

2016 PDF edition

Old Familiar Strains

A newsletter for Collectors of Radio Strain Insulators and related items
Volume 2 No. 4/5

August/October 1995

STORM KING

VIS-O-GLOW

PUR-A-TONE

**AMERICAN
ACE**

What do these names have in common?
(See page 3 for the answer)

STORM GUARD

Editorial

by Dan Howard

I have received several nice letters this month in response to the last issue. I am glad that you enjoyed it. In case you hadn't noticed, this issue focuses on the many products of L.S. Brach Manufacturing Company. Which, by the way is the answer to the question on the cover. All five were Brach Trademarks for lightning arresters and other radio accessories.

New Readers I am pleased to introduce two new readers this issue. Elton Gish, a familiar name to readers of *Crown Jewels*, joined our ranks during July. He introduced himself to me by sending about 1/2 a pound of copies of insulator catalogs and literature! Elton's address: Elton N. Gish, P.O. Box 1317, Buna TX 77612 (409) 994-5662.

Another new reader, Ray McAllister, reports that he found out about OFS on the Internet. Ray, Bob Stahr, Keith Roloson, and others participate in an insulator bulletin board. Now, apparently, we do too! To reach Ray on the Internet, check out Insulators@Resilience.COM. Ray's "other" address is: Ray McAllister, 7300 Mill Run Dr., Derwood MD 20855-1153.

Double Issue There was just too much information on the L.S. Brach company to fit between the pages of a standard issue. Rather than breaking it up, I decided to combine the August and October issues and print a "double" issue this month. (And I still didn't get it all in).

We are trying color again this issue with a photo from the collection of Bob Dennison.

I am planning to finish up the year with a late November/early December issue. Planned features include follow-ups to the articles on measuring and, if space allows, a list of Brach radio accessory patents.

Letters By now, several of you will have attended the National Insulator convention and others will have stories about finds at regional meets. I know that Dick Mackiewicz will be beating the bushes at those *fantastic* antique radio swaps back east this Fall. (No, I'm not Jealous! I'm not! I'm not! I'm not!) I would like to print stories of your finds in the December issue. Please write.

Jim Overstreet

Bob Stahr and Keith Roloson reported to me that the hobby lost a friend in late June. Keith said that Jim Overstreet passed away at age 62, the victim of a heart attack. Jim was one of the "original dozen" who contributed to the founding of this newsletter.

L.S. Brach Manufacturing Company

by Dan Howard

When this project began, I had no idea that Brach made so many different products over so many years. In addition to the arresters, insulators, and antenna kits shown in the following pictorial section, there are many more for which pictures were unavailable. I have printed a checklist of insulators and arresters on page 7. Please let me know of others as you come across them.

Notes on Brach Company History

Leon S. (L.S.) Brach was apparently quite an inventor. There was not room in this issue to list even the radio-related patents that he held! (I'll try to fit in a list in a future OFS) According to patent filings, Mr. Brach resided in New York City in the Teens. In the 1920's he cited 325 Harrison St., East Orange, NJ, as his place of residence. Mr. Brach became an associate member of the Institute of Radio Engineers in 1922.

According to ads, Brach began manufacturing lightning arresters in 1906. Sales during the first few years were to fire and police departments, telegraph companies, railroads, The U.S. Army, and others to protect signaling wires.

During World War I, Brach made a retractable airplane antenna. Products sold to the armed services may carry Brach's Manufacturer Designating Symbol "CLS".

Brach's decision to enter the home radio market probably anticipated the publishing of the Fire Underwriters rules

in May, 1922. These rules require the use of "approved" lightning arresters with outdoor antennas. Users of "unapproved" equipment risk losing their fire insurance!

According to ads, the company actively manufactured products through World War II and into the age of television. The 1955 Radio's Master shows a full line of TV antennas and accessories.

The company had been purchased by General Bronze by the early 1950's. (In 1958, General Bronze bought out Cornish Wire Co (CORWICO), also a popular lightning arrester manufacturer). Page 6 recaps these, and other, key dates.

Notes on Brach Products

Insulators

To date, I haven't found any ads for Brach brand insulators. I am beginning to suspect that that the insulators were not promoted separately. Brach may have put its name on insulators as a means to sell complete antenna kits and thereby improve lightning arrester sales. One reason I think so is that I have found Brach insulators in antenna kits but have not run across any boxed separately.

Brach is listed as a manufacturer of composition insulators in the November 1924 Radio Trade Directory. However, the company was not listed among manufacturers of glass or porcelain insulators. Has anyone found a Brach composition insulator?

In a letter published in the January 1973 Crown Jewels, Walter Lehnert theorized that Brach contracted with others to make the insulators. Thus, he attributes the two sizes and colors to manufacturing differences. This could also explain why unembossed varieties are found. Interestingly, in the 22 years since his letter was written, we have no additional varieties of Brach insulators to add to Mr. Lehnert's list.

Based on the date of Brach's design patent and the Sear's ads, I concur with Mr. Lehnert's estimation that Brach glass insulators date from the late 20's through the early Thirties.

Lightning Arresters

In addition to selling its own line of Brach Storm King and Storm Guard arresters, Brach also sold arresters under the "Solderall" trademark during the late 20's.

Brach probably manufactured and sold arresters under other "private labels" as well. Compare the "Solderall" and the "Grant Special" lightning arresters in Bob Dennison's photo on page 12. Dick Mackiewicz has a Radisco cartridge type arrester that is similar to the Brach Type 200 arrester shown in Figure 3. Collectors report finding Brach's small bakelite arrester with names such as "Blue Grass" and "Parkson." While my Blue Grass arrester is identical Brach's, the box says

that it is a product of Belknap Hardware & Mfg. Co. I am not sure what relationship, if any, existed between the two companies.

Antenna Kits

Brach sold antenna kits under his own name and under store brands through mail order outlets such as Sears Roebuck and Wards. The ads on page 13 show a variety of kits that Brach put together.

Conclusion

I appreciate all of the help that I had in assembling this information. As always, if you have something to add, please let me know and we will run an update in a future issue.

Space allowing, I will follow up with a folio of Brach arrester patents in the next issue and a list of patent numbers.

We may also come back to the Fire Underwriter's rules which provided the catalyst for wide-spread lightning arrester sales in the 1920's.

Key Dates and Addresses

by Bob Puttre and Dan Howard

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1906
L.S. Brach begins manufacturing. | (Industrial Directory of New Jersey 1943 - 1944) |
| 1911
Patents carborundum lightning arrester (Sept.) Pat #1,004,235. | 1946
New plant and office: 200 Central Ave, Newark, NJ. (1946 Radio Handbook) |
| 1917
Retractable aeroplane antenna is made for World War I. | 1951
Brach Mfg. Corp listed as a Division of General Bronze Corp (Radio's Master, 1951 per Dick Mackiewicz) (Actual buy out may have taken place earlier). |
| 1922
L.S. Brach Mfg Company 129 Sussex Ave, Newark, NJ (Proceedings of the IRE, April 1922).

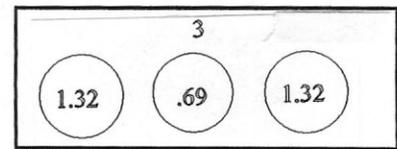
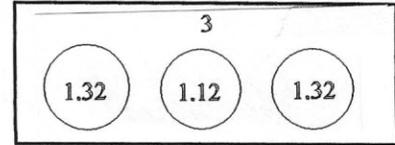
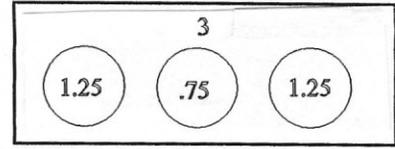
L.S. Brach enrolled as an associate member of the Institute of Radio Engineers.

First ad run in QST magazine (May). | 1958
General Bronze Corp buys out Cornish Wire Company, (Corwico), also a lightning arrester manufacturer and a former Brach competitor. (Wall Street Journal 12/10/58) |
| 1926
Brach insulator design is patented. (See Fig. 1) | 1967
New Address: 899 Main St, Sayreville, NJ. (Thomas Register) |
| 1930
Type 300 bakelite arrester is patented (April) Pat # 1,752,660. | 1968
Listing now says: "See JFD Electronics Co 15th Ave at 62nd St, Brooklyn NY" (Thomas Register) |
| 1942
L.S. Brach Mfg Corp 55 Dickerson St, Newark, NJ Pres: L.S. Brach Treasurer: Mrs Madeline Brach. (Newark City Directory) | |
| 1943
L.S. Brach Mfg Corp 55 Dickerson St, Newark, NJ. Manufacturers of radio antenna lightning arresters, municipal signal supplies, electrical specialties. Employees: 200 men, 100 ladies. | |

L.S. Brach Check List

Insulators

- Type 1: Clear glass 3 1/2" long, Embossed End 1 Side A: "L.S. Brach Mfg. Co." End 2 Side A: "Newark NJ" End 2 Side B: "Pat Appld For", End loops 15/16" dia. (Sim. to Fig. 1 & 2)
- Type 2: Clear glass 3 11/16" long, Embossed End 1 Side A: "L.S. Brach Mfg. Co." End 2 Side A: "Pat Appld For" End 1 Side B: "Newark NJ", End loops 15/16" dia. (Sim. to Fig. 1 & 2)
- Type 3: Purple glass, 3 23/32" long, Embossed End 1 Side A: "L.S. Brach Mfg. Co." End 2 Side A: "Pat Appld For" End 1 Side B: "Newark NJ", End loops 1 1/16" dia. (Sim. to Fig. 1 & 2)



Rib diameters (in inches)

Similar unembossed insulators are found in both colors.

Lightning Arresters

- Brach Radio Arrester, white porcelain, posts marked G, A, 2 9/16" x 1" (p. 12, Dennison photo, C4 R4).
- L.S. Brach, bakelite, 3" x 27/32", (not pictured).
- Same as above, marked "Parkson"
- Same as above, marked "Blue Grass"
- Storm Guard, bakelite, L.S. Brach, short neck, (Fig. 7).
- Storm Guard, bakelite, L.S. Brach, long neck, (Fig. 6).
- Storm King, bakelite, diamond shaped, posts on top and bottom, 1 7/8" high x 2 1/2" dia. (not pictured).
- Storm King, brown porcelain, non-air-gap, L.S. Brach Mfg Co, 4 1/2" x 1 3/8" (Fig. 8, 11, & 12, and P.12, Dennison photo C2 R2).
- Storm King, brown porcelain, non-air-gap, Solderall Co., 4 1/2" x 1 3/8" (Fig. 8, 11 & 12, and P.12, Dennison photo C2 R2).
- Storm King, brown porcelain, air gap (?), Solderall Co., 4 1/2" x 1 3/8" (Fig. 8, 11 & 12, and P.12, Dennison photo C2 R2).

- Type 27M, neon argon cartridge, Brach (not pictured).
- Type 200, cartridge type arrester, vacuum type, L.S. Brach Mfg. Co. (Fig. 3 and P.12, Dennison photo C6 R2).
- Type 210 Brach Vacuum Gap Lightning Protector, L.S. Brach Mfg. Co. (not pictured).
- Type 223, bakelite, vacuum type, long skirt, L.S. Brach Mfg. Co, 5 3/4" x 2 1/2" (P.12, Dennison photo C6 R1).
- Type 223, bakelite, vacuum type, low skirt, L.S. Brach Mfg. Co. (Fig. 3).
- Type 223, bakelite, vacuum type, short skirt, L.S. Brach Mfg. Co. (Fig. 4 & 5).
- Type 300 Brach Storm King, bakelite, L.S. Brach Mfg Co, posts marked ant & gnd, 4 1/2" x 1 1/4" (Fig. 9 & 13, and P.12, Dennison photo C4 R6).
- Type 300 Brach Storm King, bakelite, L.S. Brach Mfg Corp, posts marked ant and blank, 4 1/2" x 1 1/4" (Fig. 9 & 13, and P.12, Dennison photo C4 R6).
- Type 300 Brach Storm King, (doublet), bakelite, L.S. Brach Mfg Corp, posts marked ant and blank, 4 1/2" x 1 1/4" (not pictured).
- Type 666 Brach Doublet, blue porcelain, Brach, posts marked Ant, Gnd, Ant, 4 1/4" x 1 3/8" (Similar to Fig.10 and Dennison photo C2 R1).
- Vis-O-Glow, (doublet), glass, L.S. Brach Mfg Corp, 4 1/2" x 1 3/8" (Fig. 15).
- Type 1003 Vis-O-Glow, (doublet), clear plastic, L.S. Brach Mfg Corp, 4 3/8" x 1 1/4" (Not pictured).

Antenna Kits

- Brach Antenna Outfit No. 223 (1924) w/ Type 223 bakelite arrester (Fig. 16).
- Storm King Aerial Outfit (1924) w/ Storm King porcelain arrester (Fig.16)
- Sears 57F2037 (1926) w/ Storm Guard bakelite arrester (Fig. 17)
- Sears 57k2019 (1927) w/ Storm King porcelain arrester (Fig. 17)
- Sears 57N5500 (1928) w/ Storm King Type 300 bakelite arrester (not pictured).
- Ward's Airline Cat. No. 62-5174 (1928) w/ Storm King Type 300 bakelite arrester and type 3 insulators (not pictured).

Insulators

69,381. INSULATOR. LEON S. BRACH, East Orange, N. J., assignor to L. S. Brach Manufacturing Co., Newark, N. J., a Corporation of New Jersey. Filed Mar. 5, 1925. Serial No. 12,608. Term of patent 7 years.

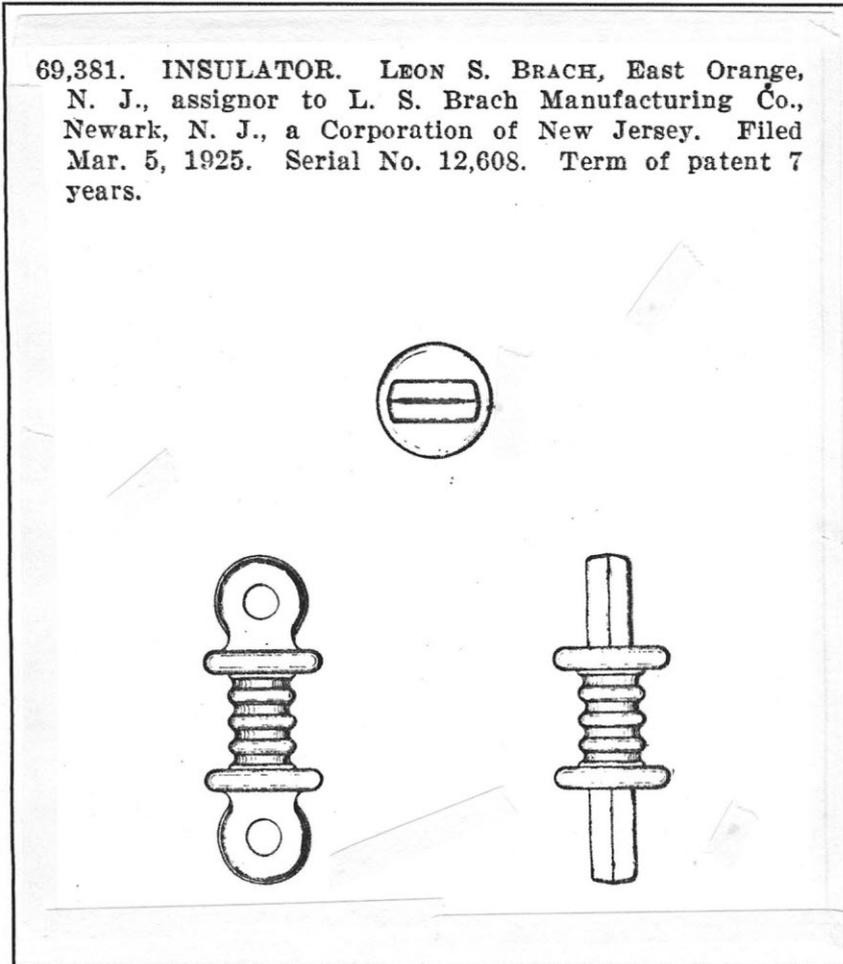
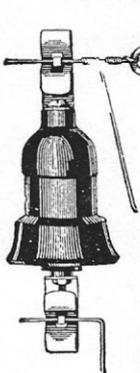


Figure 1 Insulator design patent

Glass Insulator
Considered the most practical insulator for radio use. Made of crystal glass. Size. 3 7/8 inches long by 1 1/4 inches in diameter. Shpg. wt., 2. 1/2 lb. 
57N5504—Per set of two..... 12c

Figure 2 Brach (?) Insulator

Lightning Arresters

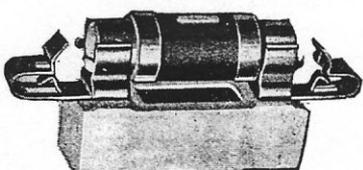


**BRACH
VACUUM
ARRESTERS**

Are Not Alone the Highest Type of Lightning Protection But Take Off Most of the Static Recommended and Used by Radio Clubs, Manufacturers, Radio Engineers and U. S. Army.

Approved, Listed and Recommended by the National Board of Fire Underwriters.

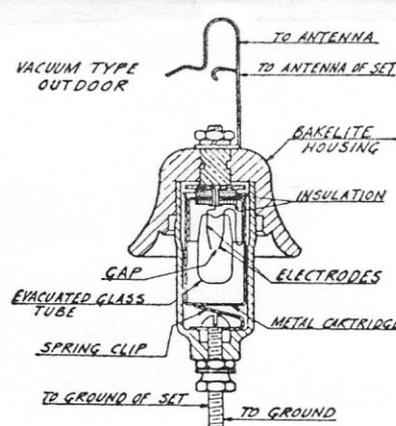
GIVE AUTOMATIC PROTECTION



Carried in Stock by All Dealers and Distributed by Leading Electrical and Radio Jobbers.

L. S. BRACH MFG. CO.
Manufacturers of Lightning Arresters for 16 Years
NEWARK, N. J.

Figure 3 Type 200 & 223



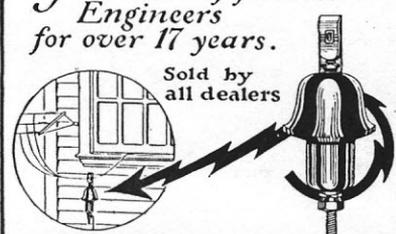
VACUUM TYPE OUTDOOR

Sectional view of vacuum type lightning arrester used for outdoor work.

Figure 4 Type 223

The choice of foremost Engineers for over 17 years.

Sold by all dealers



**BRACH
VACUUM
RADIO PROTECTOR**

Approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters

Ask YOUR Insurance Agent

L. S. BRACH MFG. CO.,
Newark, New Jersey

SOLDERALL
Metal in Paste Form



Handy Tube 25¢
Every Electrical Connection Needs
Solderall for Perfect Reception
The Only Convenient Metal Solder

Figure 5 Type 223

**Brach Storm Guard
Lightning
Arrester**

Sensitive. High capacity bakelite radio protector, non-air gap. Cannot short circuit, ground or cause loss of voice currents. Approved by Board of Underwriters. Shipping weight, 1 pound.

57F2041.....\$1.12



Figure 6 Storm Guard

**Brach Storm Guard
Non Air-gap Arrester**

Made of genuine bakelite. Designed for installation outdoors. Absolutely weather-proof and non-grounding.

17BR-S.G.
(List Price \$1.50).
Net Price..... 89¢

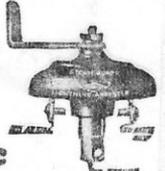


Figure 7 Storm Guard

STORM KING LIGHTNING ARRESTER

Approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters



\$1.00 at all dealers



Solderall

Solders All Joints Permanently.

SOLDERALL CO.
NEWARK, N.J.

Figure 8 Storm King

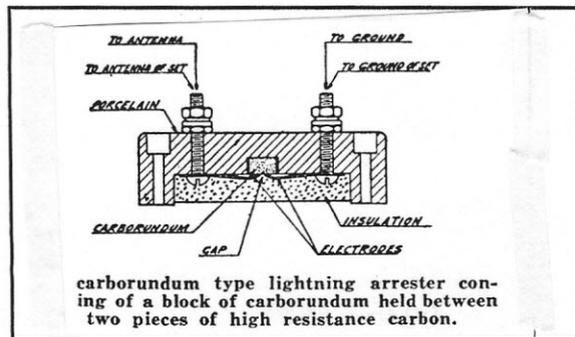


Figure 11 Storm King

Lightning Arrester



Genuine Brach high grade brown glazed porcelain Lightning Arrester of the non-air gap type. Designed for outdoor and indoor use. Will not short circuit or cause loss of volume. Approved by Board of Fire Underwriters. Length, 4 1/4 inches; width, 1 3/8 inches; ht., 2 in. Shpg. wt., 1 1/4 lbs. **69c**

57K2018

Figure 12 Storm King

Brach Storm King Arrester



Made of genuine bakelite. None-air-gap principle. For indoor installation. A protection against lightning for your radio set.

17BR-S. K.
(List Price \$1.00). **59c**
Net Price.....

This Arrester Carries \$100.00 FREE INSURANCE

Figure 9 Type 300

Brach Storm King Arrester

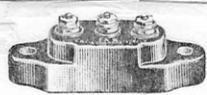


Made of genuine bakelite. The original non-air gap type of arrester. Over six million now in use. Tested to meet the requirements of the National Board of Underwriters. Shpg. Wt., 1 pound. Mounting screws supplied.

K4791—List, 50c. **28c**
YOUR PRICE.....

Brach Duplex Storm King
K4792—List, 90c. **53c**
YOUR PRICE.....

Figure 13 Type 300



A dependable air gap arrester. Porcelain case 3 3/4"x1 1/2"x1" high.

K4795— **18c**
Each

Figure 10 Brach 666?

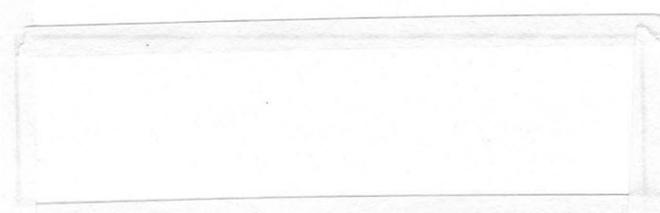


Figure 14 Brach doublet



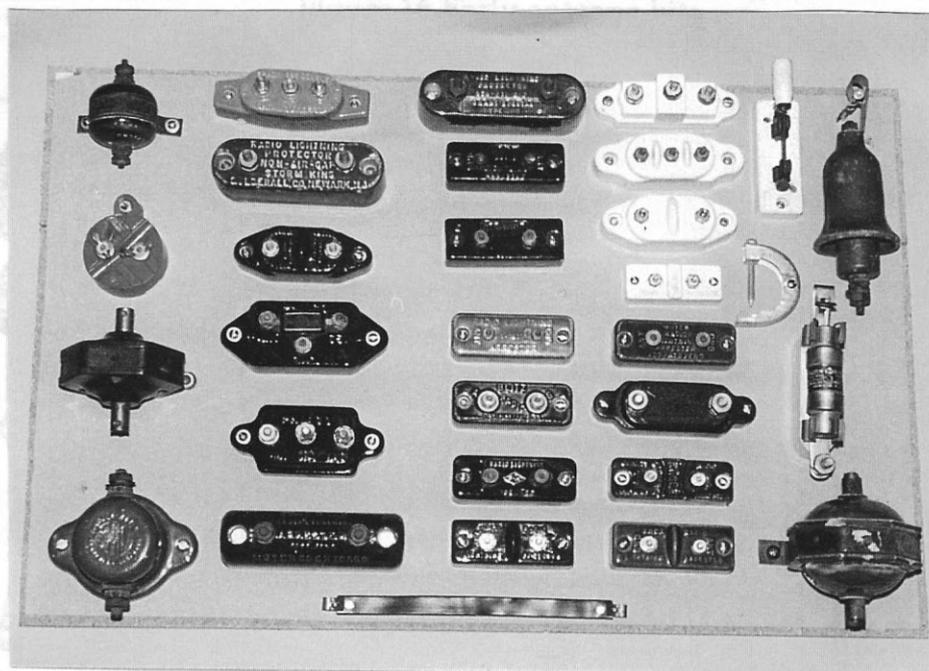
Figure 14

Duplex Vis-O-Glow
Neon Lightning Arrester

A \$100.00 insurance policy against lightning, for your radio set, goes with this arrester. Utilizes the same principle of protection that is standard in railway signaling, police and fire alarm and other important low voltage circuits. This arrester by its Neon glow shows the approach of a storm. Arrester electrodes are suspended in a neon gas tube. No resistance element is used. It is more sensitive than any other radio arrester and also will carry the heaviest discharge. Causes no loss of signal strength. Particularly desirable for Short-Wave and All-Wave receivers. You can see it operate.

K4790—List, \$1.40
YOUR PRICE..... 82¢

Figure 15 Duplex Vis-O-Glow



Doesn't Bob Dennison have a nice display of arresters? this is one of several boards on display at Bob's house. Others, with insulators, will be shown in an upcoming issue. This board ties in nicely with our Brach theme. Using columns and rows as references, one can see the following L. S. Brach products:

- Col (C) 2 Row (R) 1: Brach 666 doublet type, blue procelain
- C2 R2: Storm King made by "Solderall," brown procelain
- C3 R1: "Grant Special," brown procelain
- C4 R4: Brach, white procelain
- C4 R6: Brach Storm King Type 300, non-air gap, bakelite
- C6 R1: Brach Type 223 Vacuum Gap, long skirt, bakelite
- C6 R2: Brach Type 200 Vacuum Gap, cartridge type

Front Cover:

"Pur-A-Tone" Trademark Serial No. 178,892 in use since 1/15/22 Patent Gazette 7/17/23 pg. 645

"Storm King" Trademark Serial No. 228,959 in use since 12/22 Patent Gazette 6/22/26 pg. 829.

"Storm Guard" Trademark Serial No. 229,322 in use since 5/22 Patent Gazette 6/22/26 pg. 830.

"American Ace" Trademark Serial No. 119,498 in use since 5/1/19 Patent Gazette 11/22/21 pg. 833.

Figure 1. Insulator design patent #69,381 Patent Gazette 2/26 pg. 284.

Figure 2. Sears Catalog Fall 1928 pg. 671.

Figure 3. QST May 1922 pg. 8 (used with permission).

Figure 4 & 11. Gernsbeck's 1927 Radio Encyclopedia pg. 101.

Figure 5. Radio News Dec. 1923 pg 816.

Figure 6. Sears Catalog Fall 1926 pg. 602.

Figure 7 & 9. Chicago Salvage Stock Store Catalog, 1929 pg. 73.

Figure 8. Radio News Aug. 1924 pg 256.

Figure 10, 13 - 15. Radiolek Catalog, 1937 pg 96.

Figure 12. Sears Catalog Fall 1927 pg. 718.

Figure 16. Wetmore-Savage Radio Equipment and Supplies Catalog #29, October 1924-1925, pg. 67.

Figure 17. Sears Catalog Fall 1926 pg. 602 and Fall 1927 pg. 718.

Back Cover: Electronics Vol 15 No. 12 (December 1942) pg. 175.

Sources

- Chicago Salvage Stock Store Catalog 1929, pg. 73. Courtesy of Dick Mackiewicz.
- Gernsback, Sidney Sidney Gernsback's 1927 Radio Encyclopedia, (Palos Verdes, CA: Vintage Radio, 1974) (reprint).
- Institute of Radio Engineers, Year Book of the Institute of Radio Engineers, 1929.
- Lenhart, Walter E, Letter, Crown Jewels of the Wire, January 1973, pp. 19-20.
- L.S. Brach Mfg Co. ad, Electronics, Vol 15 No. 12 (Dec 1942) pg. 175.
- L.S. Brach Mfg Co. ad, QST, Vol. 5 No. 10 (May 1922) pg. 80.
- L.S. Brach Mfg Co. ad, Radio News, Vol. 5 No. 6 (December 1923) pg. 816.
- Manly, Harold P., Drake's Radio Cyclopedia, Chicago: Frederick J Drake & Co., 1928.
- Radio Trade Directory, The, Vol. 1 No. 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill Company Inc, November, 1924).
- Radio's Master Catalog, 19th Edition, 1955, page S-83.
- Radiolek Catalog 1937, pg. 96. Courtesy of Dick Mackiewicz.
- Sears, Roebuck and Company, Sears Catalog Chicago, IL Spring 1926, pg. 498; Fall 1926 pg. 602; Spring 1927, pg. 639; Fall 1927, pg. 718; Spring 1928, pg. 822; Fall 1928 pg. 671.
- Shaw, Bill, "Collecting Lightning Arresters," Old Timer's Bulletin, Vol. 30 No. 4 (February, 1990) pg. 21.
- Solderall ad, Radio News, Vol. 6 No. 2 (August, 1924) pg. 256.
- United States Patent Gazette, Vol. 292 No. 4, 11/22/21, pg. 833; Vol. 312 No. 4, 7/17/23, pg. 645; Vol. 343, 2/26 pg. 284; Vol 347 No. 4, 6/22/26, pp. 829-830.
- Unknown, "Your Station According to Underwriters", QST, Vol. 6 no. 10 (May 1923) pp. 46-47.
- Wetmore-Savage Company Radio Equipment and Supplies Catalog #29, October 1924- 1925 pg. 67. Courtesy of Dick Mackiewicz.
- Thanks to Bob Dennison, Elton Gish, Jeff Hogan, Dick Mackiewicz, Bob Puttre, and Bob Stahr. Their input made my job a lot easier and this issue much more enjoyable.



"ALL-OUT"

TO HELP WIN THE WAR

Today, the 36-years of skill and experience that pioneered and developed the "QUANTITY-plus-QUALITY" manufacture of BRACH products, are directed exclusively toward serving our armed forces on their road to Victory.



L. S. BRACH MFG. CORP.

World's Oldest and Largest Manufacturers of Radio Aerial Systems

55-65 DICKERSON STREET • NEWARK, N. J.