

THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO: 1930 TO 1945

In the early 1930s, receivers became simpler to use, more efficient and more elegant. More and more homes, even among the middle class, get radio sets despite the still high costs.

Radio remains a luxury item, and even during the economic crisis of 1930, sales continued. Elegantly produced devices take center stage in the salons. It's the era of large consoles made of wood by renowned cabinetmakers.

These sold for around \$ 90 in 1940, which would represent \$ 1,500 today. Then a material called Bakelite (a type of plastic) became available, which allowed to produce elegant models at a lower price.

The birth of Radio-Canada

Faced with this craze, transmitting stations multiplied. To counter the omnipresence of American radio (the waves know no borders), the Canadian government created a network which became Radio-Canada in 1936. The programming then diversified and the broadcasting periods became longer. Popular music, hockey games and radio novels go on the air. Many actors gave their voices to characters in *La pension Velder*, *Un homme et son péché* (*Séraphin*) (English: *Séraphin*: Heart of Stone), *Métropole* or *Jeunesse dorée*.

While radios evolved, programing evolved, too. Radio began to use more frequencies, especially short waves. During the Second World War this allowed us to hear reports of journalists far away at the front.

Hello M. le Monde !
Vous ne paraissez pas si grand pour moi

VICTOR
"Globe Trotter"
RADIO

Voici deux nouveaux radios qui sont bien les nôtres. Avec une seule main, vous pouvez jouer de l'airain, traverser les océans, commander à votre plaisir les programmes des différents continents soit ondes longues ou courtes. Jour de la réception de jour. Vous promenez en Europe ou en Asie régulièrement avec ces nouveaux modèles Victor à ondes sélectives. Conditions de paiement faciles.

LeSieur & Frère
169-271 Michellie, St-Jean.
MARCHANDS DE MEUBLES,
FOURNITURES DE MAISON,
PIANOS, RADIOS, TAPISSERIE, ETC.
Gros et détail.—Prix les plus bas.

1 -2: Advertisements for radios dating from 1934

3: Advertisement for radios dating from 1946

C'est PARIS

Une Réception Indéfectible des Postes à ondes courtes est maintenant à la portée de tous

Westinghouse
CROISEUR UNIVERSEL

\$84.50

The BIGGEST LITTLE RADIO IN THE WORLD

Northern Electric's Baby Grand

Northern Electric

THE FIRST RADIOS WORK WITHOUT WALL CONNECTION OR BATTERIES!

The very first receivers needed neither to be plugged into the wall nor to be powered by battery! And yet, there was indeed an electric current which enabled them to function.

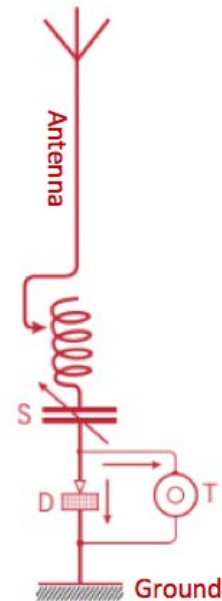
Here is what they were made of:

The antenna: when a radio wave crosses it, an electric current is induced and this propagates in the rest of the radio circuit.

A tuner (S): it allows you to select the frequency that you want to listen to by shortening or lengthening a wire coil.

A detector (D), also called crystal or galena receiver: it allows the audio signal to be separated from its carrier wave in order to transmit only the sound of the voice or music to the earpiece.

A headphone (T): under the effect of current, the membrane of the headphone is deformed in the same way as a speaker and produces sound.



The arrival of the batteries

However, these receivers did not remain without power supply for very long. A low volume, a scrambled signal and numerous limits in the received signal (distances and frequency bands limited) led to a necessary complexification of receivers. Technologies are rapidly evolving, and for the first time batteries power receivers.

A new component: the vacuum tube

In addition to the power source, one of the most notable advances is at the level of the detector, which was replaced by a vacuum tube (also called "lamp"), visible in the displayed transparent radio model. The main role of tubes was to control the direction of the current, and to amplify the signal, which was barely audible before.

Why use batteries and not household electricity?

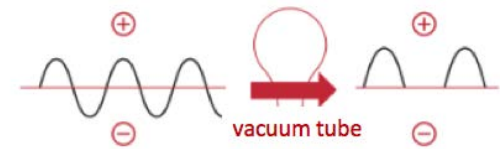
Until the early 1930s, we did not know how to deal with alternating current of wall outlets, which produced annoying background noise; the batteries, on the other hand, provided direct current without noise. This is why the radios were first powered by batteries and were so bulky!

Finally domestic electricity powered radios!

In 1925, Canadian Ted Rogers further perfected the vacuum tube to allow radios to use the wall outlet as a power source rather than bulky batteries. In fact, the tubes now make it possible to convert the alternating current from the wall sockets into a pulsating direct current, suitable for the operation of a radio.

The radio overload began therefore to decrease.

Vacuum tubes became so important in the operation of a radio that, in the 1930s, simple radios were equipped with 4 to 6 tubes, while the most sophisticated could accommodate more than twenty.



Transformation of an alternating current (wall outlet) into a pulsed current, which contains a continuous component thanks to a vacuum tube.