



THE WE 500-SERIES: A COLORFUL HISTORY

by Russ Cowell and Paul Fassbender

500 set collectors cherish their color telephones – especially those in rare colors. Here is a brief history of the development of color sets.

In 1909, Henry Ford revolutionized the automobile industry with assembly line production and other cost-saving processes. One of these efficiencies concerned color. Ford's statement, "Any customer can have a car painted in any color he wants so long as it is black" has become legend.

For the first half of the 20th century, the Bell System and its subsidiary, Western Electric Company, pretty much followed this philosophy for telephone manufacture. Save for custom-painted colors, only available by special order beginning in 1930, Bell System telephones were "basic black."

With the advent of thermoplastic materials and their use in the housing for the 302 set, five basic colors appeared in 1941: ivory, gray-green, old rose, Pekin

red and dark blue. World War II brought a quick end to the production of telephone sets for civilian use (BSP WR-C.30.011, August 5, 1942). As the Bell System was directing its efforts to meet the demand for basic telephone service, no particular effort was expended during the post-war years to promote the sale of color sets, and their production did not resume until the late 1940s.

Since paint wears off with handling, the Bell System was clearly motivated to produce sets in colored plastic rather than painting them, to reduce maintenance costs. BSP C30.011, Issue 6 states:

When a painted part of a colored telephone set is defective the entire set shall be replaced. However, on colored plastic sets, which

are not as subject to discoloration as painted sets, individual parts may be replaced.

500 Sets Produced in 8 New Colors

A 1950 analysis of the limited production of color 302 sets revealed that 70% were ivory, 12% were green and the balance was spread among the other three colors. That same year, full-scale production began of the 500 set. The original color palette recommended for the 500-series was ivory, green, beige, red, gray, and brown. Based on input from decorating consultants and the Operating Companies, blue and yellow were soon added, and production was started in 1953.

In early 1954, limited quantities of these eight colors, plus four two-tone versions (ivory, green, gray and red), became available only for 500 and 501 type desk sets (Figure 1). Two-tone sets were black sets with the black housing replaced by a color housing. The handset, dial and cords remained black (Figure 2).

"Color Multiplies Production Problems."

This subtitle from a May 12, 1954 AT&T press release on color sets shows that the Bell System admitted to start-up challenges with color. The release points out that finding a new plastic for the handsets that would take the desired pigments to match the housings required a change from the molding process used for the G1 handsets to a new injection molding process. The new handle (coded G3) had to be redesigned with thinner walls to permit the plastic to flow rapidly and

Continued on page 8.

☞ The Lancaster Show is on for June 5-6, 2009! ☞

See page 4 for details!

In This Issue



The WE 500-series: A Colorful History

by Russ Cowell and Paul Fassbender
Page 1

The President's Column

by Jonathan Finder, M.D.
Page 2

Bell System Engineers Study Gophers

by Paul Fassbender
Page 2

Mason Show Images

Page 3

2009 TCI Spring Show

by Paul Wills
Page 4



Converting a 2500MM Set to 2500DM for Home Use

by Jonathan Finder, M.D.
Page 5

Bell Telephone Quarterly: An Intercommunicating System for Homes and Offices

by C. J. Davidson & A. Tradup
Page 6

Show Announcements

Page 10

From the Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Telephone Directory – 1951

Contributed by Wayne Junop
Page 11

Buy / Sell / Trade

Pages 11 & 12

All contents copyright 2009,
Telephone Collectors International.
May not be reproduced without permission.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A Breathtaking Work of Astonishing Genius

by Jonathan Finder, M.D., TCI President

OK, that's a little over the top, but I am very excited about the new TCI member's area. I was trying to track down a fellow member and so I went over to our new site:

[http://www.telephonecollectors.org/
memberArea/](http://www.telephonecollectors.org/memberArea/)

This site was created by Kirt Stanfield and it works like magic. You can search by first name, last name, or e-mail address. The database will give you the name, telephone number, and e-mail address of any other member you search for. The whole thing is quite secure and password protected. In order to log in, you just use your e-mail address and a password that you determine. If you scroll down, you will find every *Singing Wires*

and Bonus Pages since September 2007 (this changes yearly since we do not keep all issues on line). I found it really helpful when I wanted to check an old issue of *Singing Wires* and it was a snap to find and download. In fact, I downloaded all of these issues to my hard drive, just to have them at my fingertips. For *Switchers' Quarterly* members, these issues are also available at this same site. No longer do we have to keep issuing new passwords for the new issue of *Singing Wires*, and all you have to do is remember your own password for the site.

My heartfelt thanks to Kirt for creating this wonderful resource – just another benefit of TCI membership. Don't forget to register for the June TCI Lancaster show – I hope to see you there! ☛

Bell System Engineers Study Gophers

by Paul Fassbender

There's an entertaining article in the April 1946 Bell Laboratories Record that documents some of the havoc caused by gophers during the laying of transcontinental coax cables. In one 15-mile section examined, the outer covering had been stripped "at as many as 2,500 places ranging in length from a few inches to several feet, thus exposing the thin steel to rusting and further gopher attacks."

Bell Labs conducted a study involving encouraging captive gophers to gnaw on cable samples to help determine the best protective covering to use. With care and feeding help from the Bronx Zoo, gophers were shipped in and kept in garbage cans partially filled with soil. Cable samples were buried in the soil. The go-

phers were transferred to new cans about weekly so the samples could be retrieved and studied. It was found that "disturbing the rodents oftener than about once a week decreased the amount of their gnawing." (Can't you just see the engineers graphing gnawing vs. time?)

"Some of them began to strip the outer covering from the cable samples almost immediately and in a few weeks they had severely damaged the sheath of those not protected by steel or copper tape."

"Based on this work, ten-mil copper tape was judged to be a reasonable risk and it is being used as combination lightning and gopher protection in the Dallas-Los Angeles coaxial cable now in production." ☛

Address Change, Membership Questions, Delivery Problem?

Please contact our Membership Chairman, Gary Goff,
at membership@telephonecollectors.org or (714) 528-3561.



GREETINGS FROM MASON!

(From top:) Phones displayed by Joe Vaccaro; Mrs. Neighbor arranges her phones, which sell as quickly as she can set them out; Chicago hotel phone; Phil Schelthoff examines a green WE302.



TCI Leadership

Jonathan Finder, M.D., President '11
412-361-1888
president@telephonedcollectors.org

Paul Wills
Vice President '09, TCI Webmaster
610-384-4250
vicepresident@telephonedcollectors.org

Roger Conklin, Secretary '09
305-238-5857
secretary@telephonedcollectors.org

Russ Cowell, Treasurer '10
757-258-5308
treasurer@telephonedcollectors.org

Keith Cheshire, BOD '09
386-972-1858
phonefeline41@yahoo.com

Doug Pavlichek, BOD '10
586-790-5482
dougpav@wowway.com

John Jones, BOD '10
484 431-1908
jjones3601@yahoo.com

Gary Goff, Membership Chairman
3805 Spurr Circle, Brea, CA 92823
714-528-3561
membership@telephonedcollectors.org

Chris Mattingly, BOD '11
Switchers' Quarterly Editor
314-921-6877, Ext. 31
Fax: 314-831-3480

Doug Alderdice, BOD '11
Switchers' Quarterly Composer
716-834-2664
sqeditor@telephonedcollectors.org

Shana Davis, *Singing Wires* Editor
8407 SW 57th Ave., Portland, OR 97219
503-718-8549
editor@telephonedcollectors.org

Paul & Bev McFadden
Singing Wires Editors Emeritus
847-658-7844
singingwires@aol.com



Telephone Collectors International
3805 Spurr Circle, Brea, CA 92823
714-528-3561

2009 TCI SPRING SHOW

by Paul Wills

The 2009 Lancaster Show is only three weeks away. Hopefully, everyone has made their hotel reservations and completed their travel plans. Here are a few last-minute instructions and other information that will be helpful to all those who are joining us:

We are advertising the show in a well known antique and auction newsletter that covers eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. This should result in plenty opportunities to sell to the general public.

If you did not yet register, note that the cutoff date for registering on-line will be June 3, 2009. If you plan to register by mail, post it no later than May 26, 2009 to make sure it is received in time for the show. If you miss either date, there will

be no problem registering at the door but we cannot guarantee that any tables will still be available. (Not to mention that there wouldn't be a name tag waiting for you.)

If you still need to make hotel reservations, hotel information is available in the February and March issues of *Singing Wires*. There is no reason that anyone has to stay at the "official" show hotels, so go ahead and shop around.

The two maps shown provide directions to the three key locations:

Dinner starts at Friday, June 5, 2009 at 5:30 P.M. in our private room at the Good N' Plenty Restaurant (Map 2) in Smoketown, PA. If you didn't pre-pay, don't worry. Just show up and we can collect payment there. The worst

that could happen is that the private room would be full and you would have to eat elsewhere in the restaurant.

For those who arrive later, we also have a private room reserved from 7:30 P.M. at Doc Holliday's (Map 1, Location 2) in Lancaster. There will

be a cash bar and they have a pretty good menu for those who want a full meal or just a snack. It's easy to miss so take note: After turning left off of Dillerville Road onto Harrisburg Avenue, look for a large parking lot on the left. If you go under a pedestrian bridge, you went too far. Doc Holliday's is in the building closest to the road.

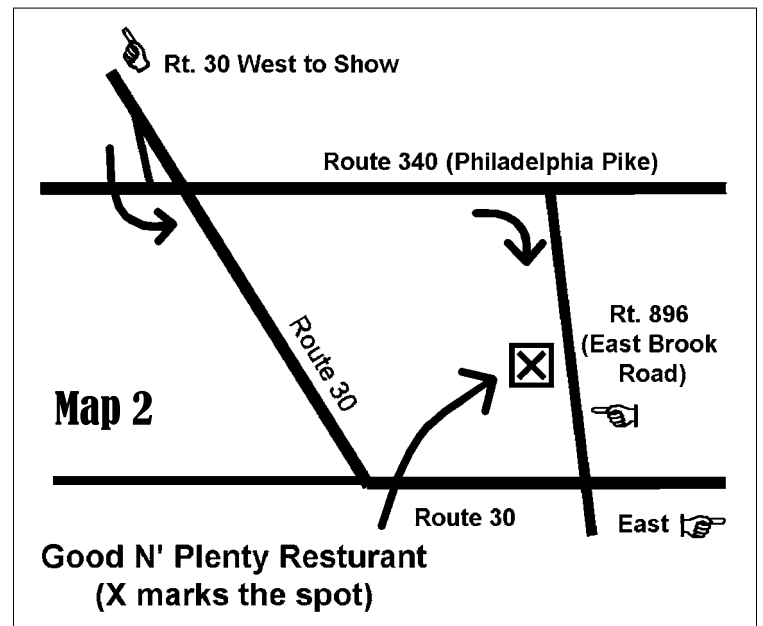
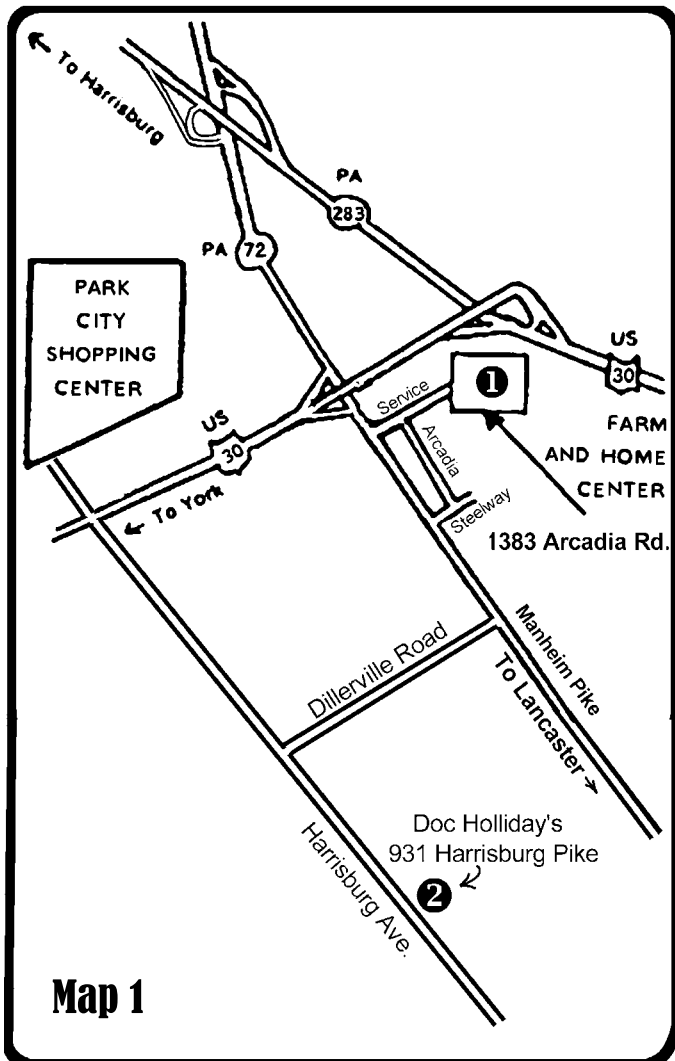
The Farm and Home Center (Map 1, Location 1) will be open around 7:00 P.M. for moving in large items and display setup only. No buying and selling will be allowed. Note that, although the building should be locked at night, there is no security offered.

The show room opens to registered attendees Saturday morning June 6, 2009 at 7:30 A.M.

The show will be open to the public between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

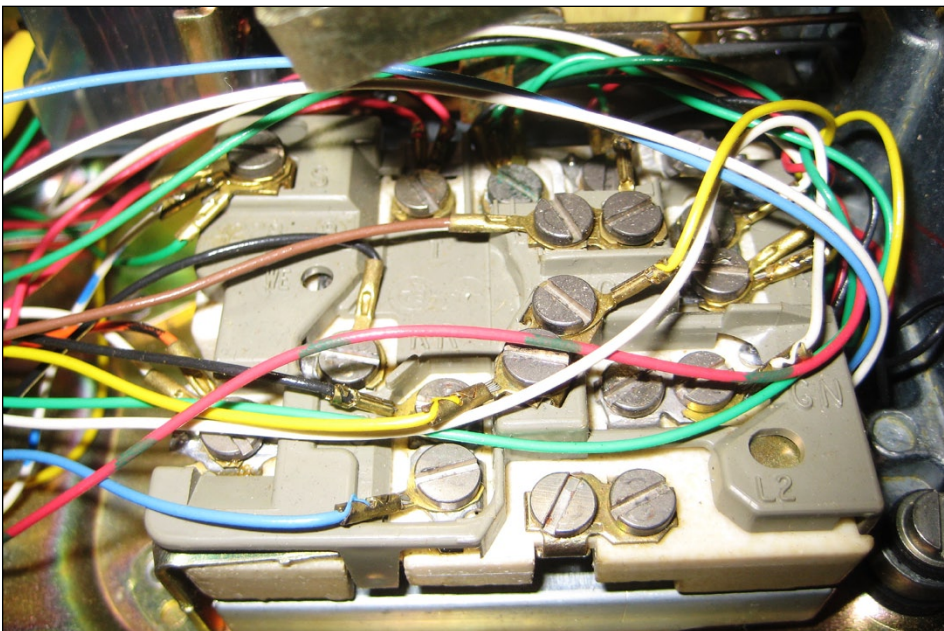
In addition to the displays brought in by our many members, there will be a working Select-O-Phone system on exhibit. There will also be a Collectors Network (C*NET) "Clinic" where interested persons will be able to acquire and configure the equipment required to connect their vintage equipment to the network. There will also be a chance for everyone to "tour" the network and dial into vintage switching equipment all over the world. Be seeing you!

—John Novack, John Jones and Paul Wills
(Show Host Committee) ☞



CONVERTING A 2500MM SET TO 2500DM FOR HOME USE

by Jonathan Finder, M.D.



(From left:) 2500MM network before being converted for home use; 2500MM stamping.

Ever pick up a nice-looking Western Electric 2500 and bring it home only to discover that it does not work in your home? If it's a 2500DM, it probably just needs a polarity guard. If it lacks one and has the standard touchtone pad, then you need to install a polarity guard with the green wire from the guard on F and the white wire on the guard on C. Place the brown and white switch wires on the guard.

If the set is labeled 2500MM, do not lose hope. These sets were designed for business use ("A lead control" for 1A2 systems) and will not work on a standard home line. They are easily converted, however. Here is how to convert a 2500MM for use in single-line residential use.

The wiring of a 2500MM converted to 2500DM is very similar to how a 2500DM is wired except for 2 key differences: the red line wire and yellow switch wire are on A, rather than on L2. There is no gray switch wire, but this matters little.

1. These usually come with a 6-lead line jack. You can clip or cover all of the leads but red and green. Unlike a 2500DM, you will not put the red lead on L2. Move the green line lead from terminal F to L1.

2. Speaking of F, move the black ring-er lead from F over to L1.

3. Move the brown switch wire off L1 to the polarity guard. In its place, put the green switch wire.

4. Move the white switch wire from C to the polarity guard, and put the white wire off the guard in its place.

5. Place the green polarity guard

wire on terminal F – there should be a green wire from the dial on terminal F as well.

6. You will find the yellow switch wire tied to the yellow line wire on GND. Move the yellow switch wire over to terminal A.

7. Speaking of terminal A, move the red line wire over to the same terminal.

8. Now place the red ringer wire on K, which is right adjacent to A.

That should do it. Your 2500MM (and for that matter, 2554MM) set will now work on standard residential lines. ☛

21 Years of Singing Wires

Over 21 Years of Singing Wires on CD / DVD

The Twenty Year History of TCI CD is now available to telephone collectors everywhere. Bev McFadden, co-editor of the *Singing Wires* Newsletter for 15 years, has taken every newsletter ever published by TCI between June '86 and December '07 and assembled them on this DVD or two-CD set. That's 244 newsletters, thousands of articles and items and hundreds of photos, many of them in color.

The CD is in PDF format. PDF files are all text searchable, you can quickly find a story or reference to any topic by simply entering a keyword into the Adobe Acrobat search window. Put in Western Electric and you will get hundreds of hits. Customize it to colored telephones and you're down to dozens of hits with half of those being Jon Kolger ads requesting colored phones. Put in Pekin red and there will be nine hits ... only 4 for mahogany A/E.

This CD is available for \$20.00 U.S. It can be paid for with PayPal ... send payment for your CD ORDER to: Singwires@aol.com.



BELL TELEPHONE QUARTERLY

An Intercommunicating System for Homes and Offices, October, 1930

by C. J. Davidson & A. Tradup

Contributed by Steve Cichorsky.

The Bell System is continually working to make available new facilities and equipment to provide complete and convenient telephone service, which is well adapted to the needs of its customers. One of the newest of these arrangements, is an intercommunicating system that has been very favorably received as shown by the large number already in service and the many additional installations under consideration. It is suitable for the larger residences and apartments, for small estates and for business offices of moderate size, and is known to telephone people as the "750-A Private Branch Exchange."

This new system offers a number of desirable features. It is simple to operate and from each telephone both outside calls and intercommunicating calls within the residence or office may be made. The instruments are of attractive design and may be obtained in various colors, if so desired.

No operator or attendant is required to answer incoming calls, since this can be done by means of push buttons at any of the telephones. Likewise, outgoing calls are established without the aid of an attendant. Intercommunicating calls are made by means of the dial. Incoming calls answered at any telephone may be transferred to any other telephone of the system.

The equipment is arranged so that both intercommunicating and outside conversations may be carried on from different telephones at the same time. Complete secrecy for both outside and intercommunicating connections is provided.

To meet varying service requirements this exchange is available in two sizes; the larger with a capacity of fifteen telephones and three outside lines and the smaller with eight telephones and two outside lines. The number of wires to each telephone has been reduced to a minimum so as to simplify the installation.

Certain of the telephones, as for example those for servants in residences can be restricted to house calls only or they can be arranged so that incoming calls can be answered and transferred but calls to the outside cannot be made. An outside line can be assigned, if desired, for the use of servants or other employees and the other outside lines reserved for family use.

A novel feature of the telephone instrument is that the push buttons for establishing the outside and intercommunicating connections are included in the instrument as shown in Figure 1. (See frontis-piece.)

There are five of these push buttons which are distinctively colored and designated 1, 2, 3, H and L. The first three

buttons connect the instrument with the outside lines, the "H" button holds the outside connection when a call is received at one telephone and transferred to another telephone, and the "L" button is depressed to make a local intercommunicating call. While ordinarily the hand set type of instrument is used, desk and wall sets with separate push buttons may also be used, if desired, at certain points.

The operation of the 750-A system may be easily understood from the accompanying pictures. Figures 2 and 3 depict the making of outside calls. The user simply depresses a button on the instrument associated with the outside line and then lifts the hand telephone in the ordinary manner. If no busy signal is received, he proceeds to make the telephone call in the usual way, either by giving the call to the telephone company operator or by dialing the number desired.

Figures 4 and 5 represent typical incoming calls. These calls are indicated by the ringing of bells associated with the outside lines. The bells are conveniently located so that they can be heard from all desired points. Incoming calls are answered by depressing push button 1, 2 or 3 associated with the outside line on which the call is being received. Each outside line has associated with it a distinctively toned bell or colored lamp



signal, or both, as may be desired, for indicating the proper button to operate. In the case of the colored lamp signals, the color corresponds to the color of the button on the instrument.

Figure 6 depicts an intercommunicating call within the residence which is established by the calling party depressing the push button "L," lifting the hand telephone and then dialing the number of the telephone desired. If the called telephone is not busy, ringing current is automatically sent over the line and rings the bell at the called telephone. The called party, in answering, depresses the "L" button on his instrument and lifts the hand telephone from the set.

Figure 7 is illustrative of a call which is answered at one telephone but transferred to another telephone. This is done by answering in the usual manner and then depressing the "H" button which operates an arrangement to hold the outside connection. The original answering

party then operates his "L" button and dials the number of the telephone desired. When the called party answers and is told about the incoming call, he depresses the button of his set corresponding to the outside line over which the call is being received. This removes the holding condition from the outside line and automatically disconnects the original answering telephone.

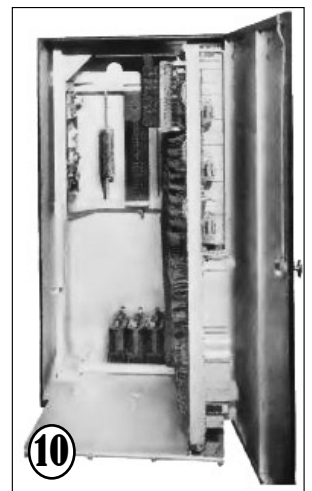
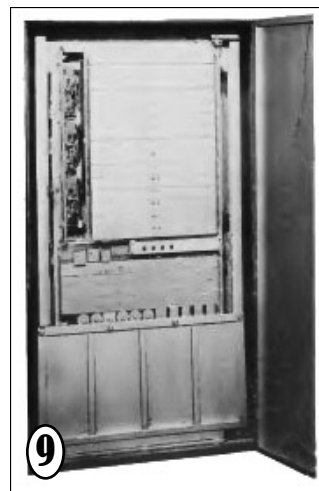
Figure 8 illustrates the making of an intercommunicating call as already described except that it shows a call to a point outside the residence, in this case, a call from the residence to the stable.

The 750-A system is equally advantageous for the telephone service of many business concerns. Perhaps the most important feature in connection with the use of this system by business concerns requiring a small number of telephones is the fact that its operation requires no operator or attendant. Thus the subscriber is relieved of the need for providing an

employee for telephone service and the problem of relief for the attendant during noon hours and at other times is avoided.

Intercommunicating System for Homes and Offices

It has been mentioned above that the 7 50-A system is one that is simple to operate. However, telephone calls cannot be originated, received or switched to other points without the use of relays and other equipment. Figures 9 and 10 illustrate the very compact manner in which all of the apparatus required has been housed in a cabinet, no larger than the ordinary coat closet. The cabinet can be placed in an out of the way and inconspicuous location. The power plant used is self-contained with the switching equipment in the cabinet and is kept in operation automatically, either by current fed over wires from the central exchange or by means of equipment arranged for local charging of the batteries. ☛



Colorful History

Continued from page 1.

prevent shrinkage pockets as it cooled. Extreme care was necessary to avoid dirt and contamination from other materials, including the remains of other colors previously used in the molds. Special ovens were designed to preheat the plastic granules to precisely control the temperature and moisture content. To prevent marking, flannel pads were placed on all assembly line fixtures and finished handsets were immediately wrapped in plastic bags to be removed by the installer. The press release concluded with:

Because of these manufacturing problems, it will take time before enough sets are available for all who might want them. For this reason, the Associated Companies will undertake no promotional efforts likely to stimulate demand for these sets that can't be filled. One exception to this rule will be a mid-western city where the sets will be promoted on a test basis.

We believe these concerns prompted the offering of two-tone sets. The black G1 handset was already in full production and could readily be supplied if there were any delays in the availability of colored G3 handsets.

Table II in BSP C30.011 (right) demonstrates that colored sets were announced before all the parts were available in matching colors.

It is of much interest that four of the initial "full color" sets – gray, red, yellow and blue – were produced with black dials! Dials were marked on the back with the color code (e.g., 7C-51 for green), a practice that was later discontinued as refurbished dials often ended up with different color number plates.

Only the ivory and brown sets had matching cords. The rest had gray cords. All cords were straight. Photos of sets with non-matching cords and dials were in Western Electric ads placed in national magazines in 1954.

In November 1954, the 554 wall set was announced in black and ivory. Green, red and beige 554s were added in 1955. A December 1954 addendum to C30.011 shows that full color keysets (models 510, 511, 544, 564 and 565) were then available in ivory, green, gray and brown, and two-tone keysets in ivory, green, red and

gray. It also suggests that all full color sets currently in production had matching color dials and that retractile handset cords were available. In July 1955, when C14.002, Issue 1 was printed, matching straight and retractile cords were available for all colors except green and blue. Green cords came shortly thereafter, but we believe the blue set continued to have gray cords until the color was discontinued in 1957.

A September 1956 Western Electric press release states that "eight delicious colors are coming off the production lines at Western Electric's Indianapolis Works with regularity these days." It went on to

that would hold a matching pigment and withstand all the stretching and twisting required for station cords. A PVC material was finally selected. Manufacturing of two-tone sets was discontinued, but ongoing customer demand for them was filled by converting black sets in the distribution houses.

Marketing the Luxury of Color

A C&P Telephone Company of Virginia publication shows a one-time charge of \$7.50 for a full color set or \$5.00 for



3

TABLE II
† 500 Series Telephone Sets and Parts

a. Full Color Group

App. Color	Dash No.	Handset	Housing	Transmitter Cap	Receiver Cap	Dial	Finger Wheel	Number Card	App. Blank	Chrome Card Holder Frame	Set Cords Color	Code (—) No.
Ivory	—50	G3A-50	P-13A385	P-19B722	P-19B738	7C-50	P-19B524	E4203	95A-50	P-296741	Ivory	—50
Green	—51	G3A-51	P-13A386	P-19B723	P-19B739	7C-51	P-19B524		95A-51	P-296741	Gray	—52
Gray	—52	G3A-52	P-13A387	P-19B724	P-19B740	7D-3	P-349543	E4204	95A-52	P-296741	Gray	—52
Red	—53	G3A-53	P-13A388	P-19B725	P-19B741	7D-3	P-349543		95A-53	P-296741	Gray	—52
Brown	—54	G3A-54	P-13A515	P-19B726	P-19B742	7C-54	P-19B524	95A-54	P-296741	Brown	—54	
Beige	—55	G3A-55	P-13A516	P-19B727	P-19B743	7C-55	P-19B524	95A-55	P-296741	Gray	—52	
Yellow	—56	G3A-56	P-13A517	P-19B728	P-19B744	7D-3	P-349543	95A-56	P-296741	Gray	—52	
Blue	—57	G3A-57	P-13A518	P-19B729	P-19B745	7D-3	P-349543	95A-57	P-296741	Gray	—52	

b. Two-Tone Group

The Dash Numbers for Two-Tone Telephone Sets are:

- 50A Equipped with *Ivory Housing
- 51A Equipped with *Green Housing
- 52A Equipped with *Gray Housing
- 53A Equipped with *Red Housing

* Get piece-part numbers for these housings from the (a) table above.
† When ordering specify piece part or code number with associated dash number (when required) of item desired.

COLORED STATION SETS

C30.011
Page 5
5 Pages

Issue 6, Dec. 1953 Scanned 2009. paul-f.com

announce that color was now available for the volume control telephone (e.g., 532), cut-off keyset (502) and the 6040 external key. Additionally, gray, brown, blue and yellow were added for the 554 line, finally giving it the full range of eight colors.

It wasn't until 1958 that all color sets were fitted with matching cords. Bell Labs had worked feverishly to find a plastic

the two-tone version. Had that charge not been levied, subscribers would have immediately wanted color telephones and the Bell companies would have had to remove millions of black sets from service with no demand for their continued use. Although \$7.50 doesn't sound like much today, in the '50s, a good lunch cost \$0.50 – 0.75, so a color phone was costly.

The one exception to the initial “no color promotion” rule was a promotion trial conducted by Illinois Bell in Decatur, IL, from May 3 through September 3, 1954. It focused largely on using color as a tool to sell extension sets – a luxury item in most homes at that time. A status memo found in the AT&T Archives highlighted the use of expected media, such as newspaper, radio and TV advertising, direct mail and displays in the Business Office. They also mounted an “All Employee” effort to get referral business, which included a bulletin, training, posters and even “colored sets installed in [the] employee rest room as a reminder.” (A Traffic Central Office rest room was a lounge where operators went for their breaks—not what you were probably thinking!) Posters also went on plant vehicles (Figure 4) and displays were prepared for use by local decorators and furniture stores.

The project report, dated October 22, 1954, showed that 70% of the sets placed were full color desk sets, 15% were two-tone desk sets, and 15% were ivory wall sets (354). Including all desk and wall sets, ivory was the most popular color at 50%, followed by green, beige, red and yellow. Blue, gray and brown had marginal success, with a combined 5% of the total. Data captured after the primary marketing period demonstrated that each color set installed acted as a “silent salesman” as subscribers wanted sets like their friends and relatives, “keeping up with the Joneses.”

A Rose Beige by Any Other Name...

As production finally began to catch up with demand, the Bell System began actively marketing color. In 1956, one of the first things the Operating Companies did was liven-up the boring color names with adjectives that connoted luxury and a decorator’s touch.

- Mountain States Tel. & Tel.’s palette included: *Cameo Ivory, Sage Green, Dove Gray, Fiesta Red, Autumn Brown, Rose Beige, Sunlight Yellow* and *Capri Blue*.

- Illinois Bell had: *Classic Ivory, Mistletoe Green, Oxford Gray, Cherry Red, Dark Mahogany Brown, Rosewood Beige, Sunlight Yellow* and *Shadow Blue*.

- New Jersey Bell used: *Cameo Ivory, Colonial Green, Charcoal Gray, Cardi-*

nal Red, Briar Brown, Rose Beige, Canary Yellow and *True Blue*.

These Companies (and others) published color brochures with color chips, similar to the color cards distributed for decorating use at paint stores.

By 1957, color was well established in the WE 500 series. Over four million color sets were in use. Subsequent years saw additional colors come and go. Examples are included in the color Bonus Pages.

New Pastel Colors for 1957

Consumer tastes changed during the mid-fifties. In 1957, the darker colors – Rose Beige, Charcoal Gray and Medium Blue were discontinued and replaced with lighter, pastel shades of the same hues. Dark Brown was also discontinued except for keysets. At the same time, pink and white sets were added to the product line. Western Electric attempted to rein in the creativity of the Operating Companies by publicizing its recommended list of standard color names: *Ivory, Moss Green, Cherry Red, Pastel Yellow, White, Rose Pink, Light Beige, Light Gray, Aqua Blue, and Mahogany Brown* (for keysets).

Rose Pink and *Aqua Blue* were considered “bedroom colors,” so they were not initially available on wall sets which were targeted more for the kitchen or rec room. In 1959, pink was added to the 554 line by popular demand. By the mid-1960s, desk and wall telephones were produced in 10 different colors by Western Electric as turquoise was added in 1964.

BSPs show that various models were limited to certain colors, and that the colors available for each model changed from time to time. Further, the Operating Companies were free to stock and promote colors of their choice – not necessarily the entire Bell System color palette. The color situation grew increasingly complex as new sets were introduced, such as the Princess, Trimline, Call Directors, Wall Keysets, etc. In 1963, the Bell System adopted the terms “promoted color” and “nonpromoted color,” clarified in BSP 500-120-100, Issue 4 (July 1963).

“Promoted color ... is manufactured in quantity.”

“Nonpromoted color ... is manufactured in limited quantity ... may be obtained by customer request and only on special order.”

Table A from the BSP shows promotion status for various classes of apparatus and is included in the Bonus Pages. This helps us understand why some color/set combinations are difficult to find, as they were special order sets. Examples include pink keysets and card dialers, and any turquoise set other than a Princess. Significantly, ivory and red were no longer in the table, resulting in a palette of eight colors, five of which were promoted for desk sets and four for wall sets. Ivory and red were added back into the color palette by 1968.

A system-wide review of 1969 production revealed that 85% of sets ordered were black, white, beige and green. A color consultant recommended a new 15-color array, retaining black, white and beige and adding 12 new colors. Management elected to retain the current colors for existing sets and experiment with new colors on new phones, such as the Design Line sets being planned in the 1970s. A few of these colors, such as different shades of blue, yellow and red, were eventually used in the 500 and 2500 series.

Collectors of 500 sets cherish their color telephones, especially those in the four shades which were discontinued in 1957 and the nonpromoted color sets. It should be noted that virtually all colors are subject to fading if exposed to light or air pollutants (tobacco smoke) over time.

Question: How can you tell a faded aqua set from a faded turquoise set, as both yellow with age to a similar blue-green hue?

Answer: Unscrew the handset caps and look at the (hopefully) unfaded color inside. This is also a good test to determine the degree of fading of any color set.

At the Lancaster Show on June 6, Russ will have on display his 500 sets in each of the fourteen WECO colors, the four discontinued in 1957 and the ten produced in the 1960s.

Next month we will continue looking at the “special use” sets announced in 1954. For more information on color and good color exhibits, see the March 2005 *Singing Wires* and the April 2008 Bonus Pages. For more on 500 series component evolution and models produced, visit www.paul-f.com/we500typ.htm.

Additional color pictures are included in the Bonus Pages. ♣

SHOW ANNOUNCEMENTS

The National Vintage Communications Fair

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre,
Warwickshire, UK • Sunday May 10th,
2009, 10:30 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Admission £5 (under 14 years, FREE).

Probably the biggest show I've ever seen. Sellers' tables loaded with all kinds of telephony and books on same. I definitely recommend the show to all telephone and radio collectors... not to be missed. —*A US Telephone Collector*

Find out more at www.nvcf.org.uk.



ATCA Regional Show

Springfield, Ohio, May 15-16, 2009 •
Clark County Fairgrounds • 4401
South Charleston Pike, Springfield, OH

Registration and one table - \$25;
Additional tables - \$10 each.

Host: *John Hucceby* •
wordshopjohn@yahoo.com

TCI Spring Show

June 5-6, 2009 • Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Farm and Home Center,
1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA
17601

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Lancaster Hilton Garden Inn (1.2 miles from the show). The room rate for a single or double room is \$121. The telephone number is (717) 560-0880. Be sure to give them the group code "PHONE" or go to <http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/groups/personalized/LNSLHGI-PHONE-20090605/index.jhtml> and reserve online.

A second block of rooms has been reserved at the Lancaster Inn Visitors Center (6.4 miles from the show). The room rate for a single or double room is \$95. The telephone number is (717) 299-2551. Be sure to give them the group code "TCI." There are also plenty of other hotels in the area!

Reception begins at 7:30 P.M. (cash bar) at Doc Holliday's in Lancaster.

Saturday June 6, 2009: 7:30 A.M., setup show room opens to registrants only • 10:00 A.M. to 4 P.M., show opens to the public.

Registration: TCI, ATCA, NIA and THG Members, \$20; Non-members \$33; Tables are free to all registered attendees!

Host: *John Novack* •
showhost@telephonecollectors.org



ATCA 2009 National Show

King of Prussia, PA • August 21-22,
2009 • Park Ridge Hotel, 480 N Gulph Rd, King of Prussia, PA 19406. Near PA Turnpike Exit 327

Host: *Mike Davis* • mvtel@verizon.net



15th Annual Telephone Collectors International Labor Day Show

September 4-5, 2009 • Holiday Inn - Cincinnati Airport, 1717 Airport Exchange Blvd., Erlanger, KY 41018

More information will be made available in upcoming issues of *Singing Wires*.

Friday June 5, 2009:
Dinner from 5:30 -
6:30 P.M. at Good N'
Plenty Restaurant •



Pulse To Tone Converters

- Use your legacy rotary phone with modern touch tone systems
- Internal and external options
- Rotatone includes "*" and "#"
- Compatible with many VOIP devices



Cloth Covered Cords

- Top quality cloth cords
- 12 available colors
- Custom lengths available
- Straight, Coiled or Braided

Reproduction Receivers

- Top Quality
- Authentic Appearance
- Accepts Magnet or U1 Receiver Element
- Cap and Body sold together or separately
- Exclusive to Oldphoneworks



1.800.843.1320



This image was captured on a back road between Burton and Brenham, Texas, midway between Houston and Austin. Photograph by Kathy Dulje.

FROM THE ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA TELEPHONE DIRECTORY – 1951

Appeal from the Ministry of Posts Telephones and Telegraphs To the Telephone Subscribers of Addis Ababa

Contributed by TCI Member Wayne Junop

How to Use the Telephone

1. Take the microtelephone off and wait patiently for the central announcement tone. Do not depress or knock the switch hook while you are waiting for the announcement tone in the hope that the tone will come sooner. This you usually see actors doing in films. But this does not help the film actor nor you. However, the film actor does no harm, as his telephone is not connected to the telephone centrale. But if you imitate the actor you delay the arrival of this tone for yourself

and you are making things worse for other subscribers who call the exchange at the same time as you do.

2. When the tone is received start at once sending the 4 figures of the wanted number, and do not help with your finger the dial to go back to its rest position. If you do so, you will, in most cases, get a wrong number. The result is that you have to call again, you engage again the machinery of the exchange which becomes overloaded, and the telephone service becomes congested and unsatisfactory.

3. When you hear that the ringing signal is sent to the subscriber you have called, wait patiently from 10 to 15 seconds until he answers. If he does not, it means that he is either out of the room or of his home, or he does not want to answer or talk to you because he is having a rest. Hang up the microtelephone then call some time later.

4. The number of machines on the automatic exchange is calculated for local conversations lasting maximum of 3 minutes. If many of the subscribers talk for example 6 minutes the traffic carrying capacity of the machines is reduced to the half. However, during inspection in the telephone exchange we have even found that there are subscribers talking from half up to 3 quarters of an hour. In most cases these subscribers were found to be men, which does not at all confirm the usual old saying that ladies talk too much. ☛

WANTED

Buy / Sell / Trade ads are free to TCI members. Please send an e-mail to: editor@telephonecollectors.org.

Wanted: One (only) hook for the receiver of a WE or NE type 317 or 1317 wall magneto telephone set. This hook would be black in colour.

Dick Capon • RECB727@comcast.net

WANTED:

- Colored AE sets, Models 1A, 32, 34, 40, 47, 50 & parts
- Colored Stromberg Carlson sets, Models 1197, 1198, 1202, 1211, 1212 & parts
- Colored North Galion sets
- Colored WE Thermoplastic model 305 sets
- Colored Kellogg Model 1000 redbar, clearbar sets & parts
- Various make transmitters
- Thinking of selling or downsizing your collection? Wood, sticks, parts. Give me a call.

Bruce Bianchi • mrlinefinder@verizon.net • (631) 707-2800



WANTED:

AT&T Telephone Story Poster, 1990 or 1993.

This poster is approx. 24"x20". There are apparently two versions of this poster—one was printed in 1990, and the second version was printed in 1993 (although it says "copyright 1990" but has two new phones that were produced after 1990). It needs to be in very good condition.

John Godby • (703) 435-3832 • johngodby@msn.com

- Looking for any Automatic Electric COLORED Desk Sets in Models 1A, 34, 40 and 50. Also looking for COLORED Stromberg Sets in Models 1197 and 1198, and North Sets in the so-called Galion H6 model. Looking for a clean Western Electric 302 in Blue, and original factory painted 202s and 302s. Since I have only recently started collecting these phones, I need many of the colors. I am also interested in COLORED Handsets and Dials for them as well as Butler Handles, Handset Transmitter and Receiver Rings in Chrome and Matte Gold as well as NOS Extensicords for the AEs.

- Ivory Banded Handset for an Automatic Electric Model 34 Desk Telephone.

Walt Aydelotte • aydelotte01@comcast.net

Trying to restore a Swedish-American wall phone. I need an original magneto and a transmitter arm complete with cup and faceplate.

David Silver • (405) 372-6915 • daverosie@brightok.net

Wanted: 2 - 4 wiper, 11 or more positions uniselectors

Henry Swann • Walland, TN • hswann1549@yahoo.com

BUY / SELL / TRADE

BUY / SELL / TRADE Ads are free to TCI members. Please send an e-mail to: editor@telephonedcollectors.org. (Large display ad space is available for a modest fee. Visit www.telephonedcollectors.org and click on "Singing Wires" for rates.)

FOR SALE

480 page Payphone History. The book is divided into 3 main sections: I. The Payphone (321 pgs), II. Booths (63 pgs) III. Signs - 810 signs (74 pgs) \$25 + \$5 shipping.

Selling out. Large inventory, real estate. Take over with 20 employees or buy partials and chunks (except parts and cords to go last).

All this U.S. made: from the 1970-1980 W.E. type TT phones:

- Networks: circuit-board-types to use in conversions such as oak wall crankers. The heart of a phone. \$10, 5@\$6.ea., 10@\$5. ea. 25@\$4. ea. 50@ \$3. ea., 100@\$2. ea.
- Ringers: S.L. \$15, 5@ \$10.ea., 10@ \$6. ea., 25@ \$5. ea., 50@ \$4. ea., 100@ \$3.ea., 200@ \$2. ea.
- TT dials: \$6., 5@ \$5.ea., 10@ \$4.ea., 25@ \$3.ea., 50 or more @\$2. (You can combine quantities.)
- 1976 Replica Eiffel Towers. These are beautiful. They have TP dials, modular plugs and are tested. Offering them at this time to collectors and dealers for \$285 (\$110 less than catalog retail).

*Ron and Mary Knappen •
phonecoinc@aol.com • (608) 582-4124, (608) 582-4124 • www.phonecoinc.com*

I have a few sets of Western Electric 2 1/2" notched Brass Bells for sale. They originally were painted black, and have already been stripped to raw brass. They can easily be painted or nickel plated. They are \$12 per set plus shipping.

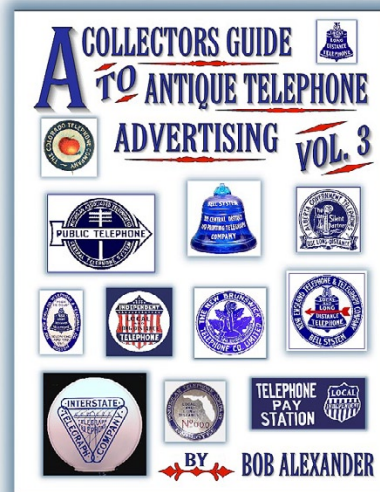
*Walt Aydelotte •
aydelotte01@comcast.net*

- Western Electric Blue Bell Dry Cell KS6542, (1900 Bell Logo) 6" high x 2 1/2" diam. \$10
- Rectangular WECO Battery, 6 1/2" wide x 4" deep x 3" high, 5 positive poles and 1 negative pole (KS6573, 1900 Bell Logo) \$20
- WECO (may be 317) oak wall magneto set, plain front, All original except ear piece and line cord. Mouthpiece has plaque that reads "AMERICAN TEL AND TEL 337". \$150
- WECO Candlestick phone, (may be 20AL) All original except the line cord and 760 receiver. \$90
- 1947 Phone Directory (Elizabethton, Butler, Mountain City, Tenn) Inter-Mountain Tel. Co. Fair condition, has writing on cover. \$10
- 1952 Phone Directory (Carrollton, GA) Southern Bell (Golden Boy logo) \$10
- 1973-1974 Phone Directory (Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City GA) Westco Telephone Company \$7
- 1974-1975 Phone Directory (Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City GA) Westco Telephone Company \$7
- Bell System line set (butt set), rotary dial, Orange, Prefect condition - appears never to have been used. No model no. \$25
- Bottle Opener (shaped like hard hat (1984 AT&T Logo). \$8
- Pencil cup / paper clip holder, Black plastic, has the Standard to Metric conversion tables on it. Very cool. 1969 Bell Logo) \$15
- Ceramic ashtray or paper clip tray
- "Introduce Your Friends to New York Tel" White base, very small light green molded phone at top. \$10
- Crystal paper clip holder / paper weight (1984 AT&T Logo) \$8
- Crystal paper weight (1984 AT&T Logo) \$8
- 2 - AT&T modular handset cords, 1992 Presidential Election "BUSH / QUAYLE" \$5 each
- 3 - Union Local 3250 clickers. \$1 each (All prices plus shipping.)

Randy White • Atlanta, GA • (770) 380-2244 • white2755@bellsouth.net

For Sale: Many parts to restore military field phone type EE-8, inquire. Original straight-line ringers for Stromberg-Carlson #1212 or #1243 \$7 each. Western Electric F-1 handsets complete with tested elements \$7 each. Your rotary dials can still be repaired for \$6 plus major parts. Postage extra.

Steve Hilsz • PO Box 429, Salome, AZ 85348 • (928) 859-3595 • jydsk@tds.net



I'm working on a new book about Telephone Co Advertising. This is the cover for it. It should be finished by mid-summer. If you have some unusual advertising pieces that you would like included, please email me at the below address. The book will be available on a CD as well as a printed version. All in color. Thanks.

*Bob Alexander •
guardfrogdesigns@yahoo.com*

Still have Dial Pulse to Touch Tone converters for sale for your rotary phones. Great for Internet phone service where the service provider does not support dial pulse. Easy to install, plug and play. No external power required. The price is \$47, which includes shipping in the U.S.

*Larry Kolb • (703) 754-3832 •
Larrykolb@comcast.net*