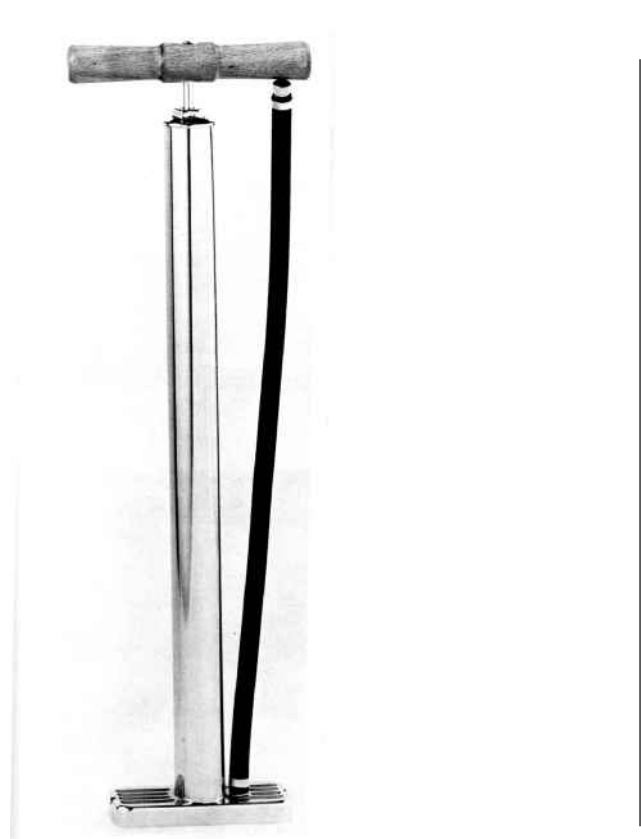




Brian Belanger
Curator



History of Arvin

From Tire Pumps to Hopalong Cassidy Radios

Why Study Arvin's History?

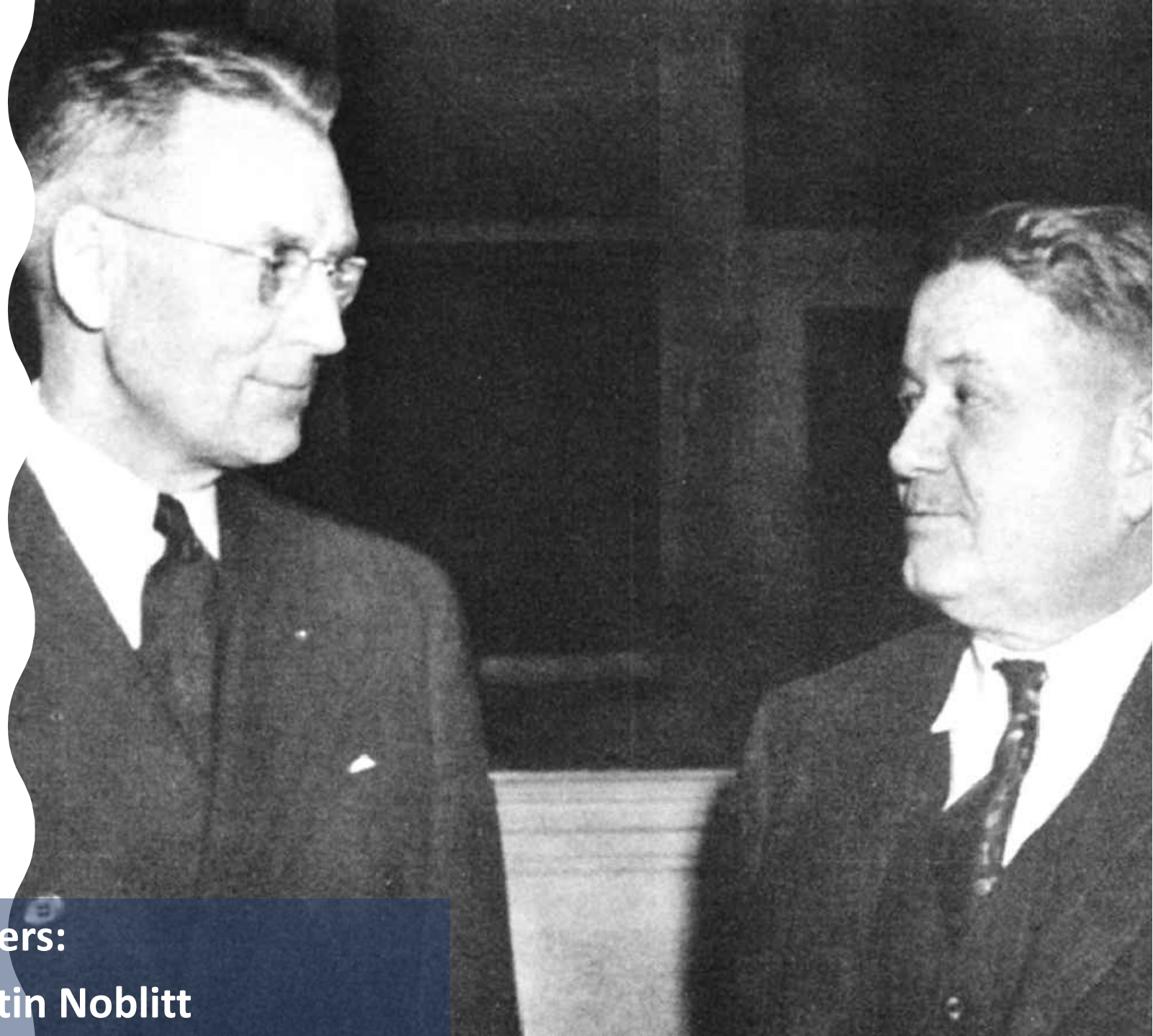
- Arvin radios are popular with radio collectors
- While Arvin was never at the top of the list of radio manufacturing firms, it produced a LOT of radios over four decades
- Its corporate history is a fascinating story

Company Name Changes

- **1919 to 1921: Indianapolis Air Pump Company**
- **1921 to 1927: Indianapolis Pump and Tube Company**
- **1927 to 1950: Noblitt-Sparks Industries, Inc.**
- **1950 to 2000: Arvin Industries, Inc.**
- **2000 to 2011: ArvinMeritor (after merge with Meritor)**
- **2011 to present: Meritor, Inc. (Arvin named dropped)**

Corporate Beginnings

- 1906: Indiana boys, Sparks and Noblitt meet and became friends while working for Carl Fisher
- Went their separate ways, then both worked for Haywood Tire & Equipment, and talked about forming a company
- 1916: They open the Indianapolis Motor School



Company founders:

Frank Sparks and Quintin Noblitt

Their First Company Fails

- **Within 6 months, they had 200 students**
- **Then World War I began**
- **Enrollment tanked as students went off to war**
- **The school closed its doors. Noblitt & Sparks went their separate ways**

January 1919:
A New Startup Company
Indianapolis Air Pump Company

**Noblitt & Sparks look
for a product that was
in demand to
manufacture and sell**

Tire Pumps!



Noblitt and Sparks Finally Succeed in Business

- Capital investment: \$1000
- Rented the back of a grocery store for \$10/month
- Made a quality tire pump for a reasonable price
- Contract to supply tire pumps to Ford



The Arvin Name

- Richard Arvin develops a heater for Model T cars and approaches Noblitt & Sparks (1920)
- Arvin Heater Co. – a subsidiary formed to make and sell them
- Main company name changed to Indianapolis Pump and Tube Co.
- In 1923 Arvin sold his interest in the Company along with the name
- Many new automotive products (mufflers, tailpipes, jacks, etc.) sold under the Arvin brand

Dealing With The Depression

- 1929: Noblitt-Sparks sales ~ \$5 million
- 1932: Sales drop to \$2.2 million, with net loss
- Company needed to think about new products
- Car radios – a natural!
- 1933: Introduced a new line of auto radios

*Hours and Miles
Fly by when You
Travel with an*

ARVIN CAR RADIO



*... A **Traveling Man** is never lonesome when he drives with an Arvin Car Radio. He's up to the minute on all the news—the sports world follows him around—and the hours and miles fly by . . . If you've been waiting for automobile radio to be perfected, you needn't wait any longer. The Arvin is ready for your car—and it has such power and volume that it gives clear, crisp reception over all traffic and engine noise. You'll say it's great—the way your Arvin brings in stations. You'll like its smooth, well-rounded tone . . . There are three Arvin models to choose from—priced as low as \$39.50—all-electric superheterodynes, with automatic volume control, remote control, shielded units and many other distinctive features. Installation is easy—no extra batteries required—no interference with heater or other accessories. Your Arvin dealer (automotive or radio) will gladly give you a demonstration. If you don't know the name of a nearby Arvin dealer, write us . . . **Noblitt-Sparks Industries, Inc., Columbus, Indiana***

THREE MODELS PRICED AT
\$39.50 • \$49.50 • \$59.50

Prices Slightly Higher on the West Coast



*Designed and Built Solely for
Automobiles by the Makers of
Arvin Hot Water Car Heaters*

Company Moves Production to Columbus, IN



Columbus, Indiana

- Home of Cummins Engine
- Historic District
- Many buildings on the National Register of Historic Places
- Famous Architects such as Eero Saarinen designed buildings
- Architectural tours from Visitor Center



Arvin Radio Production

- January 1933 – company hires radio engineers (Walt Peek, Ben Irwin, Phil Baker, Earl Booth)
- First Arvin radios were trouble-prone

1934 Arvin auto radio



1934: Arvin's First Home Radio

1936: "Rhythm" Series Introduced



1937
"Rhythm
Queen"
Model

"This little Arvin is lovely, Jim—it plays grand and it looks so nice in here."

"Right you are—it's better than our big set downstairs—let's get an Arvin down there, too!"

For only \$24.95, you can take your choice of a walnut, antique white, or maple-finished cabinet, when you buy the Arvin Rhythm Belle Model 487 shown in use above. It is a beautiful little radio for your bedroom, your youngster's room, the social room, your den or office. And when you hear how well it plays, you'll buy an Arvin for your living room, too. These, you'll probably want a console, like the splendid model at right, or a big table set, perhaps. Whoever you want, Arvin has—table models from \$19.95 to \$33.95—consoles from \$49.95 to \$150.00—including AC-DC portables and battery sets. As right: Rhythm Queen Model 507, a very beautiful 9-tube all-wave console in matched-grain walnut cabinet, \$99.50.

HEAR ALL THE GOOD PROGRAMS *Perfectly* with one or more of the new 1937 ARVIN RHYTHM RADIOS

ARVIN RADIOS

The little Arvin table models pictured above don't get foreign-speaking stations—but they do bring you all the *worth-while foreign programs* that are rebroadcast by the National and Columbia chains. They also bring you all the fine American programs, more beautifully than the big, old-fashioned sets in so many homes today. And they get police, amateur and airway signals, too.

If you want worldwide reception of foreign stations, hear the Arvin consoles or larger table models. They have a wonderfully efficient foreign tuning system built in—with the foreign stations named and logged on the big, reverse-lighted, clock-face dials. A traveling spotlight makes it easy to see and locate the station you want on any wave band—and the high-low-speed tuning drive, controlled by one knob, makes foreign tuning fast and accurate. And those are but a few of the many features Arvin offers in worldwide radios.

More than mere "features"—the new Arvins have rhythm in their eye-catching beauty, rhythm in their car-pleasing tone. They are beautiful to look at and beautiful to hear. And there's *much to hear* this year—your family needs at least two radios. Most dealers sell Arvins on easy terms.

NOBLITT-SPARKS INDUSTRIES, Inc., Columbus, Ind.
Also makers of Arvin Hot Water Gas Heaters

IN YOUR CAR, TOO, ENJOY AN ARVIN Tailor-Fit CAR RADIO

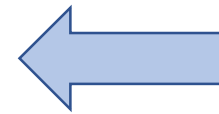
You can have an Arvin installed exactly the way you want it—with a perfect matching remote control in your instrument panel—with the speaker overhead, in-the-set or mounted separately on the dash.

New, high-powered Model 58 has exceptional ability to reach out and bring in stations, beautifully. You can enjoy an Arvin Car Radio for as little as \$59.95.

ARVIN *Rhythm* **RADIOS**

Arvin Radios

1936: "Rhythm" series,
1937: "Phantom" series



Chairside

Model 617
Tombstone



Late 1930s to 1942:
Emphasis On Smaller, Less Expensive Radios



1938

Model 40 “Mighty Mite”

Two-tube radio

Wholesale price - \$4.10,
retail price less than \$10

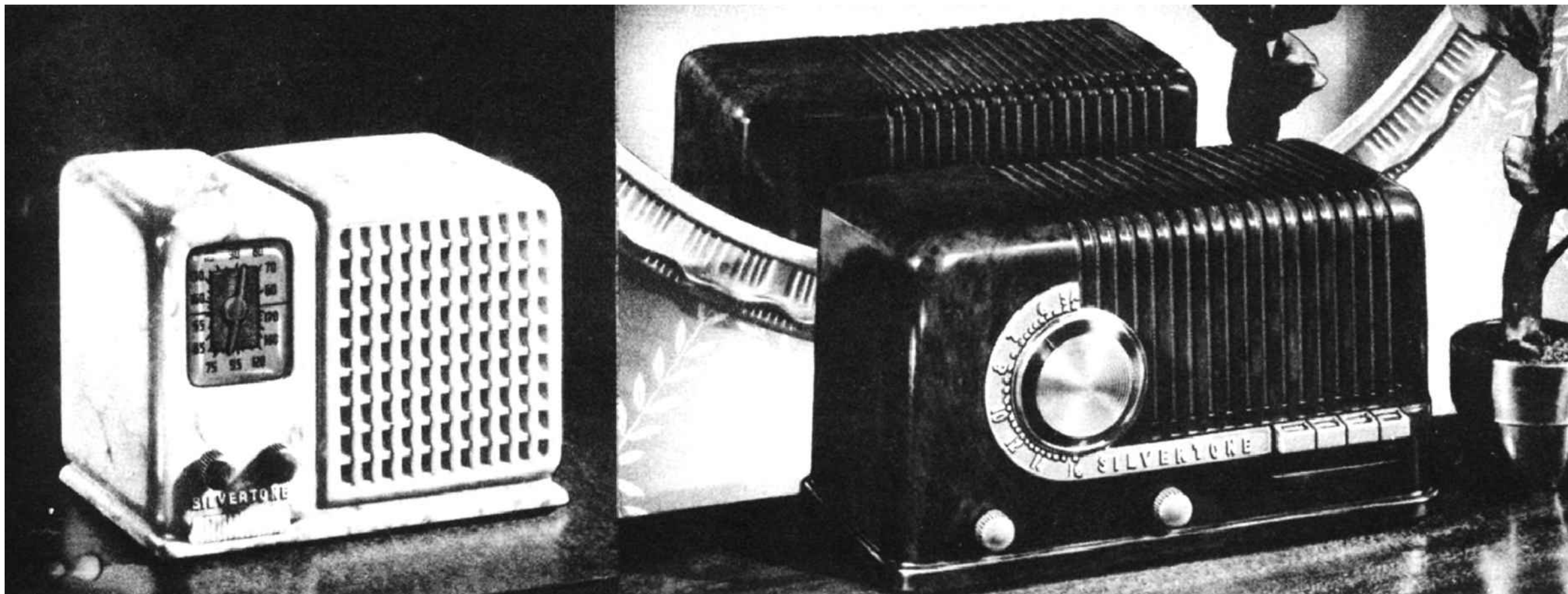
Arvin's Catalin Radios



Model 532 (1941)
(Wholesale price to
dealers was \$11.86)

Silvertone Radios for Sears-Roebuck

(Silvertone chassis that start with 132 are made by Arvin)



Post WWII Arvin Radios



Model 444 (1946)



Model 857T (1954)



Model 59 (1959)



Model 544A (1946)



The Hopalong Cassidy Arvin



Model 441T
1950
Early version

Arvin Made Transistor Radios



Arvin made transistor
radios from 1957
until the late 1960s

Model 60R63 (1960)

Arvin Made Television Sets

From 1949
until the 1960s



Only a
few color
TVs were
made



Arvin and Stereo

- AM/FM Stereo Radios
- Stereo Tape Recorders
- Phonographs



Key Dates – 1940s to 1970

- **1947: First Arvin AM/FM radio**
- **Early 1950s: Arvin is in the top ten radio manufacturers in terms on number of radios sold**
- **1954: 4 Millionth Arvin radio sold**
- **Early 1960s: Arvin produces ten percent of U.S. radios**
- **1962: Arvin opens radio plant in Princeton, KY**
- **Gets into military electronics**
- **Late 1960s: Arvin uses a plant in Taiwan**



Princeton, KY Plant

Arvin Exits Consumer Electronics

- **Arvin purchases niche electronics firms, e.g., Westgate Laboratory (1961) and Calspan Corp., (1978) begins shifting to military electronics**
- **By 1980, out of consumer electronics business**

Was Arvin a Good Company?

- **Noblitt and Sparks strived to operate Arvin with high ethical standards**
- **1924 Example: The company took obsolete Chevy auto heaters back from jobbers**
- **Arvin hired people with disabilities**
- **Managers did not get reserved parking spots**

The End of Arvin

- **Meritor – Former Rockwell Automotive, another supplier of truck and automobile components (brakes, axles, etc.) and Arvin decide to merge**
- **2000: ArvinMeritor formed**
- **“A merger of equals”**
- **2011: Arvin named dropped, Arvin’s former businesses sold off**

Arvin radios today:

Found only in
museums and
radio collections.
Not in Stores!

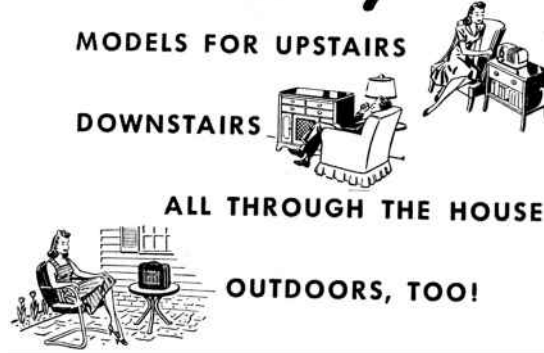
Here they are!

MODELS FOR UPSTAIRS

DOWNSTAIRS

ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE

OUTDOORS, TOO!



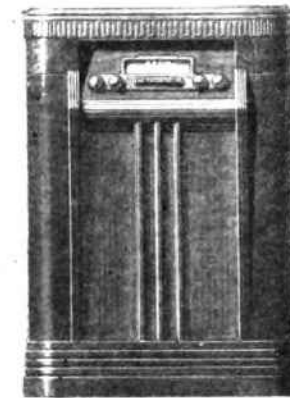
4-tube Portable 540
Remarkable Reception
for a Small
Pocket-size Radio.



5-tube Portable 524
Superior Tone and
Power in Attractive,
Durable Case.



10-tube Model 888
with Automatic Record Changer and
FM in Walnut Wood Veneer Cabinet.



6-tube Model 668
Walnut Wood Finish Console
with Angled Control Panel.



12-tube Model 1088
with Automatic Record Changer and
FM in Walnut Wood Veneer Cabinet.

There's a dealer near you who will take your order now for the Arvin models you choose. You'll have the utmost in beauty, value and radio enjoyment for years—with Arvin.

Questions?