

COLLECTORS CORNER

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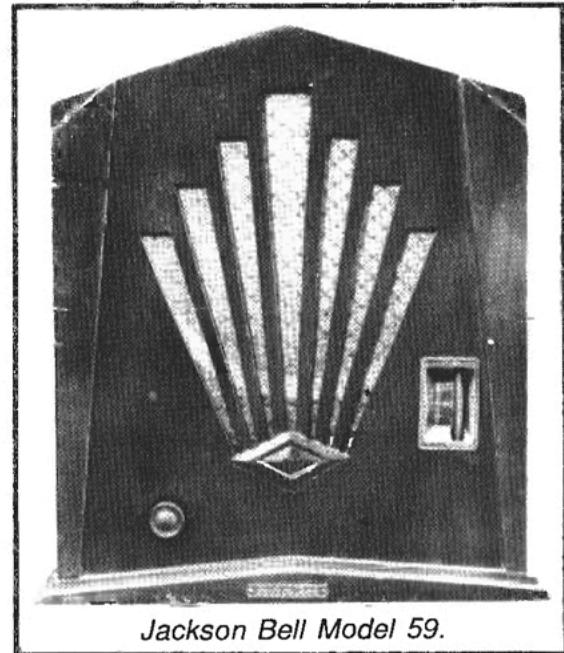
JACKSON BELL MODEL 59

The Jackson Bell Company of Los Angeles, California, was one of the pioneers of the move towards "midget" radios that became the rage during the early 1930's. The early midget radios were looked upon with scorn by the major radio manufacturers of the day. But radios like the Jackson Bell model 59 were eagerly bought by the less wealthy and as a second set by the well-to-do. They were also very popular among apartment dwellers. The major manufacturers could not ignore the growing sales of the midgets, and by mid-1931 most had introduced models of their own.

The model 59 was introduced in late 1929, selling for \$59.50. In comparison to later midget sets, it was quite primitive. It uses seven tubes; a 26 in each of the two RF stages, a 27 as detector, another 26 in the first AF stage, two 71A's in the push-pull output stage, and an 80 as rectifier. Both audio stages are transformer coupled, and the output stage feeds a magnetic speaker. Little filtering is needed by the magnetic speaker so only a 2 Mfd. and a 4 Mfd. paper condenser are used along with a filter choke. Volume is controlled by simultaneously varying the bias on the RF tubes and shorting out the input signal at the antenna.

I was rather surprised at the performance of the model 59. It was better than I had expected. Although sensitivity was adequate on the high end of the dial, below 850 KHz it was very poor. An alignment job might have cured this. Stations in South Bend, Chicago, and Indianapolis were received in the daytime with sufficient volume for comfortable listening. Increasing the volume too much caused regeneration on distant stations or overloaded the speaker on the nearby ones. For a magnetic balanced armature speaker, tone quality seemed better than most.

The next Jackson Bell model, the 60, was very similar to the 59. In fact some 59's were remarked as 60's and most of the model 59's shortcomings were rectified. A regeneration control was added, the magnetic speaker replaced by an electrodynamic, and the 27 detector tube replaced by a type 24.



Jackson Bell Model 59.

The early Jackson Bell midget cabinets were a simple, easy to manufacture, art deco style. The finish seems to be more paint than a stain, and the wood underneath is very light in color and weight. I had a model 60 in my collection at one time that was done in black with silver lamé (a cloth interwoven with metallic threads) grille cloth and white pin striping. It was original and very striking, but the finish was in poor condition.

The Jackson Bell model 59 seems to be quite a bit rarer than the model 60 and the much more common model 62. All are hard to find in good shape on account of cheap construction methods. The 59 and 60 seem to still be reasonably priced as most collectors don't care for the styling. They are probably the easiest-to-find examples of a really early midget radio.

In the next installment of "Collectors Corner" the Crosley Model 122, the "Super Buddy Boy", will be featured. (Frank Heathcote)

The Collectors Corner will appear as a regular feature of Antique Radio Classified. It is an attempt to build knowledge and interest of radio collectors primarily in AC home receivers of the late 1920's to the 1940's, with emphasis on the lesser known and more unusual styles and brands. Helpful restoration hints will be given where possible. Any questions, comments, or suggestions on this column, the radios featured, or on any other radios may be sent to Frank Heathcote, 1235 N. 3rd St., Logansport, Indiana 46947. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope for reply.

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