



McMurdo Silver Masterpiece V dial, the story inside-

○ # 8

○ Vol-23

○ 2017



Emerson AU-190 white Catalin radio, more pictures inside



Majestic "Park Avenue" the designer Rosenow and Company



**NEW MEXICO**

**RADIO**  
**COLLECTORS CLUB**

## August 13th NMRCC Meeting theme Radio repair workshop and discussion

In later 1936 another new model appeared, the Masterpiece V. A complete re-design was obvious. In addition to the use of metal tubes, the set now had a larger and more impressive dial and front panel. The much-refined circuit used two 6K7's in the r.f. stages, a 6L7 mixer, a 6J7 oscillator, three 6K7's in the i.f., a 6Q7 second detector and first audio, a 6K7 and 6H6 as AVC amplifier and rectifier, two 6C5's in push-pull driving two 6L6's in the output, and two 5Z3 rectifiers. In addition, the receiver had a volume-expander using a 6L7, 6C5 and a 6H6. A 6G5 Tuning-eye tube replaced the meter used in previous models.

## The History of McMurdo Silver, Inc. by Richard Majestic

Starting in the nineteen twenties and continuing through the forties, many an old-time radio man can recall the numerous technical articles written by McMurdo Silver. Today, a few radio collectors are fortunate enough to have a gleaming chrome-plated Masterpiece receiver tucked away in their hoard of early wireless and home entertainment antiquity. Even now, there are still a few of those kings of the air awaiting their fate in the dusty attics and cellars of old homes. But, what of the man who designed these classic Masterpieces that once graced the formal living rooms of the affluent few who would be satisfied

with nothing short of the very best.

McMurdo Silver was born March 15, 1903, in Geneva, New York. He was the son of John Archer Silver, a professor of Ancient History at Hobart College. Radio first impressed McMurdo in 1912, when a written account of the use of "wireless telegraphy" on ships at sea came to his attention. At the same time, he also read an article about the Mexican Rurales. The Rurales were a troop of mounted police who were recruited from criminals. A

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*The*  
**MASTERPIECE**  
*of the*  
**MASTER**  
**DESIGNER**

I designed it, but I did not name it. Impartial laboratory instruments did that. They measured this receiver. Also the others it was designed to out-perform. Their verdict was... "so far ahead of anything else that comparison is utterly impossible."

Indisputable mathematical facts, therefore designated that this receiver be known as "The Masterpiece."

You will agree that it has been correctly named... when you see its performance curves.

You will KNOW it is the greatest advancement in radio since the screen grid tube... when you make a personal test of The Masterpiece side by side with all other so called "custom-built" 15-550 meter receivers.

Now... with the coming of The Masterpiece you can actually "get" foreign reception with regularity and certainty—

Now... you can have an all-wave receiver that embodies meter tuning, automatic volume control, silent tuning between stations, manual and automatic tone control and absolute freedom from cross modulation under any and all circumstances.

Now... you can enjoy a receiver having all of the above sensational features PLUS the 42 pound 12 inch Silver speaker that delivers 4 times the output of any and all other dynamic units, and that gives a tone quality not even remotely approached by competition.

Now... you can buy a receiver on which I will have personally logged three or more foreign stations outside



**The Ballantine 300 VTVM** was first introduced about 1939, and was one of the most accurate VTVMs you could buy for AC RMS and audio measurements. I recently picked up a pair of 300Es in rack mount for the ridiculous price of \$5; maybe the bird poop had something to do with the price. After a thorough cleaning I powered them slowly and let the capacitors reform a bit; after a couple of minutes the current settled down to about .3 amp per unit. I believe this to be OK as the fuses are .4 amp slo-blo. The service manual hasn't

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# The NMRCC Meeting July 9th, 2017

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are midway through 2017 and I want to thank everyone for their participation in our meetings. We have had some great club auctions, radio presentations and a fun, well-attended summer picnic. I would also like to thank members for their story submissions to our radio club newsletter! A big thanks goes out to Richard for not only consistently contributing his great stories over the many years, but for taking the time to edit, produce and distribute our great newsletter. I would really like to encourage more newsletter story participation from our members in this area to help take the load off of Richard. I'm sure you all have some great stories to share with our members here. It would be really great to hear from some new folks we have not heard from before. Sharing your radio knowledge and experiences is what makes our club enjoyable and I hope we can continue to do that through more participation in the newsletter.

If you know someone who you think would be interested in becoming a member of our club I encourage you to invite them or bring them to one of our meetings. Some of you did that on our club tour of the International Balloon Museum last month and that was great!

Thanks again for your participation and help with our auctions and I look forward to a great second half of the year!

~David Wilson

## "The Fine Things Are Always Hand Made" (EH Scott slogan)

I was going through some of my radio brochures the other day and came across a 1934 Scott brochure titled "SCOTT Custom Built Cabinets." This great depression period brochure pitches prospective customers that a chrome chassis, high-end Scott radios is built like hand made Stradivarius violin. The theme of this unique brochure was "The Fine Things Are Always Hand Made." Anyone who has owned or worked on a 1930s Scott radios knows these radios are amazingly well engineered, delivering top performance across all radio bands. Engineering and performance is what Scott hung their marketing hat on for many years in all their marketing materials. This brochure I came across, on the other hand, is a departure from that standard Scott engineering and performance marketing approach as it focuses more on cabinet craftsmanship through most of the brochure. In this piece

Scott describes how Scott cabinets are made and hand finished in painstaking detail and then they show their finished works of art page after page showcasing the many cabinet styles, all designed to accommodate one of Scott's chrome, All-Wave radio chassis.

The process used in Scott's cabinets explains why many of their cabinets have held up so well over the years. Scott would first sand their cabinet wood areas, apply water base stain, then filler, and sand the cabinet again. Then each cabinet had three coats of white shellac applied with sanding between each coat. The Shellac was then allowed several days to dry. Consoles were then given 4 coats of high quality lacquer, after a third coat of lacquer, the finish was rubbed out with very fine Pumice stone and oil. Then cleaned and the forth and final coat of lacquer was applied. The final coat on each Scott cabinet was then cleaned and let dry for several days before it's went through a final phase of rubbing and polishing process. <sup>SEP</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

I used a similar finishing process to the Scott process described above on the my Zenith 1000Z Stratosphere radio cabinet, except I did not use a Pumice stone with oil. Instead, I wet sanded between coats with 320 then 1000 and finally with 1200 grit wet sandpaper. Water based stain was also use on my cabinet too like the old days. The shellac step helps fill the wood gain in, especially with the exotic veneers like the Carpathian Elm Burl and in detailed inlay wood areas like Zenith used on their Stratosphere cabinets.

On my 1000Z finish lacquer coats I used nitrocellulose lacquer, which is a low-drying solvent-based lacquer that contain nitrocellulose, a resin obtained from the nitration of cotton and other cellulosic materials, which were developed in the early 1920s. This lacquer eventually was heavily used on wooden products, like furniture and on musical instruments. Nitrocellulose lacquers are also used to make firework fuses waterproof. Nitrocellulose was a major improvement over earlier automobile and furniture finishes, both in ease of application and in color retention. I use the preferred method of applying this quick-drying lacquer by spraying it on with a spray gun. Interestingly enough, spray guns were developed to spray Nitrocellulose lacquers. Today, it is getting harder and harder to use Nitrocellulose lacquers in the U.S., where states like California restrict and regulate the use of certain types of lacquers. This is due to the hazardous nature of the solvent, which is

(Continued on page Three)

## NMRCC 2017 MEETINGS

- August 13th** Radio repair workshop session
- September 10th** Unusual devices to stump the experts
- October 8th** Fall Picnic (Wilson's) Field Trip to Goddard Hall-Klipsch NMSU
- November 12th** Little known radio manufacturers
- December 10th** Holiday party (Toppo's)



## NMRCC Officers for 2017

- *David Wilson: President*
- *Mark Toppo: Vice President*
- *Richard Majestic: Treasurer*
- *open Secretary*
- *open Membership*
- *Ron Monty Director*
- *Ray Trujillo Director*
- *John Anthes Director*
- *John Hannahs*
- *Richard Majestic: Newsletter Editor (President pro-tem)*

(Continued from page Two)  
 flammable and toxic. It is very hazardous to manufacture nitrocellulose. The lacquer grade of soluble nitrocellulose is closely related to the more highly nitrated form, which is used to make explosives.

I use Behlen Nitrocellulose lacquer, which is primarily made for "Stringed Instruments." This lacquer is expensive compared to other lacquers, costing about \$18 to \$22 a quart, but it is known for its hard, durable finish that's less brittle and more flexible than standard nitrocellulose based lacquers. Behlen is designed to accommodate the expansion and contraction of the

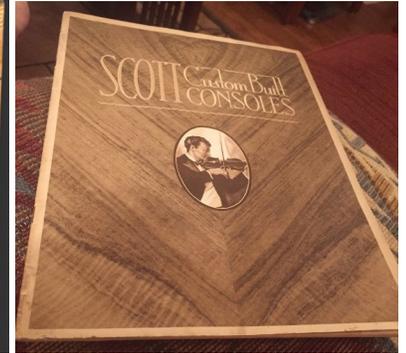


wood in "Stringed Instruments" and is also known for its better resistance to cold-checking and scuffs. It comes ready to spray with no thinning required, for faster finish build-up in multiple coats. I use the Behlen reducer in all my spraying so I can have better control in my finish coat outcomes.

Mohawk is also a good Nitrocellulose lacquer for radio cabinet finish work and runs about \$13 a quart.

So, if you are into replicating the type of finish found on the high-end radios of the 1930s, the 1934 Scott brochure lays it out

on how it was done. I hope by sharing my cabinet finishing methods along with Scott's here I have given you an idea of how you can get that same kind of authentic, original looking finish on your radio today. ~David Wilson



Zenith 1000z 25-tube

EH Scott brochure



The meeting theme was Catalin-Bakelite-plastic radios here are some of the member's examples

# The History of McMurdo Silver, Inc. by Richard Majestic

(Continued from page Seven)

After World War 11, McMurdo Silver opened a new company under his name in Connecticut where he manufactured a few very small receivers (models 800, 801, 801B, 802, and U-17). The main line of the Connecticut company was a group of test instruments which included the McMurdo Silver Model 900 VOMAX vacuum-tube voltmeter. McMurdo Silver allegedly committed suicide in circa 1948 and this marked the end of the era.

~R Majestic

At the right of this view of Dr. Greenleaf Whittier Pickard's transmission phenomena observation post at Portsmouth Navy Yard is seen the first non-plug-in coil all wave super-heterodyne—designed by my laboratories. Dr. Pickard reports eminently satisfactory results from this receiver.



**Irving Rosenow**  
Majestic 776 "Lido" (1933)  
Majestic 886 "Park Avenue" (1933)  
Majestic 161 (1934)  
Zenith 809 (1935)  
Zenith 829 (1935)  
Zenith 835 (1935)

## THE STORY OF THE "PARK AVENUE"

Majestic's parent company, Grigsby-Grunow headquartered in Chicago, wanted to tie in with the "modernistic" theme of their hometown 1933-1934 Chicago World's Fair. Grigsby-Grunow hired Irving Rosenow and his Chicago industrial design firm, Rosenow & Co. to conceive and design these modernistic cabinets.

In the summer of 1933, the Majestic Park Avenue, Lido, Ritz and Riviera models were introduced. Small by console/floor model standards, these four radically different and now famous modernistic cabinet designs headlined Majestic's 1934 "Smart Set" radio model line.

Sales were outstanding. Rosenow and Co., were a hit! They ended up designing the next series of Majestic radio cabinets, most of which offered chrome or aluminum grilles including the model 161 and 174.

Everything changed when Grigsby-Grunow was forced into bankruptcy in mid-1934.

Ironically, Zenith who had a long standing feud with Grigsby-Grunow over previous business dealings, snatched up Rosenow & Co., who immediately designed for Zenith, their 1935 chrome grille radio cabinet models 809, 829 and 835.

As for the design genius of Irving Rosenow.....it was not to be seen again. He perished in an auto accident a year and a half later, driving home to Chicago after unveiling his latest and sadly, his last designs....refrigerators for Stewart-Warner.

\*The above story from a eBay sale by majestic1, his parents purchased the sale 'Park Ave' in 1933. The Park Ave to the right is mine.



# The Ballantine 300E VTVM by John Estock



arrived yet.

One had a newer capacitor probably installed in the '70s or '80s; a bit unusual as these VTVMs were made in the early '60s. This should have been my first clue. The VTVM on the left appeared to function accurately but the right one would display a full scale reading on the 300 volt range with only 30 volts input; the knob was in the correct position. I thought it must be an attenuator problem. Must be something open, like a precision resistor or switch contact; Ballantine used glass-encased resistors that were still within spec. Soldering was fine. I found a couple of wires in the power supply circuit that had come loose, but re-soldering them made no difference. Time for comparison readings--all sections of the power supply were accurate voltage-wise. I then started resistance readings to ground and found the meter rectifier board had some differences; the one replaced capacitor on the good VTVM had much higher readings; I discovered that a metal mounting bracket had worn through the plastic on a capacitor, shorting the case to ground. New caps installed.



One problem I did have: I used Tarn-X to clean one of the range switches when I thought the problem was a poor connection and afterwards the meter would jump when changing ranges. Tarn-X is nasty stuff and needs to be completely removed from electronic parts, especially in high impedance and high gain circuits; never use it in high voltage circuits. I used carburetor cleaner, which will destroy some plastic and paint, to removed the residue; blow drying with a compressor or letting it sit for a day is also essential.



I re-stuffed all the electrolytics and these meters are ready for another 54 years of service. They are incredibly accurate; they have a flat response from 30Hz to 100kHz, and only 1dB down at 10Hz and .4dB down at 20Hz. They are supposed to be accurate to 250kHz, but the only accurate audio generator I have, a Krohn-Hite 4025R, stops at about 100kHz.

~John Estock

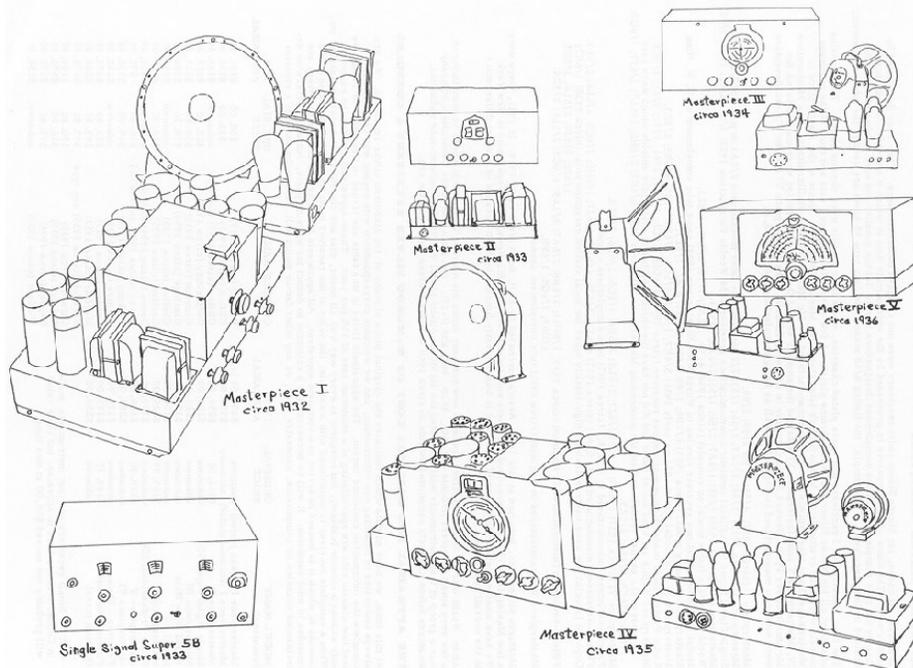
# The History of McMurdo Silver, Inc. by Richard Majestic

rope attached to a tree limb was put around the criminal's neck and he was placed on a horse. The executioner stood with a whip, ready to strike the horse and asked the criminal if he wished to become a Rurale or to be hung. The answer was invariably Si! Si! (Yes!).

McMurdo's earliest "wireless" experiment combined information from both articles which he read. The next day, the family cook heard a series of unearthly yells coming from the back yard. A young Mexican boy with his hands tied behind him had been plated astride a saw-horse. A very heavy rope had been connected between his neck and a limb of a tree above him. He was calling upon all the saints known to him in near unintelligible Spanish. Next to him stood one of the "Silver Gang" asking loudly if he wanted to join or die. In anticipation of the reply, the executioner held the nozzle of a length of garden hose in one hand. Some distance away, at the other end of the hose, stood McMurdo in an old wash boiler which was supposed to be a ship at sea. Thus, the executioner could speak through the garden hose to the "judge" (McMurdo) who could, in turn, pass sentence on the victim. The analytical mind of McMurdo had reasoned that communication with ships could only be accomplished through a long rubber hose, since no one could shout several thousand miles.

At the age of 26, he received a manufacturers' license from the Radio Corporation of America, General Electric, Westinghouse, and American Telephone & Telegraph Company to manufacture receivers under the famous 'pooled patents'. This license was normally issued only to large, long established firms and a minimum payment of \$100,000.00 per year was required as compensation for the use of these combined patents.

McMurdo Silver's Interest caused him to work without thought of time- his curiosity caused him to surmount every obstacle to learn. In 1929, A. Henry an employee wrote, "If the humblest of his employees wishes to tell Silver that his decision upon a subject is wrong, he will listen attentively and change his mind in a flash if the arguments advanced are better than those on which his original decision was based." The accuracy of McMurdo's instantaneous decision was a by-word with his associates.



- Masterpiece I (circa 1932) 4/58; 7/56; 2/45; 2/80.
- Masterpiece II (circa 1933) 5/58; 1/2A7; 2/56; 1/53; 2/2B6; 1/5Z3 – later models used 2/2A3 in place of 2/2B6.
- Single Signal Super 5B (official amateur communications receiver 1934 Worlds Fair) (circa 1933) 5/58; 2/56; 1/47; 1/80.
- Masterpiece III (circa 1934) 5/58; 1/2A7; 2/56; 1/53; 2/2A5; 1/5Z3.
- World Wide Nine (table model or console) (circa 1934) 4/58; 1/2A7; 1/55; 2/2A5; 1/5Z3.
- Model 5C (communications receiver similar to World Wide Nine) (circa 1934) same tube complement as W. W. Nine.
- Masterpiece IV early model (circa 1935) 6/6D6; 1/85; 3/76; 1/6B7; 6/42; 2/5Z3.
- Masterpiece IV late model (circa 1935 or early 1936) 5/6K7; 1/6L7; 5/6C5; 1/6B7; 1/85; 4/6B5; 2/5Z3.
- Radio Professional model 5D communications receiver (circa 1935) 4/6D6; 1/6C6; 1/6B7; 1/41; 1/76; 1/42; 1/5Z3.
- Masterpiece V (this set used metal tubes and did not have the chrome or bright metal tube shields which were used on most of the earlier models and on the preceding Masterpiece V (circa 1936) 6/6K7; 2/6H6; 2/6L7; 1/6J7; 1/6Q7; 1/6G5; 3/6C5; 2/6L6; 2/5Z3.
- Masterpiece VI (circa 1937) 5/6K7; 5/6JS; 2/6J7; 2/6L7; 2/6B8; 1/6G5; 2/6L6; 2/5Z3.
- Fourteen-Sixteen (manufactured in U.S.A.) (circa 1937) tube complement unknown.
- Fifteen-Seventeen (manufactured in U. S. A. ) (circa 1937) 4/6K7; 3/6JS; 1/6L7; 1/6J7; 1/6H6; 1/6G5; 2/6L6; 2/5Z3.
- Orpheon (special low sensitivity wide-band high-fidelity tuner for local station reception only) (circa 1938) 1/6K7; 2/6J5; 1/6Q7; 2/6L6; 1/5Z3.
- Fifteen-Seventeen (manufactured in England) (circa 1939) 1/SP41; 1/6A8; 4/6K7; 3/L63; 1/6C8; 2/6L6; 2/5Z4; 1/D63; 1/6G5; 1/6F8.
- Masterpiece VI (manufactured in England) (circa 1939) tube complement unknown.

All good things seem to come finally to an end, and so it was with Silver Marshall with the onslaught of the depression. Silver-Marshall faded away and McMurdo Silver established a laboratory under his own name in late 1932. This was the beginning of the McMurdo Silver classic time period. The first Masterpiece I sets (brass plated chassis) were probably hand made by McMurdo Silver and his associates.

Later models (chrome plated) were manufactured for Silver by Hallicrafters. The Masterpieces IV, V, and VI were manufactured by Howard Radio Company.

*Not much of any history has been written about Silver Marshall Company, except that McMurdo's mother formed the company and funded the com-*

*pany and McMurdo worked there but at what capacity is unknown. His mother fired McMurdo in 1930-31 when he a year later formed his own manufacturing company which is the two page ad I sent you.*

*The information I speculate was that Silver Marshall obtained the license and McMurdo tried to used it in 1932 with the introduction of the Master Piece II (2) but he used Hallicrafters license and manufacturing for that radio. The Master Piece I (1) is impossible to find and Brathwaite has one, but it might be the prototype. Silver Marshall radios were almost always made from sheet brass or brass plated steel. In a brochure book I have, the Master Piece II (2) was*

# The History of McMurdo Silver, Inc. by Richard Majestic

*McMurdo's first product from his new Company 1933.*

In November of 1933, the Masterpiece II was introduced as the "official general coverage receiver for the Byrd Antarctic Expedition". The Masterpiece III was introduced in 1934, followed by the Masterpiece IV in 1935 The Masterpiece V in 1936, and finally, the Masterpiece VI in 1937.

From 1933 to 1938, several lesser sets were produced, but none were as grand as the Masterpiece series.

In November of 1938, McMurdo Silver, Inc., folded and the company, assets were purchased by E. H. Scott. Silver joined the engineering Staff of E. I. Guithman, where he designed and developed a very interesting small communications receiver. During World War II, he was employed by Lear Aviation. After the war, he again formed his own company, this time in Hartford, Connecticut. This company manufactured a few receivers, but the main product was electronic test gear.

McMurdo Silver allegedly committed suicide in 1948. All that remains today is a few of his beautiful classic radio receivers and his numerous articles which were published throughout the golden age of radio.

## McMurdo Silver Receivers

In almost all cases, McMurdo Silver radio receivers were not assigned model numbers. They are designated by names only. The name of each receiver is preceded by the approximate date in which it was first manufactured, then by the tube complement.

Tube complement designations herein list the quantity and type number of each tube utilized in each receiver. For example, the listing 4/58 means that four type 58 tubes are used in the tube complement.

The first Masterpiece receivers had brass plated chassis, while later models were chrome plated. The chassis of almost all, McMurdo Silver sets were

chrome plated. A few of the Masterpiece sets and most of the prototype models were hand crafted in McMurdo Silver's laboratory, McMurdo Silver, Inc.

Some of the Masterpiece I, Masterpiece II and Masterpiece III sets were manufactured for McMurdo Silver by Hallicrafters. The Masterpiece IV, Masterpiece V and Masterpiece VI sets and the smaller sets of the same time period were manufactured for McMurdo Silver by the Howard Radio Company in Chicago, Illinois. The Masterpiece VI and the Fifteen-Seventeen were evidently manufactured in England as well as being manufactured in the U. S. A.

McMurdo Silver, Inc. went bankrupt in late 1938. Assets purchased by E. H. Scott circa early 1939. In 1941, there were a few Masterpiece VI and Fifteen-Seventeen sets sold (advertised in Radio News) by Davega Radio in New York. We have what we believe to be one of these and it was evidently finished by Scott because of several differences in the overall appearance.

## The Appraisal and Original Cost of McMurdo Silver Receivers and Consoles (1978 data)

At this time, we have no data which indicates the original price of many of the McMurdo Silver receivers. We are always interested in obtaining new information, and we welcome correspondence with anyone who can help us complete the information contained herein. The appraisals listed in this table are issued in December of 1978. We feel that classic sets are appreciating at a minimum rate of 15% per year. These appraisals are for the receivers only without a console (cabinet), but complete in every way with all knobs, dial and control escutcheons, speakers, etc. When a complete receiver is considered with a console, the value of the receiver must be added to the value of the console in which it is housed to arrive at a complete appraisal. All appraisals listed herein are for receivers and consoles in mint condition. It will be necessary for a collector to deduct for missing parts, rusted or otherwise deteriorated chassis or components, excessive wear, or any other factor which will reduce the value of a receiver.

MODEL NAME (receiver)	ORIGINAL PRICE	1978 APPRAISAL	2012 Est. VALUE
Masterpiece I (brass plated)	unknown	\$400.00 (rare)	\$5,500.00
Masterpiece I (chrome plated)	unknown	\$350.00	\$3,500.00
Masterpiece II	\$161.06	\$250.00	\$2,500.00
Single Signal Super 5B	unknown	\$200.00	\$550.00
Masterpiece III	unknown	\$225.00	\$2,500.00
World Wide Nine	unknown	\$150.00	
Model 5C	unknown	\$150.00	\$500.00
Masterpiece IV	\$169.75	\$225.00	\$2,000.00
Radio Professional 5D	unknown	\$175.00	\$4,000.00
Masterpiece V	\$229.00	\$200.00	\$7,500.00
Masterpiece VI	unknown	\$200.00	\$7,000.00
Fourteen - Sixteen	unknown	\$175.00	\$2,000.00
Fifteen - Seventeen	\$149.75	\$175.00	\$2,500.00
Orpheon (rare)	unknown	\$250.00	

*(Continued on page Four)*



**NEW MEXICO RADIO COLLECTORS CLUB**

**New Mexico Radio Collectors Club**

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FOR INFORMATION CHECK THE INTERNET  
<http://www.newmexicoradiocollectorsclub.com/>



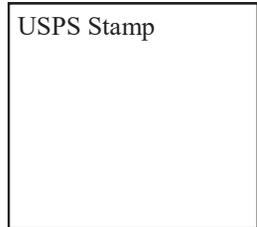
*The New Mexico Radio Collectors Club is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 in order to enhance the enjoyment of collecting and preservation of radios for all its members.*

*NMRCC meets the second Sunday of the month at The Quelab at 680 Haines Ave NW , Albuquerque NM Tailgate sale at 1:00PM meetings start at 2:00 pm. Visitors Always Welcomed.*

**NMRCC NEWSLETTER**

THIS PUBLICATION IS THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW MEXICO RADIO COLLECTORS CLUB. INPUT FROM ALL MEMBERS ARE SOLICITED AND WELCOME ON 20<sup>TH</sup> OF THE PRECEDING MONTH. RICHARD MAJESTIC PRO-TEMP NEWSLETTER EDITOR, SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS IN WORD FORMAT, PICTURES IN \*.JPG FORMAT TO: [RMAJESTIC@MSN.COM](mailto:RMAJESTIC@MSN.COM)

USPS Stamp



1933 McMurdo Silver Masterpiece II in a custom cabinet that the seller claimed was original to the Masterpiece II but I can only find a similar cabinet from by Silver Marshal sold in 1931



1936 McMurdo Silver Masterpiece V on the Carlton bass-reflex cabinet with the original 18" Jensen loudspeaker. I purchased this radio at Estes in 2009.

