

MAARC  
Presentation  
May 17, 2026

## The History of Lyric Radio and Wurlitzer

“From Violins to Radios and Jukeboxes”

Presented by Tom Shearer (with updates)

Previously presented November 15, 2000

A decorative graphic consisting of several short, thick, yellow dashed lines arranged in a curved, upward-sloping pattern in the bottom right corner of the slide.

1853

Violins  
Started  
it All!

- Wurlitzer had been making high quality violins in Germany since the mid-1700s.
- Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company was organized in Cincinnati in 1853.
- Wurlitzer initially imported instruments from Germany and sold them in its US stores. In 1856, the flagship store was located at 120 W. 42nd Street in New York City (in Manhattan, near Broadway and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue).
- Wurlitzer sold musical instruments, sheet music, Victrolas, etc. from their stores.

1880

First  
Corporate  
Move

- In 1880, the company began manufacturing pianos and eventually relocated to North Tonawanda, NY. DeKalb, IL, later became a major manufacturing location for various types of pianos.
- Following the move, Wurlitzer quickly expanded to make band organs, orchestrions, player pianos and pipe organs, which were popular in theaters during the silent movie era.

- Wurlitzer began making innovative automatic harps about this time that were more durable than European prototypes.

1909

Automatic  
Harps

- From about 1905 to about 1911, J.W. Whitlock and Company of Rising Sun, Indiana produced automatic harps sold by Wurlitzer.
- In 1911, Wurlitzer was the top supplier of automatic harps to brothels in the Barbary Coast, San Francisco's red-light district.
- To know more, visit this blog:

<https://www.tropicalfishvintage.com/blog/2017/1/31/things-you-didnt-know-about-wurlitzer-3-for-a-brief-period-wurlitzer-was-the-premier-supplier-of-automatic-harps-to-san-francisco-brothels>

1910

Theater  
Organ

- By this time, Wurlitzer had major facilities in North Tonawanda, NY and Cincinnati, Ohio
- The Wurlitzer theatre organ was introduced and became Wurlitzer's most famous product. Many still exist all over the world, including one at the Byrd Theater in Richmond, VA
- Wurlitzer also manufactured the Band Organ, Orchestrion, and Nickelodeon.

# 1910

A precursor to the music palaces of the 1920s, this is a nickelodeon theater in Toronto, Canada around 1910. Nickelodeons often used gaudy posters and ornamented facades to attract patrons, but bare walls and hard seats usually awaited within.



1920

The  
Beginning

- “All American Electrical Manufacturers” was founded by E. N. Rauland in Chicago, Illinois, with a focus on producing radio set components.
- “Mohawk Electric Corporation” was also founded this same year in Chicago, Illinois

1922

Focus on  
Radio  
Technology  
Begins

- Rauland's "All American Electrical Manufacturers" changed its name to "All American Radio Corporation," still located in Chicago, Illinois
- Eagle Radio Company formed in Newark, NJ
  - Eagle sold console and table battery sets from 1923 to 1926
  - Eagle was basically across the Hudson from Wurlitzer
- Hazeltine invented the Neutrodyne circuit
  - Eagle capitalized on this, as well as about 20 independent radio manufactures

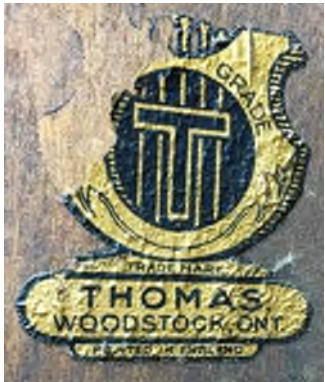
1923

Models  
Available

- The Mohawk Corporation
  - Model 100 introduced this year.
    - Wood 3 knob 5 tube battery table set with a slant front
- The Eagle Corporation
  - Model A
    - Wood 3 knob 5 tube battery table set

1924

More  
Corporate  
Name  
Changes



- “Mohawk Electric Corporation” changed its name to “Mohawk Corporation of Illinois,” still located in Chicago.
- At this time Mohawk also started doing business in Toronto, Canada as Mohawk Radio Limited, which was the Canadian subsidiary of Mohawk Corporation of Illinois
  - Cabinets in Canada were made by Thomas, in Woodstock, ON.
- Eagle introduced the Model B “Neutrodyne”
  - Wood 3 knob 5 tube battery TRF table set

1925

Advertising  
News

- Advertising emerges depicting “Rauland Manufacturing Company” using “All American” as a trade name
- Eagle continued the “Neutrodyne” table radio as Model F
  - Eagle also had several other console and table models with 5 tubes and 3 knobs
  - This was Eagle’s heyday
- Mohawk had some nicer portable, table and console battery sets with 5 or 6 tubes, arguably nicer than Eagle’s offerings

1925

Mohawk  
made radios  
for other  
companies,  
too

- The Mohawk Model 100, introduced in 1923, was made for and sold by Otto Higel Co. Ltd., Toronto, Canada.
  - This company was established in Toronto during 1896 to make piano and organ supplies. The owner was from Germany and likely very familiar with the Wurlitzers

1926

Many Trade  
Names!

Let's  
Debate!

- Some sources suggest Rauland/All American was making radio sets under trade names All-Max, Chieftain, Lyric, Sextette. All American was a component supplier, principally to Mohawk.
  - Rauland also sold Lyric brand radio vacuum tubes during the late 1920s.
- Eagle began a decline, but had several console and table battery sets available
  - Each had 5 tubes and 3 dials
- Mohawk had at least 8 nicer table and console battery sets using 3 knobs and 6 tubes
  - These had Native American model names like Cherokee, Iroquois, Navajo, Pocahontas and others

1927

Merger  
and  
Acquisition!

- Pioneers during the early years of radio, “The All-American Radio Corporation” and “Mohawk Corporation” merged late in the year to become “The All-American Mohawk Corporation.”
  - All American brought the ‘Lyric’ name to the partnership, and Mohawk supplied the engineering talent and distribution network (Wurlitzer and possibly some others)
- All-American Mohawk marketed radio sets primarily under the “Lyric” and “Mohawk” names
  - Mohawk Model 44 was a wood table battery set with two knobs and six tubes
- Wurlitzer purchased the Eagle Radio Company

1928

Wurlitzer  
Selling  
Lyric  
Radios!

- Wurlitzer was now featuring the “All American Mohawk Corporation Lyric Radio” in its Christmas advertising for its New York City store
  - Wurlitzer became one of Lyric’s largest dealers
  - Advertised Prices for Lyric radios ranged from \$92.50 to \$425.00 *less tubes, with the high-end model equivalent to nearly \$8,000.00 today!*
- All-American Mohawk Lyric sets from 1928 continued into 1929. These were A/C TRF sets.
  - 6 Tube A/C Models 60, 61, 62, 65, 66
  - 8 Tube A/C Models 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88
    - These had an extra RF stage and Push-Pull output



1929

Big  
Acquisition!

- Research suggests Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company **took over production of Lyric** radios, and I believe that to be both US production and the subsidiary in Toronto. U.S. production later moved from Chicago to North Tonawanda, NY (near Buffalo).
- E. N. Rauland left All-American Mohawk and set-up Rauland Corporation (more to tell later).
- All-American Mohawk Lyric sets from 1929 continued into 1930. These were A/C TRF sets.
  - Models 90, 93, 94, 95 had 10 tubes and 4 RF stages
    - These also had 25 HZ and 60HZ versions

1930

In-Between  
Year

Some Notable  
Models

All were A/C

- Lyric 11 – Wood Lowboy Console with 7 tubes, 3 knobs, broadcast band
- Lyric A1 – Wood Lowboy Console with 7 tubes, 3 knobs
- Lyric J – Nice cathedral with 6 tubes, 3 knobs
  - Possibly an early A/C superhet, could not find schematic

1931 - 1932

Some  
Significant  
Models

Superhets  
175KHZ IF  
Used A/C

- Known Mohawk Lyric Superhet Models Made in Canada (with the Lyric name on front and a Wurlitzer metal tag added to the rear of the cabinet
  - S-6 was a 6 tube 3 knob radio available as a wood cathedral or wood lowboy console
    - The author acquired one in Lexington VA and restored it (see pictures on next slide)
  - S-7 was a 7 tube 3 knob cathedral set available as a console too
  - S-8 was an 8 tube 3 knob console set



# 1931-1932

## Lyric S-6 Console Radio

- Made by Mohawk Radio Ltd. in **Toronto, Canada**
- “Product of Wurlitzer Tag” on the back of the cabinet
- Early 6 Tube Superheterodyne, S6 Chassis
- Donated to the National Capital Radio & Television Museum in 2024 from the Tom Shearer Collection



1931-1932

## Lyric S-62 Grandfather Clock Radio

- Made by All-American Mohawk Corporation in **North Tonawanda, New York**
- Early 6 Tube Superheterodyne
- Same Lyric S6 Chassis as the Canadian S6 in the previous slide
- Lee Wells collection



1931-1932

### Lyric S-7 Cathedral Radio

- Made by Mohawk Radio Ltd. in **Toronto, Canada**
- Early 7 Tube Superheterodyne
- AC set
- Broadcast band
- Advertised using the new “screen grid” tube



1932-1933

US and Canada

Superhets

175 KHZ IF

- Lyric 39
  - A/C, Superhet, 9 tubes
- Lyric 49
  - A/C, Superhet, 9 tubes, 2 speakers

# 1934

Wurlitzer  
manufactured  
its own radios  
under the Lyric  
name

- Wurlitzer produced and sold its own radios using the Lyric brand name, with manufacturing in North Tonawanda, NY.
- Model SA-91A – A/C with 9 tubes and 4 knobs
  - Author acquired late 1990s at Radioactivity tailgate
  - Small **art-deco** wood lowboy console with 4 legs
  - Superhet with 175 KHZ IF
  - Schematic indicates design by All-American Mohawk
- There were tombstone, table, console and side-table Lyrics with 4 to 13 tubes during this year



# 1934

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## **Lyric SA-91A**

- Must be early because made by All-American Mohawk In the US and has no Wurlitzer identification on the chassis or cabinet
- Perhaps a last “hurrah” by All-American Mohawk!
- Art-Deco
- 9 tubes with push-pull 47s
- A/C Superheterodyne
- Schematics and Alignment Info in Riders 4 and 5
  - Still Using 175 KHZ IF
- Tom Shearer Collection

# 1934

## LYRIC Model SA-5

- These examples of the same model were made by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company in North Tonawanda, NY, USA
- 5 Tube Superheterodyne chassis in tombstone cabinet
- Both sets are the same model and year.
  - The white radio has the LYRIC tag on the back of the chassis
  - The brown radio has the “new” Wurlitzer tag on the back of the chassis
- These two unrestored radios were acquired by the author at the April 2026 MAARC tailgate at Sully Station



1930s

Jukeboxes

Why Sales

Skyrocketed!

- The Wurlitzer was the iconic jukebox of the Big Band era, to the extent that Wurlitzer came in some places to be a generic name for *any* jukebox.
- The end of Prohibition in 1933 and the resulting increase in the market for coin-operated music machines in bars and dance halls helped with the company's success.
- In 1932, Businessman and Politician Homer Capehart (1897-1979) joined the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company of North Tonawanda, New York, as vice president and general sales manager (after selling phonograph parts to Wurlitzer)
  - Previously he bought Packard Piano Company to manufacture musical instruments, and founded Capehart Corp (Amperion) in 1927 that was partially acquired by Farnsworth in 1939

1942

Goodbye  
Mohawk!

- During WW II, Wurlitzer stopped making organs and other luxury items including radios in North Tonawanda to make proximity fuses for our military.
- After growing throughout the 1930s, Mohawk Radio Limited in Toronto was acquired by **Addison** Industries, Ltd, of Canada
- Addison was a producer of nice pre-war art-deco catalin and plastic radios, like the ones in the next two slides

1940

Addison 2 “Waterfall” Deco  
Catalin Radio

Photo from Public Domain



1940

Addison 2 “Waterfall” Deco  
Plastic Radio

Tom Shearer Collection



1940s to  
1960s

Jukeboxes

- Wurlitzer manufactured monaural jukeboxes under the “**Lyric**” name
- In 1963, Stereo made an appearance in Wurlitzer jukeboxes under the “**Stereophonic**” name
- In the late 1960s, Seeburg jukebox production numbers surpassed Wurlitzer’s, because Seeburg used a simpler mechanism to play both sides of a smaller 45 record
- Wurlitzer struggled on for several years producing a final nostalgic 1971 model called the "1050." The model didn't sell well, and the jukebox line was sold to a German company in 1973.

1948

Final  
Takeover!

- Rauland Corporation was bought by Zenith, also located in Chicago, which was then used to produce television picture tubes for many years.

1955 - 1982

Electric Pianos

- Wurlitzer produced electric pianos from 1955 to 1982. They were commonly known as “Wurlis.” They became popular with R&B and Rock groups, especially Supertramp.
- The company became famous for a variety of other pianos, especially the spinet which was used by beginners, and the “butterfly” grand. Wurlitzer invented many features on its pianos.

1966-  
1969

Electric  
Guitars

- Wurlitzer had an Elkhart, Indiana location by this time, and became the sole distributor of guitars made by the Holman-Woodell Company of Neodesha, Kansas. Early Wurlitzer guitars were wired for stereo output.
- By 1967, Wurlitzer left Holman-Woodell due to quality issues, and Wurlitzer guitars were then manufactured by Welson in Italy. The Wurlitzer line expanded to include semi-hollow body electric and acoustic guitars. Wurlitzer continued to distribute Welson-made guitars under the Wurlitzer name until 1969 when Wurlitzer stopped selling guitars under its own brand name.

## 1988 to Present

Wurlitzer ends up back in Germany

- Baldwin Piano purchased Wurlitzer's piano-making assets and brand in 1988. Soon after, Gibson Guitar acquired Baldwin as a subsidiary. Gibson also purchased Deutche Wurlitzer Jukebox and Electronics Vending brand in 2006, briefly bringing the primary Wurlitzer product lines back under one owner. Baldwin stopped using the Wurlitzer name on pianos by the end of 2009.
- Gibson now uses the Wurlitzer brand exclusively for jukeboxes and vending machines. Wurlitzer continued to manufacture jukeboxes and vending machines at its factory in Hullhorst, Germany until 2013. Wurlitzer still makes replacement parts, and its headquarters are located in Hullhorst, with distribution and sales offices in Gurnee, Illinois and Oxfordshire, England.

## Conclusion

### Summary

- It appears production of Mohawk's Lyric line of radios, both in the US and Canada, was amalgamated under Wurlitzer before 1930, and ended at the onset of WWII.
- The Canadian plant, at least, was acquired by Addison a year or two before the U.S. and Canada entered WWII .
- According to Duke University Archives, the Lyric trade name lasted into the 1950s, but I believe was really the mid 1960s when Wurlitzer marketed monaural jukeboxes as "Lyrics."

End of  
Presentation

That's All! Thanks for watching!

Wurlitzer and Lyric

- Tom's email: [CTRCMShearer@yahoo.com](mailto:CTRCMShearer@yahoo.com)
- Sources/References Used:
  - Riders
  - Wikipedia
  - Radiomuseum
  - Internet Searches
  - Duke University Repository
  - Collector's Guide to Antique Radios, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Slusser
  - Canadian Vintage Radio Society
  - Tom Shearer Collection
    - Lyric S-6, SA-5 and SA-91A
    - Addison 2 Deco Plastic Radio
  - Lee Walls Collection – Lyric S-62 Grandfather Clock Radio