

THE FIRST CLOCK RADIO?

By Marv Beeferman

I purchased what might be considered one of the first "clock radios" about 15 years ago from Bruce Mager of Waves. It was displayed at one of our club show-and-tell sessions but it was only until recently that I decided to do a little research regarding its origins.

On the rear of the case is engraved "RADIO CLOCK CASE - INDIA IVORY CO." Printed along the bottom edge of the clock is also found "THE INDIA IVORY CO., PROVIDENCE R.I. The India Ivory Company manufactured miniature mantle, desk and table clocks encased in a celluloid material that was sometimes described as "French ivory" or "ivorine." They are easily distinguished by their classic design using pillars and columns.

Although not marked, the crystal radio is identical to a 1920s Beaver Baby Grand chassis with nickel-plated hardware. The set measures 2-1/4" X 3-3/4" and is of simple construction using a catwhisker detector and two tuning dials with taps to a coil in the rear. The Beaver Baby Grand appeared between 1922 and 1923 and was manufactured by the Beaver Machine and Tool Co. of Forest Hill, New Jersey. It came in various styles (four versions have been identified by collectors) with cases made from oak and molded hard rubber and prices ranging from \$7.50 to \$10.00.

This "clock radio" is something of a rare bird with very limited sightings. One version is said to have brass (or gold) colored radio hardware. Another example showed up in the old equipment contest at Radiofest 1992 in Elgin, Illinois.

References:

1. Maurice L. Sievers, "Crystal Clear," Vol. I and II
2. Antique Radio Classified, Vol. 9, No. 10 (October 1992)



The first "clock radio?"



The Beaver Baby Grand— note its similarity to the set in the "clock radio."



Interior of "clock radio" showing multi-tapped coil. With no antenna tuning, this set is designed to receive only a limited number of nearby stations.

MORE ON “THE FIRST CLOCK RADIO”

By Marv Beeferman

Last month's *Broadcaster* featured an article on what many collectors consider to be “the first clock radio.” It was built by the India Ivory Company of Providence, R.I. It was constructed using one of the company's typical miniature celluloid table clocks and a Beaver Baby

Grand crystal radio.

While I was doing research on the radio, I came across offerings for two clocks which were very similar to the design of the clock radio and made by the same company. You can see by the photos that the clocks are distinguished by their “classic” design using pillars and columns and their ivory look, sometimes referred to as “French ivory” or “ivorine”.

Since the prices were very reasonable, I purchased them with the thought that they might make a great basis for an AWA contest entry. Talk about portability! Even so, the clocks do make an interesting and inexpensive collectable that take up little space.



The original “clock radio” fitted with a 1923 Beaver Baby Grand crystal set.