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Collecting E. H. Scott radios in Brazil
John Scott-Taggart remembered – Part 2
Collecting
E. H. Scott
classical radios
in Brazil
by Carlos Alberto Fazano

E. H. Scott was born in Dunedin,
New Zealand, on 1 June 1887. During WWI
he served in France as a soldier with the
Australian/New Zealand army corps. After
the war, Mr Scott moved to America and
started his own company in 1924.

His career as a radio manufacturer was
very successful and in the technological
aspect he was often ahead of his time. By
employing modern testing devices he was the
first to establish several landmarks in the
radio art, among them: ‘first to build in 1928
a commercial all-wave receiver as well as a
15 to 500 metre superheterodyne set without
plug-in coils.’

He moved to Canada upon his retirement
in 1949, and passed away in 1951. As proudly
proclaimed on the logo printed on the dial of
his Philharmonic receiver (reproduced
below), the instruments he developed and
manufactured could truly be compared to the
famous Italian violin.
The ‘Philharmonic’

The legendary 30-valve ‘Philharmonic’ high-fidelity AM/FM radio, was manufactured around 1938–39. It was basically supplied as two main chassis finished in gleaming chromium, one for the radio tuner and the other for the power supply and audio section. It was supplied as standard with a specially designed 15-inch loudspeaker with a frequency range from 30 to 9000Hz. This could be extended up to 15kHz by using the optional Scott special 4-unit system including a dividing network.

The ‘Philharmonic’ incorporated the latest developments in radio engineering at the time of its manufacture, and featured:

- 33 octal-based valves, including tuning indicators and rectifiers.
- Coverage 13–2000m in five AM bands and one 41–50MHz FM band.
- Laboratory-type tuning dial with 2-speed tuning and micrometer logging scale.
- Separate antenna connections with Scott ‘Supershield’ antenna coupling system.
- 2 RF stages.
- Stabilised local oscillator with voltage regulation.
- 4 IF stages.
- 6 noise-reduction systems.
- 4 parallel stage push-pull audio amplifier.

The ‘Philharmonic’ radio system could be supplied in several different beautifully finished wooden cabinet styles, such as Laureate Grand, Chippendale or Waverly Grand.

Scott radios in Brazil

For various reasons, much invaluable information about the past activities of the Scott Co. in Brazil has been lost, and it is therefore difficult to produce a full history. During the 1930s, only a very few Scott receivers came into Brazil, among them the models ‘Allwave’ and ‘Phantom’. High ex-works prices and the handling and tax charges involved were probably responsible for the low level of imports.

From the early 1940s up to 1953, the Scott Co. was represented in Brazil by Generoso Rocco Comércio e Importação. This company, established in São Paulo city, was responsible for the importation of Scott units, and for providing marketing and after-sales services to customers. Technical assistance and maintenance was carried out by the company’s radio engineer, Julio Lucarelli.

With the coming of television to Brazil, around 1950, the Rocco Co. also imported some TV sets. These units were sold as part of the radio phonograph 800B, whose chassis was assembled in the same cabinet.
During the war period the Scott Co. launched two very important sets: the communications receiver and the morale receiver. The Scott special communications receiver was built only in small quantities for professional applications. It was a 26-valve high fidelity receiver incorporating 22 separate controls, two completely separate tuners on the same chassis – one tuning 140–1600kHz, the other 1.5–60MHz – and a beat frequency oscillator with pitch control.

The morale receiver was developed to provide entertainment for soldiers and sailors thousands of miles away from home. This was an ingenious type of radio designated as a low-radiation receiver. Marvin Hobbs, the Scott Company's chief engineer, developed special circuitry for the US Navy, so that the radiated signals from the set could not be picked up by the highly sensitive direction-finding equipment of German submarines.

Marvin Hobbs was chief engineer of the E. H. Scott Radio Laboratories from 1939 to 1947. His technique of filtering, grounding and isolation of a receiver local oscillator culminated in the development of the low radiation or 'morale' radio, used intensively by the US Navy during WWII.

This receiver provided entertainment for many officers and men, because the local oscillator shielding blocked all radiated signals which might be picked up by the sensitive direction-finding equipment of enemy submarines. On 16 March 1943, Marvin Hobbs was granted US Patent No. 2,314,309 for this invention.

After 1947, he held various positions in the electronics industry, before retiring in November 1982 from the post of Senior Technical Editor at Bell Telephone Laboratories. In 1984 he published a book, *E. H. Scott, the Dean of DX, a History of Classic Radios*; a 'must' for any collector of classic radios.

The Scott Co. also designed for the US government the radio model AR-1 used in the first presidential aircraft.

After the war, the last development of this remarkable company was the radio phonograph 'Series 800'. Basically a set of two separate chrome-plated chassis carrying the tuner, power supply and a fine quality audio amplifier feeding a heavy duty 15-inch dynamic reproducer with built-in coaxial 'speaker and self-contained dividing network.
Series 800

The radio phonograph Series 800 was launched in 1948. In keeping with the Scott philosophy, it was supplied as two main chrome-plated chassis, comprising the radio tuner and the power supply and audio section. The Scott 800 incorporated also a highly-developed built-in phonograph and a heavy-duty 15-inch dynamic reproducer with coaxial loudspeaker and self-contained dividing network.

As an optional extra, a 12-inch TV set could also be connected to the model 800.

Also available was a complete line of superbly finished furniture for the proper installation of the model 800 in several wooden cabinet styles, such as Chippendale, Regency, or the Scott Modern.
The Scott communications receiver

So far as Brazil is concerned this receiver has an unusual history, since only one unit was ever imported. In the early 1940s, this set – serial number JJ-267 – was purchased by a famous Brazilian industrial entrepreneur, E. Matarazzo, to be used in the family yacht.

During a cruise the boat almost sank, but many of its parts, including the Scott receiver, were saved by the rescue team. In order to avoid contamination by sea water of the receiver’s sensitive components and electrical circuits, it was completely dismantled and all the parts were dried, cleaned, packed and stored in the Matarazzo family warehouse for more than 20 years.

As only a few special communications receivers were manufactured by Scott in the USA, the Brazilian unit has great importance, representing a very rare piece of classical radio. In recognition of the historical significance, it is now undergoing a meticulous procedure of restoration.

Perhaps at some time in the future, an article describing this restoration might be published in *Radio Bygones*, accompanied by plenty of photographs and diagrams. For the moment, we must be satisfied with an artist’s impression of the finished set, shown here.

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References

Hobbs Marvin, E. H. Scott the Dean of DX, North Frontier Press, Chicago, 1985, USA.

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