

## MACLITE RADIO

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**M**y interest in radio collecting began over fifty years ago. It has always been centered on short-lived companies that began making radios in the early 1920's. Such companies typically began with enthusiasm and high hopes, but failed after producing perhaps no more than two or three models.

Many early manufacturers fall into this category. Because of their brief lifetimes, it can be difficult to research the firms and collect their products. But I enjoy this kind of a challenge. In fact, if a radio make is listed in one of the so-called price guides it is probably too common to hold my interest!

The Maclite story was unique for me in that the majority of the research and the supporting documentation actually came into my hands a year before a Maclite radio did. The documents, obtained from an area paper dealer on two different occasions, consisted of a packet of paper that was saved by Daisy M. Jefts and Mrs. Alice E. Scott.

The ladies lived at the same address on Lunenburg Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, which is about 3 miles from my home. In 1923 they purchased forty shares of stock between them at \$35 per share. They had bought their stock at a time when any radio enterprise was full of promise, paying for it on a promissory note with appropriate time payments.

The packet of paper I acquired included their Stock Certificates, the notes and receipts for the payments, and a large folded broadside picture of the factory at Clarendon and Stanhope Streets in Boston. The other side of the sheet has a long promotional statement that was promising, to say the least.



Maclite company headquarters at Clarendon and Stanhope Streets in Boston



Reissued stock certificate in the name of Maclite Battery and Radio Corporation.

There was also what appeared to be a reprint (one side was blank) from the now-defunct *Boston Transcript* of January 18 1924--part of a series of articles designed to help the radio buyer to decide which set to buy. I was able to verify its authenticity during one of my trips to the New York Public Library archives, where I located that very newspaper.

The company evidently began as the Maclite Storage Battery Co. but subsequently was known as Maclite Radio Sales Co. Finally, in July 1925, it

became the Maclite Battery and Radio Corporation.

Some information gleaned from the Jeffts/Scott is summarized below:

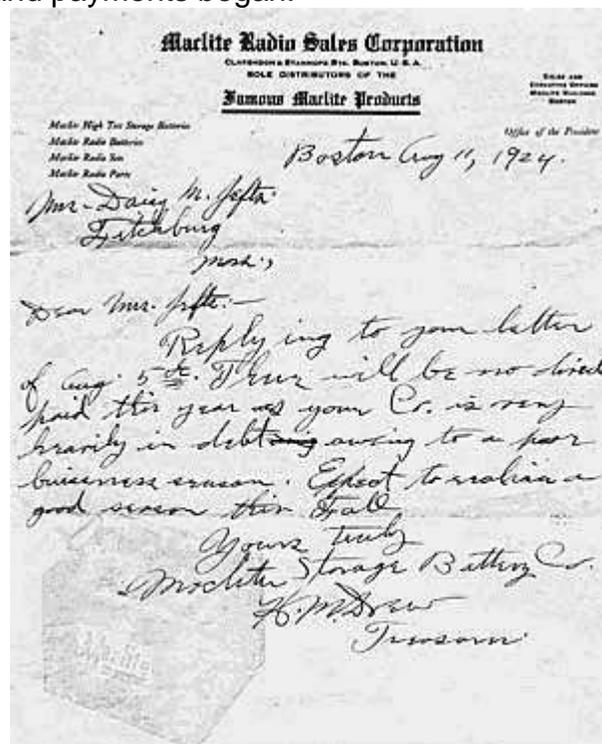
**April 1923**--The stock was purchased and payments began.

**May 22, 1923**--All company stock was sold out and the following optimistic statement was made to stockholders: "As you have joined this organization as a stockholder at the very beginning of its operation, I feel that I should take this occasion to advise you that the possibilities before are very great and to express the opinion that it would be in your best interest to hold your shares, as no doubt you will have many offers for same, as I feel we are at the threshold of a bright future both in our battery and radio departments. (P. N. McNeill President)

**Aug 25, 1923**--Stock payments were completed by Scott and Jeffts.

**Oct 6 1923**--In a letter to stockholders: "Please take notice that your trustees have decided at a meeting recently held, that action on common stock dividends be deferred until January 1, 1924"

**Dec 28, 1923**--In a letter to stockholders: "You are hereby notified that the annual meeting of the stock holders of the Maclite Storage Battery Company will be held in the company's office, #62 Stanhope Street in the city of Boston Massachusetts, on



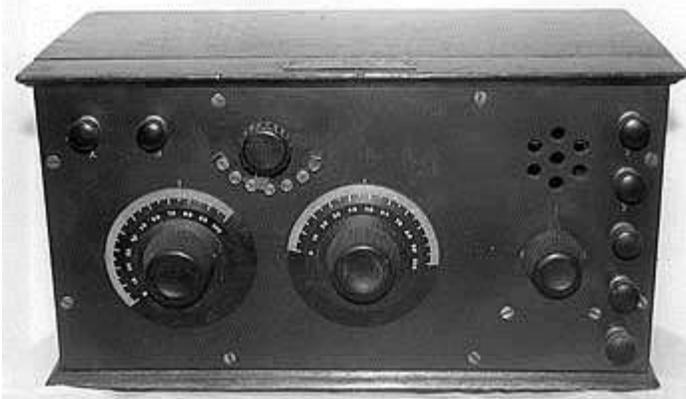
Note from the Maclite Treasurer to Mrs. Jeffts with the bad news about the dividend.

*Monday, the 7th day of January, 1924 at 7:30 PM for the election of Directors, Treasurer, and clerk and for the transaction of any other business that may properly come before the meeting..."*

**Jan 15, 1924**--In a letter to stockholders: *"The Board of Directors ... have decided at a meeting recently held, that dividends on the preferred and common stock, be passed and action on same be deferred for the present. Enclosed please find financial report on the company. (Note: This report, dated Dec. 31, 1923, showed a loss of \$11,544.51).*

**Aug 11, 1924**--(Handwritten (!) to Mrs. Jeffs) *Replying to your letter of Aug. 5th. There will be no dividend this year as your Co. is very heavily in debt owing to a poor business season. Expect to realize a good season this fall. (Signed by the Treasurer)*

**July 2, 1925**--Notice was sent that stockholders in the former Maclite Storage Battery Co. and/or the Maclite Radio Sales Corporation are to exchange their present holdings for the equal number of shares in the new Maclite Battery and Radio Corporation. (The stock certificates that I have indicate that the two women did that.)



The Maclite Model B receiver.

The first announcement I have seen of Maclite's entrance into the National radio field appears in the June 1922 issue of *The Radio Dealer*, which indicated the company was manufacturing radio and automobile batteries, variocouplers, variometers, variable condensers, and complete tube and crystal sets. This magazine seems to be the only source of Maclite ads and announcements.

An ad in the April 1923 issue of the same publication mentioned crystal detectors. However, I have never seen a detector or crystal set by Maclite mentioned as part of a collection.

The Maclite Radio Model B that I have is a typical one-tube regenerative set. It was pretty much out of date soon after it was produced, and I have found no indication the company used any other circuit. The only other model I have heard of is the Model A, which seems to be pretty much identical to the "B" according to the picture in the *Boston Transcript* article.

I do know of a couple of other Model Bs that are around and possibly an amplifier. One was on Ebay and one showed up at the Carl Knipfel auction by Richard Estes.

There is a little story behind how I got this set, which always adds to the value of a radio in my mind. It showed up in a very well advertised auction that was being held right in the middle of the peak activity of a New England Radio Club meet.

Although I was set up to sell as usual, I had my wife take charge of my space and drove 60 miles right through Boston to get there, buy the set (as well as a

Radiofone Crystal set) and get back to the meet before it closed. The only other person who had a real interest in the set was laid up for surgery and, luckily for me, couldn't attend. Incidentally, my wife had sold everything before I got back!

Maclite was a typical "radio boom" company that either leaped before they looked or couldn't move fast enough. I would be interested to hear from anyone who has additional information to add to this story and who may have any Maclite products.