

# American Radio Revival

*"New Life for Old Boxes"*



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## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. "How much is my restored radio worth?"

This is a complicated question, but very generally, the value of any set can be ascertained by adding its retail antique-store market value in a non-working or substandard condition (the state I find 90% of all vintage sets in) to its cost of restoration. Market conditions in the private collector arena must be understood, too. Non-working radios are *usually* not very valuable; there are exceptions: Scotts, McMurdo Silvers, "novelty" sets, Third Reich sets, high-end luxury sets, specialty sets, limited runs, very early sets (early 1920's and back), etc.

### 2. "Can I buy a radio from American Radio Revival?"

No. We *don't* handle sales of old-time sets. We can provide you with a better quality of service if we stick to restoration. "He who spreads himself thin may do everything badly."

### 3. "My set works sorta O.K. Why should I have it restored?"

This is skating on very thin ice. Depending on when it was made, the components in your set are perhaps 30, 40, 50 or even in some cases 60+ years old. After a short time of playing a "works-sorta-ok" set, there is usually a flash, a loud BANG! and the set falls dead, or starts smoking until someone pulls the plug. It's safe to say that the cost of restoration will now be higher. Play it safe and money-wise: restore it, **then** plug it in and enjoy it! Additionally, you'll be stunned at what the set acts like after restoration, no matter how good you thought it ran before.

[By the way, we *restore*, not merely repair. There are many slap-dash-patchwork artists around, but very few who really know how to renovate, reconstruct and electrically align a set to original specifications.]

### 4. "How can I tell if my set is a good candidate for restoration?"

About 5% of all sets attempted fail to respond to restoration; there are many reasons for this: concealed, non-reversible damage of non-generic and irreplaceable parts are one, corrosive deterioration of the same category of parts another, and previous substandard modification "hatchet jobs" performed by servicing personnel barely qualified to hold a soldering iron the third, and most prevalent reason. Sets that

have had their chassis hacked up by poor repair persons are often very difficult cases indeed, and some are just too far gone. It makes us sick when we see this.

To minimize wasted effort, we usually tackle the chassis, power supplies and speaker assemblies first before starting the cabinetry and refinishing. We want to be sure we have a "runner" first before spending 40+ hours on restoring a console cabinet, for example. Yes, it does take that long; we do this by hand, not in a setting with sets on an assembly line being shot with lacquer guns.

If your set fails to respond, you will only be charged the wholesale cost of any non-returnable special order electronic parts that were needed to attempt restoration plus a one-hour labor charge. But remember: 95% of all sets attempted make it!

5. *"Is my set worth fixing?"*

This is a very personal call, and can only be answered by the owner. If you're doing this as an investment, that's one thing. In general, sets do appreciate rather well over time. If it was your father's or mother's set, that's another thing entirely. Again, the set may be one that really "put the hook in you" when you passed it. That's reason enough! But no matter how exalted or how humble, I always tell my clients that they must like the set, regardless of it's dollar value. No matter how valuable, if you hate the way it looks, you won't keep it long.

6. *"Why restore a set anyway?"*

Besides the personal reasons, you'll be doing future generations a huge favor. The radio communications art developed very quickly over a matter of a very few years. Technical discoveries promptly made last year's set obsolete, and many sets went into the landfill promptly, or in one period, actually burned on a mass scale as a marketing ploy to get people to buy new radios. We just could never have too many saved and brought back to life!

7. *"What's this going to cost me?"*

Every manufacturer had his own ideas about how an early radio should have been built! As such, they can vary a good deal in design, especially radios from the 20's. This can throw a wrench into shoot-from-the-hip estimation; doing an estimate over the phone is irresponsible and almost always inaccurate. To get reasonable correct, you'll have to bring or send the set in for no-cost, no-obligation written estimate.

8. *"What kind of sets do you work on?"*

Generally, we like to confine ourselves to the "Golden Age of Radio" era of American make, 1928-1942, and to the home broadcast radio in particular. We make occasional exception for certain earlier battery sets, and some later radios up to about

1960. We also do some vintage communication "general coverage" receivers from 1933-1970. But they have to be vacuum tube or tube/hybrid types from 1958 onward.

9. "What sort of sets don't you work on?"

- A) Anything foreign made, no matter if made for the US market or not.
- B) Anything made past 1960, unless it's a general coverage Shortwave rig, and that to just 1970.
- C) Solid State gear.
- D) Audiophile and/or Stereo Gear.
- E) Amateur Radio Transmitters
- F) Radio/Phono Combos of any year

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