appeal to girls? Why not the same internal radio with the same cabinet, but branded for girls?

Like Peter Pan, Pollyanna was a very popular children's book series, with an orphan girl as the heroine. It would have seemed a perfect fit for a new radio.

It was not a problem for Jackson-Bell to accommodate the new branding. They had the cabinet used for the Peter Pan and the model 84 chassis. All they needed was a Pollyanna grille insert and a newly designed Pollyanna paper sticker. We don't know how well the sets sold, but there are ads and a small number of known surviving examples today.



*Model 84 Pollyanna Radio*

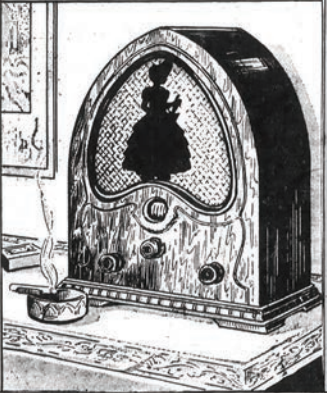
*We like Pollyannas if they're these new*  
**midget radios!**

*with Pentode &  
screen-grid tubes!  
Ready to play!*

**\$24.95**

A better radio in every way than you've ever seen before at so dramatically low a price! No wonder we like these Pollyannas... you will too! Manufactured by the Jackson-Bell Company, equipped with genuine Arcturus tubes, dynamic speaker, the new Pentode and screen-grid tubes! The Pollyanna is sweet toned, and surprisingly selective and sensitive. BREUNER'S feature it in the Pre-Removal Sale for only \$24.95! Buy for vacations!

BREUNER'S, MAIN FLOOR



*Ad for the Pollyanna Radio  
Oakland Tribune, Oakland, CA - July 17, 1932*



*Exclusive Pollyanna Paper Sticker*

## Peter Pan Bookcase Radio

The model 25 PeterPan bookcase radio was one of several clock or bookcase radios offered by Jackson-Bell. This set is not a one-off product since at least three examples of this version exist today. No doubt there are many other Jackson-Bell midget variations the authors have not seen. Please let us know what you have.



*Peter Pan Bookcase Radio*



*Peter Pan Bookcase Radio Rear View*

The image above is an early model 25 chassis from April 1932. This indicates that this Bookcase Radio was marketed at the same time as the first small tombstone table sets.

The tag with red text is a "guarantee" covering parts only. Not included were labor, tubes and shipping. Perhaps this guarantee was worthwhile if the power transformer or speaker failed!

### Speaker Wiring

The speaker wires are often broken. Here is how they should be connected.



**Field Coil, B+, 400-Ohm Resistor to Chassis\***

**Field Coil, Transformer Center Tap**

**Output Transformer, 47 Tube Plate**

**Output Transformer, B+, 80 Tube Filament**

The speaker wiring is the same for all models reviewed in this article. The speakers are interchangeable which meant Jackson-Bell had to stock just one sub-assembly for all of these models.

\*The model 25-AV chassis uses a different field coil circuit. The resistance measurement to the chassis is high.



[Return to Blogs Page](#)