

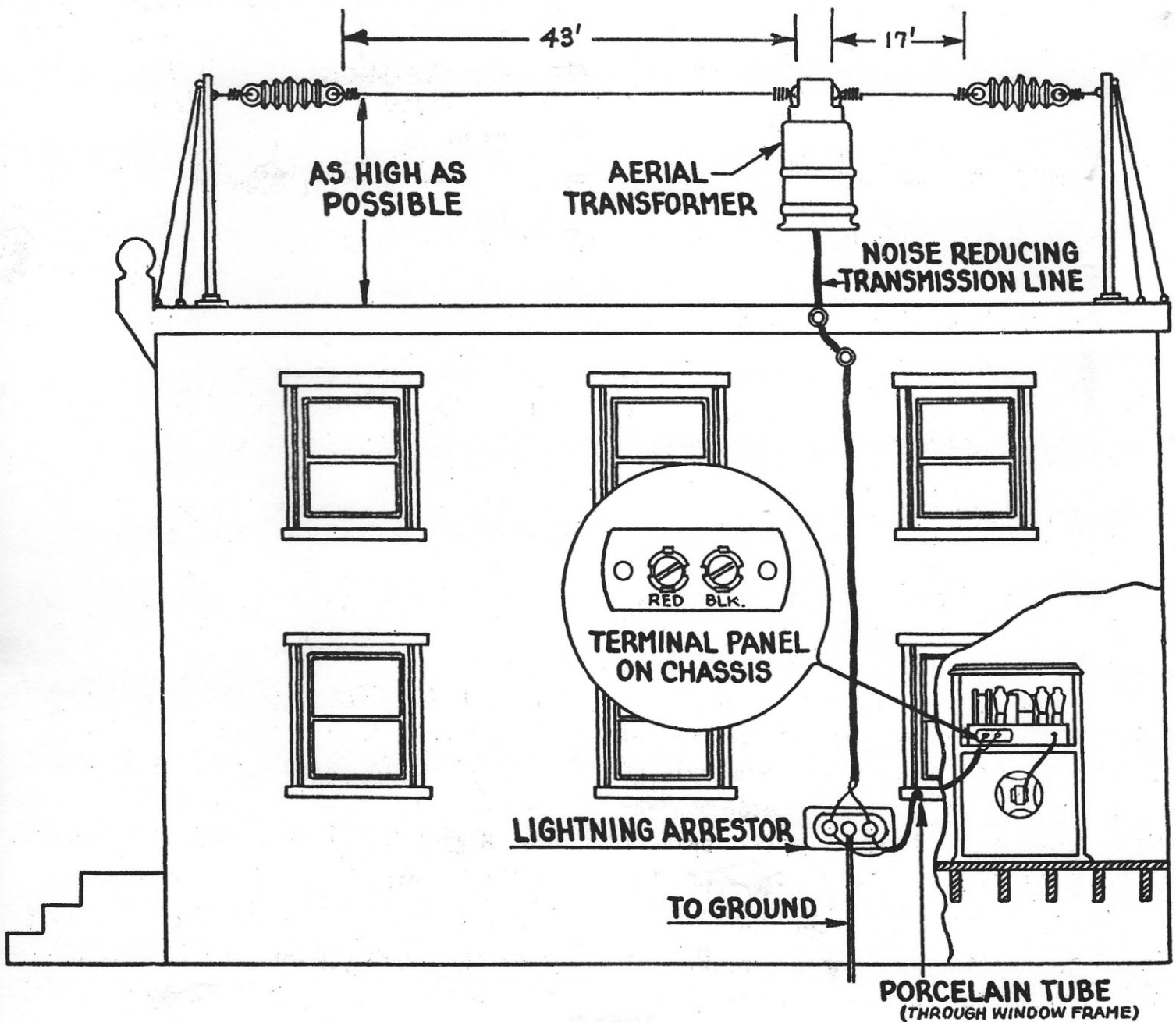
2016 PDF edition

Old Familiar Strains

a newsletter for collectors of radio strain insulators and related items

Volume 8 No. 3

June, 2001



Hopewell Insulators and the Airgaps

By Dan Howard

While I don't have a lot of information about these insulators, they are so neat looking that I wanted to put together a short article, in hopes that someone will write back with "the rest of the story."


I believe that Hopewell insulators were made in Hopewell, NJ. According to a mid-1920's Montgomery Ward catalog (where these prints came from), the insulators are constructed from hard rubber. The examples that I've seen range in color from a honey brown to a mica gray color.


Though I haven't seen one in person, the air gap insulators appear to have been molded in one piece, with an arrangement that resembles two dog bone insulators spaced slightly apart. Aside from the places where they are joined in middle, it appears that a 1/2" (or so) gap separates the insulator throughout its length. Though it is not clear from the picture, I have to believe that the insulators were joined at the ends as well, simply for strength if for no other reason.

Hopewell units are often embossed with the company's name. They may also carry a part number. My 6" dog bone is embossed Hopewell No. 193. I also have a couple of the small insulators with screw-eye ends that are embossed Hopewell but without a part number. Unfortunately the part numbers in the ads are Ward's own and have no apparent tie-in with Hopewell's system.

Insulators

We are here introducing a new line of insulators for radio purposes which were produced after careful study and experiments. The material used is the most satisfactory, moderately priced material for the purpose and has rubber as a base. Tough and durable. No shellac is used. Has a high melting point (360° F.) and the dielectric strength is very high. Not affected by acids, water, or any ordinary atmospheric conditions. A particular feature of these insulators is that, with the exception of 63 J 6616 and 63 J 6618, there is no metal whatever used in their construction. This makes for greater strength and better resistance to the weather.


63 J 6610—Insulator for small aerial. Length over all, 4 inches. Flash over voltage, 35,000 volts. Shp. wt., 4 ounces. Two for..... **18¢** 

 A popular style of round insulator with metal loops for holding wire.

63 J 6616—Length, 3 inches. Tensile strength, 250 pounds. Flash over voltage, 28,000 volts. Shipping weight, 4 ounces..... **17¢**


63 J 6618—Length over all, 3 3/4 inches. Tensile strength, 350 pounds. Flash over voltage, 42,000 volts. Shipping weight, 4 ounces..... **20¢**

A rugged, solid type of insulator for longer aeriels.


63 J 6612—Length over all, 5 1/2 inches. Tensile strength, 350 pounds. Flash over voltage, 40,000 volts. Shipping weight, 8 ounces..... **36¢** 

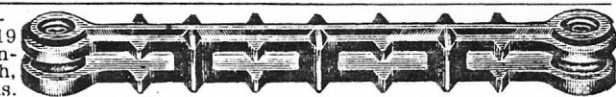
63 J 6614—Length over all, 8 1/2 inches. Tensile strength, 1,000 pounds. Flash over voltage, 90,000 volts. Shipping weight, 1 1/4 pounds. Each..... **66¢**

Air Gap Type Insulators

In this type insulator, air gaps have been interposed between live parts, thus imposing particular stress on the air and preventing any localized heating. This greatly builds up the electrical strength of the insulator and in thus preventing hot spots, eliminates possible mechanical failure. 

63 J 6620—Length, 4 inches. Tensile strength, 750 pounds. Flash over voltage, 37,000 volts. Shipping weight, 1 1/2 pounds..... **37¢**

63 J 6622—Length, 7 3/4 inches. Tensile strength, 1,200 pounds. Flash over voltage, 72,000 volts. Shp. wt., 2 1/2 pounds..... **91¢** 

63 J 6624—Length, 19 inches. Tensile strength, 1,200 pounds. 

Flash over voltage, 165,000 volts. The ideal type of insulator to use for transmitting aeriels and is a necessity for C W. transmission. **\$2.80**

Philco and Fil-Ko Insulators and Arresters

By Dan Howard

As mentioned in the last issue, Philco (The Philadelphia Storage Battery Company) purchased knife switches from Heinemann in the early 1920's¹. They also sold their own brand of antenna insulators and lightning arresters.

The DX Instrument Company sold the "Fil-Ko" line of radio parts in the 1920's. I don't know if "Fil-Ko" was an original name, or an attempt to mimic Philco's well-known mark. In the spirit of fair play, we'll give both companies a good look in this article.

Fil-Ko Lightning Arresters

Phillip Drexler recently sent me information on the Fil-Ko lightning arrester. This is another of the 1920's "better-mousetrap" designs that we've profiled over the years. Manufacturers came up with many novel concepts during this period, few of which really caught on.

The Fil-Ko lightning arrester consists of a tubular bakelite body that is topped with an aluminum cap. The unit measures about 4-3/4" long overall, including a 1-3/8" cap. The bakelite body is 3/4" in diameter and the cap is about 1-1/2". The double Fahnestock clip at the top of the unit is used to connect to the radio and the antenna. The ground connection is made at the bottom.

In addition to the arrester's paper label, the aluminum cap has

stamped-in markings "Fil-Ko Radio Lightning Arrester."

According to the information on Phillip's box, the aluminum top cap serves to "prevent soot, smoke and moisture film leakage of antenna impulses, which causes weak or noisy signals."

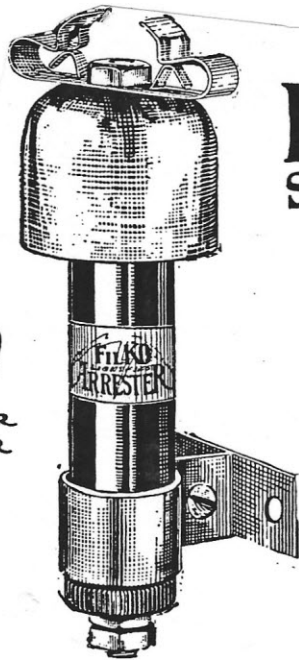
Fil-Ko ads date from mid-1924 to early 1927. The actual source of the arrester is a little clouded. Phillip's information gives the manufacture as S.R. Hipple of Williamsport, PA. Ads that I've found for the arrester show the manufacturer as DX Instrument Company of Harrisburg, PA (about 80 miles south of Williamsport). The January, 1927, *Radio News* included a "product of merit" article about the arrester, listing S.R. Hipple as the manufacturer.

Besides the lightning arrester, DX Instrument ads list other Fil-Ko brand radio parts including variable resistors and an off-on switch.

Restoring a Fil-Ko Arrester

I consider this arrester to be rather rare, so I wasn't going to quibble when I had a chance to swap for an incomplete unit a few years ago. The unit was missing its top connector, the mounting clamp, and the paper label. A standard double-ended Fahnestock clip from the junk box replaced the missing connector. The only necessary modification was enlarging the mounting hole slightly to make it pass over the top bolt on

¹ See OFS 4/01 pg 14.



\$150

**AT YOUR
DEALER.**

FIL-KO-LIGHTNING ARRESTER

SCIENTIFICALLY CORRECT

Prevents Leakage Losses

This arrester with its bell-shaped shield will positively keep dry and not gather dust or other conductive matter which causes short-circuits from aerial to ground. This makes certain that all radio impulses reaching the aerial pass through your set, insuring maximum reception. Insulation is of polished Bakelite—the best, most moisture-proof dielectric. It is hermetically sealed—no dirt or moisture can reach the gap. Rugged mounting bracket keeps FIL-KO-Lightning Arrester rigid under all conditions.

the arrester.

To my delight, I had a suitable Fil-Ko ad and was able to scale-up a paper label. After enlarging the picture on the copier, I copied it onto a buff/brown paper that looked “right” to me and glued it on.

An adjustable chrome clip, originally intended to hold a broomstick, is used to mount the arrester. Someday, when I’m more ambitious, I’ll try my hand at fashioning a more appropriate mounting from brass strap.

Philco Radio Antennas

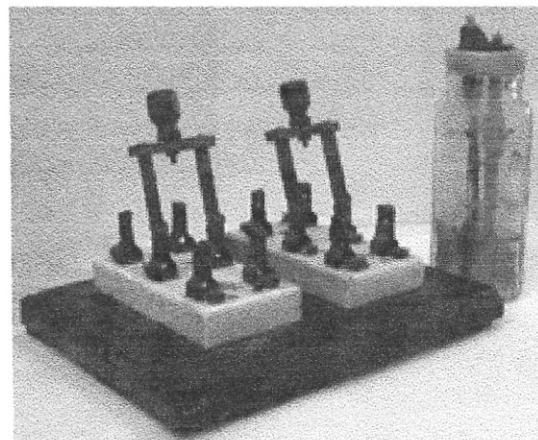
Owners of Ford automobiles may already know that Philco made car radios for Ford for many years. Before that, they made batteries, among other things.

Philco History

Starting around 1900, Philco, the Philadelphia Storage Battery

Company, manufactured wet-cell batteries for autos and radios.

The glass bottle in the photo is a single 1-1/2 volt Philcotron cell. When in use, it would have been filled with liquid acid, like modern car batteries. The Philco “charging panel” (with Sensory knife switches²) was used to switch the battery charger in and out of the circuit. Both items would have been a common sight in living rooms during the “good old days” of radio.



² See OFS 4/01 pg. 14.

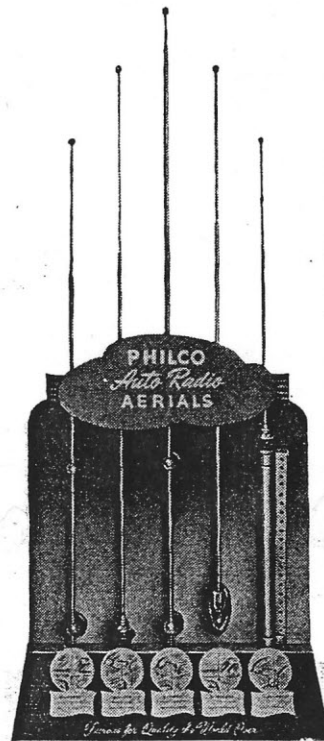
In the late 1920's, Philco began producing AC radios, as it looked like the market for radio batteries would soon disappear. Philco's legendary line of round-top "cathedral" radios were huge sellers during the Great Depression. Considered by many to be the epitome of what an "antique radio" should look like, the Philco cathedral came in a number of models to suit individual tastes and budgets.

Short wave listening was popular during this period and to draw in distant stations it was necessary to have a good antenna. Philco solved the problem in two ways. First, by jumpering terminals on the back of early Philcos, the owner could use the house wiring for an antenna³. Fleron, Brach, and others sold outboard accessory devices that did the same thing. Second, for users that had the room for an outdoor antenna, Philco sold lightning arresters, antenna kits and its own unique style of strain insulators.

Beginning in the 1930's, Philco manufactured radios for Ford, and Ford eventually purchased the company. Philco accessory car antennas were also sold separately. This ad is from 1947.

A bit of trivia - Philco's connection with Ford is very well known. But did you know that the company made radios for other manufacturers as well? While researching this article I found that Philco car radios were also used in: Graham, Hupmobile, Lincoln, Nash, Packard, Pierce-Arrow, Plymouth, Studebaker,

³ Philco Radio pg. 11.



**PHILCO 5-UNIT
AUTO AERIAL DISPLAY**

Shows a selection of 5 popular models. Smartly styled. Occupies minimum space. Permits customer to see them *all* and make his choice. Helps you sell-up. Get it FREE from your Philco Distributor.

Chrysler, Willys-Overland, Reo, and Dodge vehicles!

Philco introduced the first telescoping rod car antenna in 1934⁴. Before this, car radios were used with various types of running board antennas or roof antennas. In 1954, they introduced the first commercially made all-transistor car radio⁵.

Another bit of Philco trivia – their home radios in the 1940's and 1950's were often called Transistones – a name that became almost

⁴ www.olderadio.com

⁵ www.olderadio.com

synonymous with Philco. Do you know where the name came from? According to Ron Ramirez, Philco bought the Transitone Automobile Radio Company in 1930. The Philco Transitone was their trademark for car radios until 1938. The first home sets to actually carry the Philco Transitone mark were not introduced until 1940⁶.

Although it doesn't hold for all Philco products (especially the antennas), one handy feature of the company's product numbers is that the first two digits often indicate the year of manufacture.

Philco's Insulators, Arresters, & Kits

Though Philco manufactured radios and accessory items, I believe that the company's lightning arresters and insulators were all "private label" items made by others.

Insulators

Based on appearance, I assume that Philco purchased its insulators and arresters from a variety of sources. Philco porcelain insulators and arresters are found with white and black glazes. The company also sold the common glass corkscrew strains with some of its antenna kits.

One probable source of the company's porcelain insulators is The Cook Pottery Company of Trenton, NJ (See OFS 12/96). The black-glazed gray porcelain nail knobs that came in my Philco

antenna kit are clearly marked Wedge CP Co, a Cook trademark. The arrester included with the kit is made of identical gray porcelain and is also glazed black. Previously I had attributed this gray porcelain to the Star Porcelain Company who called it "Nu-Blac." I am now at a loss to explain how Star's cross-town competitor, Cook, made an identical product, but they apparently did so.

Philco's black eggs are also made of Nu-Blac (or Cook's equivalent product). They are noteworthy not only for their striking black glaze, but also for their large size. Some eggs are marked with Philco's recess-embossed part number. Others are completely unmarked. Neither style carries a manufacturer's marking.

Arresters

Philco's "non-doublet-doublet" arrester (page 10) always gets comments. **Dick Mackiewicz** purchased a number of these units in the early nineties. Like the standard 27-7741 arrester, they are finished and marked in the normal way. There is even a hole where the third binding post should have gone. Though one of these could be "manufactured" by taking an arrester apart, I've seen several obviously new-old-stock examples with the filler material in tact. Most likely manufactured in the late depression, it was apparently easier to make two-post arresters from doublets rather than designing a new porcelain casting.

Philco had a strong presence in the television market beginning in the

⁶ www.philcoradio.com

1940's. They partnered with JFD Manufacturing (see *OFS 4/00*) sometime in the 1950's to produce a private-label twin-lead lightning arrester. JFD manufactured similar items for Philco's competitors including Montgomery Wards.

Kits

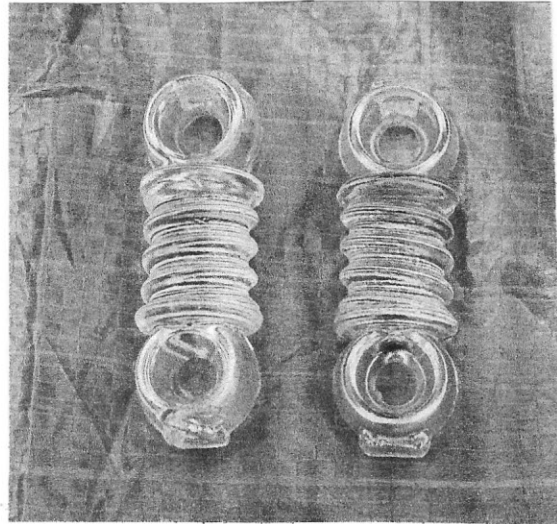
Several of my black eggs were purchased from a man who installed outdoor radio antennas at elementary schools around Oregon. Mr. Johnson's "spare parts box" contained Philco arresters and black eggs, white porcelain wiring tubes, and miscellaneous parts that were left over from his school antenna projects. All were Philco parts, apparently.

In the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, Philco sold "fully assembled" antenna kits for homeowners and farmers. Usually, one strain insulator was soldered to an end of the antenna. The other insulator was furnished loose.

As shown in the antenna kit section, some Philco kits came with small white porcelain johnny balls. These insulators are quite distinctive because they are cross-shaped when viewed from the end. Readers report that these may carry under-glaze ink "Philco" markings.

Philco antenna kits also came with the common 3" corkscrew glass insulators. Though the insulators are not marked, Knox made many like them. **Don Hutchinson** recently provided this corkscrew picture. He wrote to remind me that the

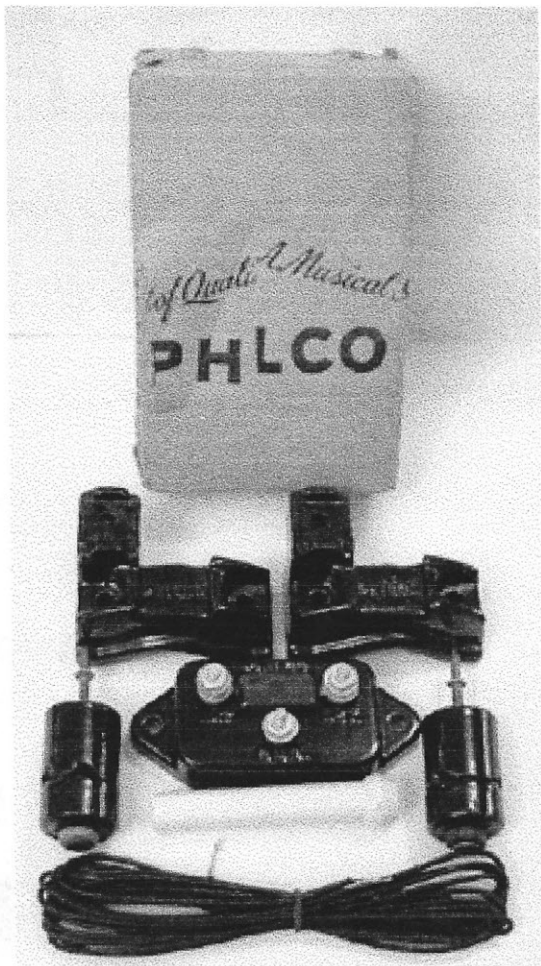
insulators come with both clockwise, and counterclockwise "threads."



I would appreciate your help in identifying a "mystery" antenna kit. While shopping at the Rochester antique radio swap, I found a Philco antenna kit lying in the weeds by the freeway right-of-way fence. I don't know if the hand-written \$1.00 price was the dealer's actual asking price, but since it was late, and we'd both spent the day in the sun, he gladly took my dollar and escaped back into the shade of his trailer.

The top of the plain brown box is stamped "Philco Part No. 40-6371." The intriguing penciled comment "Philco Aerial Mystery Control" on the side of the box is what originally got my attention.

Philco sold a wireless "mystery tuner" in the early 1940's whereby you could tune your living room console with a wireless remote from the comfort of your armchair. These wood box remotes use a telephone-dial style tuner that directed a tuning



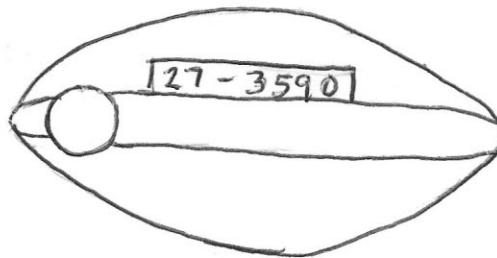
circuit inside the set. More than one collector has suggested that my antenna kit might be a receiving antenna for the console. However any such antenna was probably internal to the set. This kit is clearly intended for outdoor installation.

As shown above, the mystery kit includes a through-wall unglazed tube, two Philco nail-knobs, a 27-9184 arrester and two unknown 27-9185 castings. All of the porcelain (except for the tube) is white ceramic with black glaze. The 27-9185 castings appear to be some kind of mast clamp, however no one has been able to identify them for me. Please share your thoughts.

Strain Insulators

Corkscrew Glass Insulator - The very common 3" corkscrew glass strain was used in some of Philco's antenna kits. As pictured on page 8, Knox or another glass company probably made them.

Black Egg 27-3590 black glazed gray porcelain 2-1/2" long recess-embossed 27-3590. Made by Cook Pottery Co.? Also found unembossed.



White Egg - cross-shaped egg insulator, white glazed white porcelain, under-glaze ink marking Philco T.M. Reg., johnny ball style, but distinctly cross-shaped when viewed from the ends. (pictured on page 12 as part of the farm aerial kit)

Porcelain Aerial Insulators 27-7927 (Unknown style, listed as part of 40-5656 antenna kit - mine came with glass corkscrews)

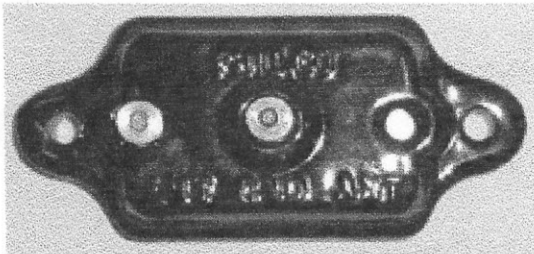
Lightning Arresters

27-7741 (1) doublet style (only two binding posts are installed – one hole left empty), 4", black glazed white porcelain

Top: embossed Philco Ant Gnd Ant (small font)

Bottom: recess embossed 27-7741 (large font), rectangular hole with brown filler.

Though this unit looks incomplete, several have been reported.

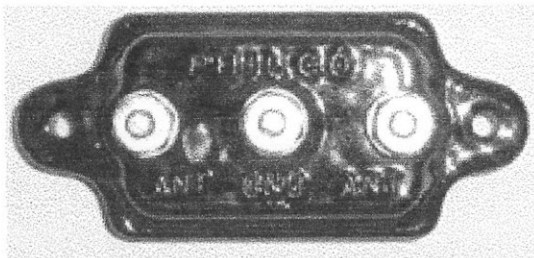


27-7741 (1) two posts

27-7741 (2) doublet style, 4", black glazed gray porcelain

Top: embossed Philco Ant Gnd Ant (large font)

Bottom: recess embossed 27-7741 (large font), rectangular hole with black filler.



27-7741 (2) large embossing

27-7741 (3) doublet style, 4", black glazed white porcelain

Top: embossed Philco Ant Gnd Ant (small font)

Bottom: recess embossed 27-7741 (small font), rectangular hole with black filler.

27-7741 (4) doublet style, 4", black glazed gray porcelain

Top: embossed Philco Ant Gnd Ant (large font)

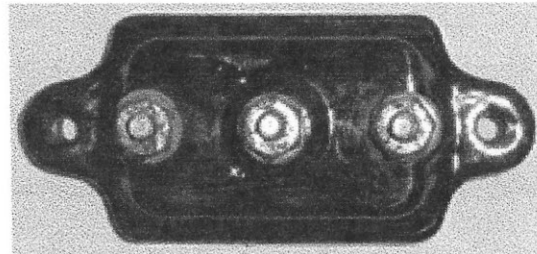
Bottom: recess embossed 27-7741 (small font), irregularly-shaped hole with brown filler.

27-7741? (5) doublet style, 4", black glazed gray porcelain

Top: no markings

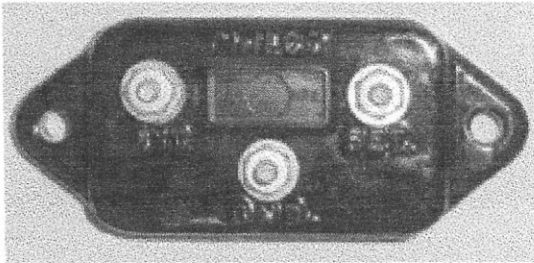
Bottom: no markings, irregularly-shaped hole with brown filler.

This is exactly the same as style 4 (without the markings).



27-7741 (5) no embossing

27-9184 doublet style, 4-5/16", black glazed white porcelain
 Top: embossed Philco Ant. Gnd. Set. (large font)
 Bottom: recess embossed 27-9194 (large font), rectangular hole with black filler.
 Molded capacitor bridges between the ant and set binding posts.

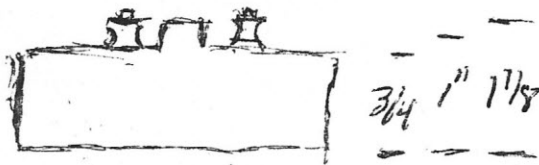


27-9184 with condenser

45-6315 two-post style, 3-1/8", white glazed white porcelain
 Top: Philco Radio Lightning Arrester, ANT, GND



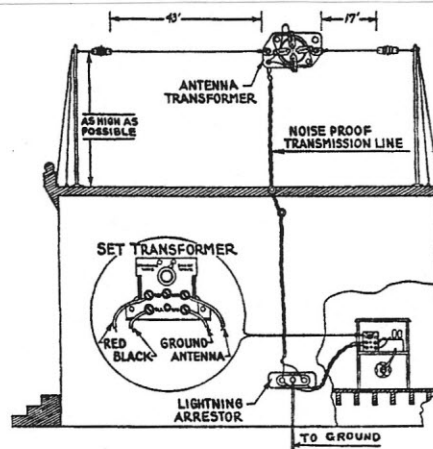
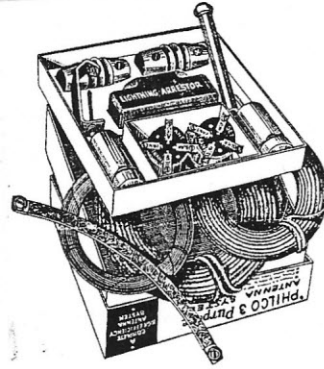
← 3 1/8 →



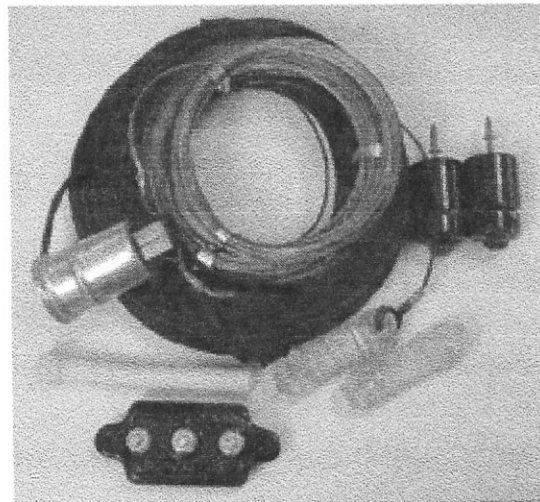
45-??91 Twin lead, green glazed porcelain, manufactured by JFD (OFS 4/00)

Antenna Kits

Circa 1935 3-Purpose Aerial



40-5656 All-Wave Antenna Kit (with or without antenna transformer)



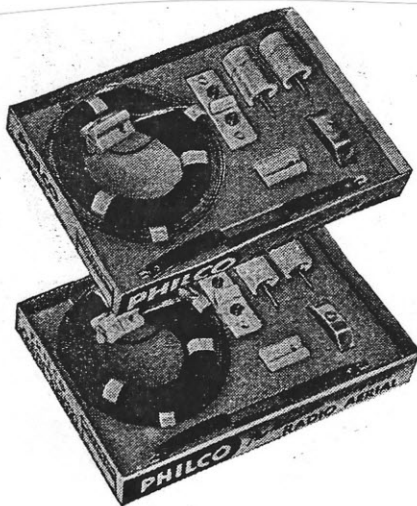
40-5656 All-wave Antenna Kit

40-6112 1938 High Efficiency Aerial
(includes aerial transformer, lightning
arrester, and tube insulator.)

40-6371 Mystery Antenna Kit
(see page 9)

45-1469 Farm Radio Aerial (includes
white cross-shaped insulators, white
arrester, and white nail-knobs.

Circa 1947 Outdoor Aerial (same as
Farm Radio Aerial)



**PHILCO
OUTDOOR AERIAL**

Everything in one package
at a sure-fire low price. For
months it's been selling
like hot cakes. Profitable!

**PHILCO
FARM AERIAL**

Another big selling package
deal. A "must" for dealers
selling in the farm areas.

FM Dipole Aerial (1947) available
with or without reflector.



**PHILCO FM
DIPOLE AERIAL**

Makes any FM radio per-
form better. Get set for the
swing to FM by featuring
your installation service with
this new Philco product.

Other products

32-1641 Aerial Transformer (short)
2-1/4" aluminum body with black
Bakelite insulator recess-embossed
Philco.

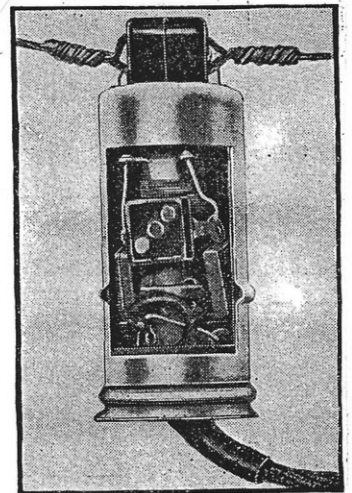
??-???? Aerial Transformer (long)
3-1/8" aluminum body with black
Bakelite insulator recess-embossed
Philco.

ALL-WAVE ANTENNA TRANSFORMER (1146)

(Philco Radio & Television Corp.)

ACCOMPANYING an assembled
all-wave antenna kit, this trans-
former is said to be much more
efficient than that of previous types
of similar make. The antenna kit
may be used with any set, but those
that have no built-in set trans-
former, will need an extra com-
panion unit. The entire outfit gives
maximum noise elimination and
efficiency on all waves.

The completely weatherproof con-
struction of the unit permits it to
be mounted outdoors, right at the
junction of the two conductors of
the dipole antenna system. The com-
plete antenna kit is available all
soldered, ready to string up.



Novel antenna transformer. (1146)

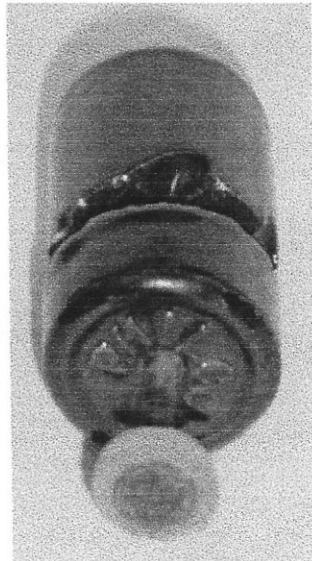
27-9185 Mast Clamp?
black glazed white porcelain
Top: embossed Philco
Bottom: recess embossed 27-185
Used with mystery antenna kit

27-7021 Porcelain Tube
4" wall tube unglazed white,
unmarked

27-7903 Nail-on knobs
black glazed gray porcelain
embossed Wedge CP Co Patd.

??-???? Nail-on knobs
black glazed white porcelain
embossed Philco.

PS W 110 Nail-on knobs
Unglazed white
(used with farm radio aerial kit)



Philco Nail Knob

Photo Credits

Pg. 2 Burnstein-Applebee pg. 48
Pg. 5 *Radio News* 8/24 pg. 219.
Pg. 6 *Radio News* 5/47 pg. 30
Pg. 8 Don Hutchinson photo
Pg. 11 Philco 1935 service notes
Pg. 11 Dick Mackiewicz notebook
Pg. 12 *Radio News* 5/47 pg. 30
Pg. 12 *Radio News* 5/47 pg. 30
Pg. 12 *Radio Craft* 10/36 pg. 223

Digital photography courtesy of
Phillip Newell, Impact Business
Solutions

Sources

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Radio Craft 10/36 pg. 223.
Phillip Drexler letter 4/23/01.
Dick Mackiewicz letters: 11/21/94,
3/20/96.
Dick Mackiewicz notebook.
"Philco ad" *Radio News* 5/47 pg. 30.
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listing.
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hardware/philco.htm](http://www.olderadio.com/archives/hardware/philco.htm)
www.philcoradio.com

Further reading

For further information, I would
highly recommend:

- ✓ Alan Douglas's book "Radio
Manufacturer's of the 1920's"
(Vol. 2)
- ✓ Ron Ramirez's book "Philco
Radio 1928-1942" (or his website
www.philcoradio.com)
- ✓ www.olderadio.com.

Each of these references takes a
different perspective on Philco's
history, and each is excellent.

5th Annual Portland Show

August 11th, 2001, Portland, OR
Dan Howard (503) 761-7799
Please call, write, or look up the details on the web (Crown Jewels, or Insulators.com). The last four have been fun. Let's do it again.

Gene Condon writes:

Regarding rod insulators – (OFS 2/01 pg. 4) – Please Dan, there are no such. Insulators must never be confused with the octagonal or round balls or the products which served strictly ornamental purposes. Even a ruby antenna arrow has some utility.

G-Line Communications

Year's ago **Bob Stahr** sent me a copy from the July, 1973 *Crown Jewels*. M. E. Boatman's pictures and article describe a wired communication system called G-Line. A signal is fed from a funnel and travels along the outside of a wire until reaching another funnel at the receiving end – most closely akin to the old tin-can-and-string method. However the G-line has been demonstrated over a distance of miles! I recently found two additional articles on the subject of G-Line communications. The June, 1974 *QST* has an interesting non-technical discussion of the phenomenon. I also have a copy of Georg Goubau's original 1951 article. If you have an interest in the subject, drop me a line, or should I say "G-line."

New Johnson Marking

Seen at a recent show – Johnson 12" insulator with black ink stamp marking Johnson 136.112.

New Porcelain Mark

Robin Harrison recently found some porcelain strains marked FCM. According to Jack Tod's *"A History of the Electrical Porcelain Industry in the United States,"* these should be products of Fernando C. Mesa Co of Irvington, NJ. I believe that this is a previously unreported mark. Robin also has a telephone bell transformer with the company's mark. Tod attributes miscellaneous wiring devices to the company.

Items Seen on Ebay

A lady in the east has had several sales that included colored glass strains. Purples and blues are generating enthusiastic bids. I understand that a cobalt blue strain recently sold in the \$400 range. Greens are right behind with a green-amber glass strain selling for over \$100 recently.

A couple weeks ago one of the blue porcelain airpocket insulators sold. Another lot included a green porcelain strain and a cobalt blue Fedco johnny ball. I don't recall seeing a blue johnny ball before.

Robin Harrison and I saw a listing for an SF Radio porcelain bar insulator. We don't know where the seller got her info that this 1940's insulator was from "San Francisco's first radio station," but someone liked it well enough to pay over \$30 for it.

The supply of plain glass strains seems to have finally caught up with demand. I'm noticing fewer excessively high bids for the more common styles.

Washington Bottle Collectors Association's Show and Sale

May 4th & 5th Enumclaw, WA
reported by Dan Howard

The Enumclaw show was enjoyable this year. **Robin Harrison** and others put together an outstanding display showing a couple dozen styles of Lima insulators. One outstanding item was a large multipart insulator in a turquoise glaze. Very nice. Other insulators in various shades of brown and mustard were real eye-catchers. Well done, gentlemen.

Gil Hedges-Blanquez found a couple of new ones for his collection. **Tim Woods** found a new-in-the-wrapper Locke WWII strain insulator.

The Bottle Collectors were running the show for the first time this year and, for whatever reason, the number of tables and displays was way down. Hopefully this great annual show will be back to full strength next year.

NIA Western Regional Show

June 1-3, Medford, OR
reported by Dan Howard

The National Insulator Association's Western Regional Show was here in Oregon this year. The Jefferson State Insulator Club hosted the event in Medford, which is just north of the California border. The club sold about 80% of the available tables, and there were more displays than I have seen in a long time.

OFS readers in attendance included **Steve Watkins, Gil Hedges-**

Blanquez, Ed Sewell, Carol McDougald, and Tim Woods. Pat Patocka brought along greetings from his wife **Shirley**, who was unable to attend.

Although there were quite a few strains for sale, the talk of the day was a black glass strain that sold early on Friday for only \$1.00!

There were two strain insulator displays. A collector from California won the *Crown Jewels* pennant and first place - porcelain for his johnny ball display. I competed in the specialty category with a display of E F Johnson insulators which featured the company's complete line-up of strains, spreaders, feed thru's and standoffs for 1942. Starting with a 1942 company ad, I laid the insulators out exactly like the picture. The display was a real joy to assemble.

Gil's display of Mexican pin insulators was terrific. For his efforts he won first place - foreign. Later, a commemorative insulator for this year's national convention was awarded him as a door prize.

As Lisa and I were making our last good-byes on Sunday afternoon, my name was called over the PA system as the raffle winner of an aqua EC&M insulator! Now I need to make some decisions about the fate of the little aqua beauty. I'm afraid that if I leave it lying around here, it could grow into a pin insulator collection.

Where did the guy with that black glass strain insulator go???

Barkelew Update

I got the nicest letter from our newest reader, **Jim Wolfe**. Jim lives in Middletown, OH, the former home of Barkelew. Jim saw the reference to Barkelew on ICON (Insulator Collectors on the Net), sent for the April issue, and ended up joining us.

First, has anyone been able to identify the pin type insulators in the Barkelew ads? I would sure be interested to learn the #'s of the pieces, and to hear your guesses about who would have likely made them. Please let me know.

Second, Jim sent me a recent newspaper article from Middletown. Barkelew's brick factory is still standing at 1905 Columbia Ave. However it has been standing empty for a long time and has now been condemned.

Finally, the Medford show yielded some embossed Barkelew pedestals with mahogany glaze. Previous examples were unembossed. These are embossed on the top of the base "Barkelew" "No. 611." Darn, and they were new in the box, too. Life is hard! I have a couple spares – call me if you need one.

Source:

Middletown Journal 4-19-01 pg. A1 & A5. Courtesy of Jim Wolfe.

JFD Update – AT-107 Jumbo

This morning I heard those words we all love to hear, "Hey Dan, ever seen one of these?" My friend was holding up a JFD lightning arrester. The two of us, along with a dozen others were rapidly unloading a huge Ford pickup truck that showed up at our May antique radio swap meet.

When Don handed the AT-107 to me, I knew that I'd never seen one before. When the JFD article came out last April, no one reported having one of them, so I was only able to include the most minimal information.

The AT-107 is white porcelain, glazed black. It is 3" long and 2" wide. The side is embossed "JFD Television Lightning Arrester AT-107 JFD Mfg Co Inc Bklyn NY." Like most JFD arresters, the back is notched so that it can be mounted on a round TV antenna mast.

The dark rectangular spots on the top of the arrester in the picture (*OFS* 4/00 pg. 12) are actually small clear-plastic hold-down bars. A wing nut holds each bar on one end only.

The AT-107 is designed to work with open wire feed line (only), which may account for its rarity. I am sure that there was much more demand for JFD's other arresters that would work with "all" types of feed line.