

Jackson-Bell Radio Confusion

by Jim Ryan

Radios carrying the Jackson-Bell name or other identifying devices may not have actually been manufactured by Jackson-Bell. Jackson-Bell entered receivership on December 2, 1932, and was declared bankrupt on February 13, 1933. Today's Los Angeles radio collectors are faced with a puzzling array of post-1932 radio sets.

Unusual "Jackson-Bell" Radio Varieties

Imagine that you are at a location where numerous vintage radios are available. You spot one that has a Jackson-Bell name plate on the front, and are excited by the prospect of finding a new, undocumented model. New models have been discovered in the past, but it is more likely that what you have found is a radio produced after Jackson-Bell had already ceased to exist.

Post-1932 Explanation

You might believe that only Jackson-Bell would have access to identifying devices, or the right to use them in labeling their products.

However, there are two ways for Jackson-Bell radios and component parts to find their way into products they did not manufacture or market themselves. Keep in mind that this material is in addition to original Jackson-Bell radios that were already in the supply chain in 1933 and beyond.

Post-Receivership - Through Herb Bell's Actions

Herb Bell approached the judge handling the receivership and the eventual bankruptcy to try to recover as much of what was owed to his creditors as possible. He requested and was granted the authority to market much of his TRF radio inventory to satisfy this goal. The amount raised through this effort partially met that goal, but the auction would likely have provided considerably more.

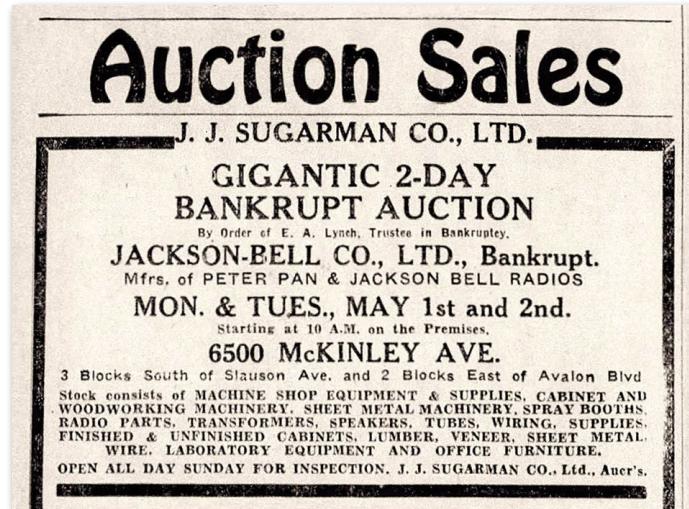
Through Items Sold at the Bankruptcy Auction

All tools and materials used in the production of radios at their facilities were made available for sale at the bankruptcy auction. This would have included nameplates, chassis, cabinets, tubes and much more.

The material available from both of these bankruptcy activities would eventually enter the marketplace as post-Jackson-Bell radios, or as components used to create sets never envisioned by the Bell brothers.

About the Auction

A bankruptcy auction in Los Angeles in 1933 was required by law to provide some form of public notice or advertisement. The only advertisement we can find for the auction was published in the Los Angeles Times one day before the auction itself.



Public Notice of the Jackson-Bell Auction Sale The Los Angeles Times - April 30, 1933.

With the depression at its worst in 1932 - 1933, the assumption is that most members of the public would not have been able to attend the auction with enough ready-cash to outbid members of the radio trade. Auction attendance may have been limited to mostly those who were involved in the radio industry since they would have certainly known about it in advance.

One member of that group had an even greater advantage. He had a long-standing relationship with Jackson-Bell and had been in the radio trade on his own for many years.

He can be credited with the largest number of Post-bankruptcy Jackson-Bell labeled radios identified to date.

That person was Richard Scott Shelley - also known as Roy Shelley.

Roy Shelley and His Association With Jackson-Bell



The Early Days in Los Angeles

Shelley was born to a farming family in Iowa in 1893. Before coming to Los Angeles, he spent some time in Story, Wyoming as a farmer, and registered for the draft there on June 5, 1917.

He served with the Army's 303rd Field Signal Battalion and was wounded in France on October 11, 1918. He was transferred from a French hospital to one in New York before being moved to a Newton, Iowa hospital to continue his recovery.

Indications are that R. S. Shelley moved from Iowa to Southern California in 1923. He may have been active marketing grapes and other produce from the central valley before 1927. The ad below is the first indication of his main activity (other than radio sales) for many years to come.

BANKRUPT SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: that the undersigned Trustee in Bankruptcy for the Estate of WM. E. VAN HORN, BANKRUPT, will on

Wednesday, August 3rd, 1927

at 2:00 P. M.

at the office of HON. BEN E. TARVER, Room 408 MOORE BLDG., SANTA ANA, CALIF., offers for sale to the highest bidder the entire assets of the above entitled bankrupt estate, subject to confirmation by the Court, consisting principally of the following, to-wit:

Auto Parts and Accessories	\$1,024.48
Tools and Equipment	\$1,135.15
Office Furniture	\$ 235.00

The above assets comprise tools and equipment of a first-class, fully equipped garage and will be sold piece by piece or as a unit.

The assets may be inspected at the Bankrupt's former place of business, 315 West Fifth St., Santa Ana, Calif., on day of sale until 1:30 P. M.

Terms of sale, deposit of 25% must be paid upon award of bid, the balance upon confirmation by the Court, which will be applied for forthwith. Delivery must be arranged for, for the same day.

For further information, write or call

R. S. SHELLEY, Trustee
625 Subway Terminal Bldg.,
Los Angeles, Calif. Mutual 9177

The Shelley Radio Company Building

The image at right was obtained from Dennis Bell. He posted this photo on the Ancestry.com website in 2023.

He was kind enough to give permission to use this image for this article. This is the only image of this building I have ever encountered.

Since Shelley's address changed so often, it is difficult to verify an address or accurately date the location.

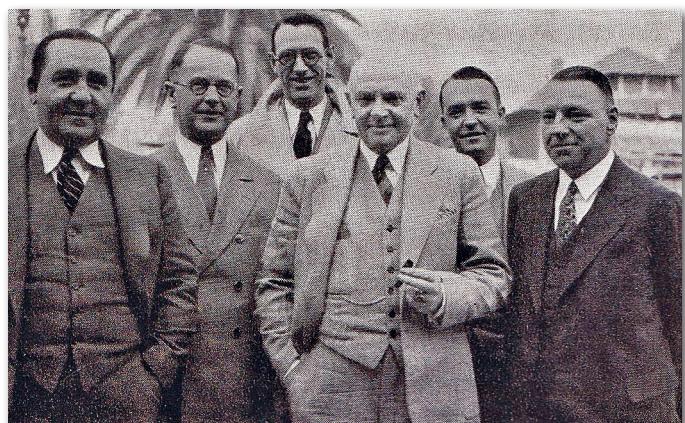
Shelley Business Interest After 1927

Shelley continued his depression-era business of handling liquidations, assignments, and bankruptcies. He was also selling radios through newspaper ads, but by March of 1930, he began running his own radio sales out of a building at 417 South Hill Street.

Through these endeavors, he began to build relationships with many in the radio trade. Among those acquaintances was E. A. Lynch who was later involved in the Jackson-Bell bankruptcy and lawsuit that arose out of that action.

If you've read our articles in the past, you will recognize the photo below. The group came together for a sales conference at the Jackson-Bell factory at 1682 West Washington Blvd.

From left to right we have Herb Bell - President, B. Stark - Texas distributor, R. S. Shelley - Michigan, Iowa and Nebraska distributor, Harold D. Thomas - Oregon and Washington distributor, R. Bell, an officer of the company, and McCubbin - Utah distributor.



Jackson-Bell Staff and Distributors in 1931

Shelley Bankrupt Sale Ad - The Los Angeles Register - Los Angeles, CA. - August 01, 1927.

Shelley Business Interest After 1927 (Continued)

The 1930 census shows that he was the proprietor and owner of the Shelley Radio Company Store at 1841 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles. When we couple this with what appears in magazines of the period, we get a revealing overview.

He was not only in business for himself before, during, and long after the Jackson-Bell bankruptcy, but he was a distributor for that company at the same time!

Shelley After Jackson-Bell Bankruptcy

What later Documents Tell Us

How many attendees were at the auction is unknown. Some may have managed to buy some of the material at the auction besides Shelley.

But there are many documented sets that bear the names of companies that Shelley is believed to have controlled. He may have even purchased some intellectual rights from Jackson-Bell. The latter is sheer speculation based on the use of the name "Jackson-Bell" and nameplate on some of the sets he sold after 1932.

The images and documents presented here are examples of some of the material we have been able to locate. It is by no means an exhaustive accounting of all he may have produced.

The Pacific Radio Corporation

A 1936 Brochure from this company lists both their name and the Jackson-Bell name on every page. All of the radios shown in this brochure are table models except for the 556-C Console.

The September 1936 issue of Radio Today lists 11 models for 1937. This company is also referred to by the acronym PARCO to represent the company's full name.

The June 1937 issue lists another 8 models for 1937-1938, and the June 1938 issue lists another 15 models. Other resources claim that there were at least 34 models produced between 1934 and 1939.

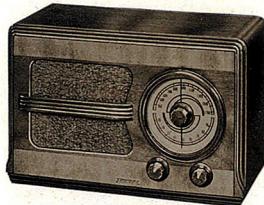
Another model that is not listed in any of these sources is the Pacific Coast Radio model 45 found on the internet. It has the Jackson-Bell nameplate on the front and the Pacific Coast and Gilfillan labels on the chassis.

At Right:

The Pacific Radio Corporation Model 45
Discovered on eBay on October 8, 2017



MODEL 206



MODEL 226

Jackson Bell

This model employs an efficient four-tube tuned Radio Frequency Circuit, playing regular Broadcast and Police Short Wave Stations and uses the latest type tubes. The chassis is installed in an especially attractive, compact hand-rubbed walnut cabinet with lacewood overlay and easy-to-read full-vision illuminated dial for the Station Selector and Volume Control.

Manufactured by
PACIFIC RADIO CORPORATION
1479 West Adams Street Los Angeles, Calif.

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DELUXE
CONSOLE

Jackson Bell



MODEL 556-C

MODEL 556-C

THIS is the latest development in modern type console receivers. It is a hand-rubbed, oil walnut cabinet throughout and the slanting control panel is made of matched herringbone walnut. The back of this console cabinet is as highly finished as the front so that it may be used next to a wall or in the center of the room. It is equipped with a powerful, all-wave, superheterodyne chassis covering all short-wave channels from 16 to 200 meters in addition to the regular Broadcast and Police Bands. It plays American and Foreign Short Wave stations, Ships, Airplanes, Amateurs and Commercial. There are five oil metal tubes used including two new dual-purpose tubes which gives this receiver sparkling seven-tube performance. Due to the large dynamic speaker and unique acoustic design of the cabinet this model has especially good tone quality.

Manufactured by
PACIFIC RADIO CORPORATION
1479 West Adams Street Los Angeles, Calif.

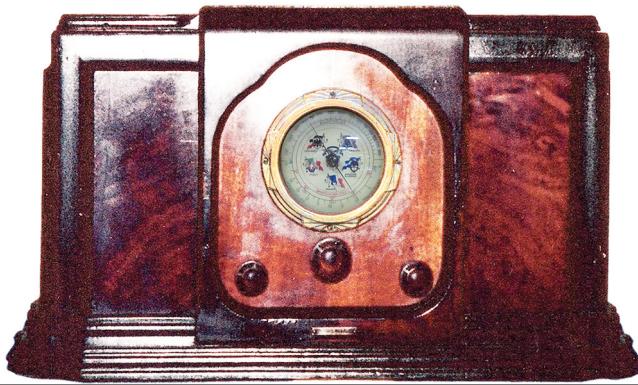
A Two-Page Sample From the 1936 Pacific Radio Corporation Brochure



The Peter Pan Radio Manufacturing Company

Most of the advertising I have been able to locate is in stores that do not say that the radios are from this company. They usually indicate that it is a new model Peter Pan. These are likely Shelley products due to the date of release.

In the case of the advertising in the next column, the model number is not identified. Instead they simply call it the "New Peter Pan midget radio."



Peter Pan Model 34 Deluxe
From the collection of Mike Simpson



Peter Pan Model 34 Royale
From the collection of Richard Gray

Model Numbers

The number of radio images that I have been able to locate is rather small as compared to the models listed in radio documentation at my disposal. Sources include period magazine listings, website compilations, Rider schematics and the databases of Mallory-Yaxley, Sylvania, and Sams Red Book.

The Emporium
MARKET OPPOSITE POWELL : EXBROOK 6800 : SAN FRANCISCO

Other Emporium advertising on pages 4, 5, 10

Our smallest in size and price!

NEW
“PETER PAN”
midget radio
\$11.95

“Peter Pan” is one of the smallest, cutest radios to be had! It's the perfect radio for your “den,” kitchen or extra room... for students that want to take a small radio back to school with them. Or get one for your small son or daughter—when you see it you'll agree that it will delight the heart of any youngster! Grille model in ivory \$1 extra.

Compare ALL the great 1939 radios at The Emporium
SOUNDPROOF RADIO ROOMS, FOURTH FLOOR

The New Peter Pan Midget Radio The San Francisco Call Bulletin July 27, 1938

Some of the Peter Pan Radio Manufacturing Company schematics that are in Riders are identical to those for Jackson Bell. We believe that whole radios and parts for building others were purchased at the Jackson-Bell bankruptcy auction and used in Shelley's marketing over the years.

The model numbers are:

4	45	77
4-S	45N	77-A
6	47	88
25-AV	56	555
25-UV	58 (Auto)	

I have provided these numbers as an aid to anyone who might find a radio marketed after 1932 that they believe may be a Shelley product.

Others may have had access to radios or components disposed of by Jackson-Bell through the methods discussed earlier. They may even be “Franken-radios” assembled from junk-part boxes.

Unknown Sources

The Warwick Example

There are a number of radios that have been modified to appear as if they were Peter Pan Radios. A case in point is this Warwick radio that still has the Warwick Manufacturing Company (W. M. Co.) label affixed to the chassis.

When this radio was modified, or by whom is unknown. Other radios have been treated the same way. Whether the owner believed that what they had was a Peter Pan radio due to misinformation, or they thought this was an unknown rarity is an open question.

I hope that these pages help reduce this to a rare occurrence by providing more clarity to the issue.



Peter Pan Radio Created from A Warwick Radio



Peter Pan Nameplate Added To Warwick Radio



Peter Pan Warwick Radio W. M. Co. Label on Chassis

Final Notes

There are many radios that have questionable provenance. The demise of Jackson-Bell added a complexity to model identification that we've tried to clarify by giving users of our website access to authenticated information on known models produced by Jackson-Bell before 1933.

Radios found to make their first appearance after that date are questionable. We add one last example to reinforce that point.

Jackson-Bell Radio Company

The Sylvania lists a Jackson-Bell Company, LTD., with an extensive list of models. This example is not on that list. The label on the chassis says that this is a model 9 (Jackson Bell did not make a model 9).

One source says that the cabinet is a 1934 West Coast variant of the Cavilcade 56 radio.



Jackson-Bell Radio Company Model 9

The Southern California Antique Radios Society

There is no organization anywhere with a better understanding of radios made in Los Angeles than SCARS. Our Gazette proves this with every issue. Membership is only \$25.00 a year. For more information...

Visit us at <https://www.antiqueradios.org>

We Have The Information You Need.

Determining if the radio you have is an original Jackson-Bell or one of those produced after 1933 requires close attention to detail and a knowledge of products known to be authentic Jackson-Bells.

Our site can go a long way toward resolving these issues.

Visit us at <http://www.laradios.org>.