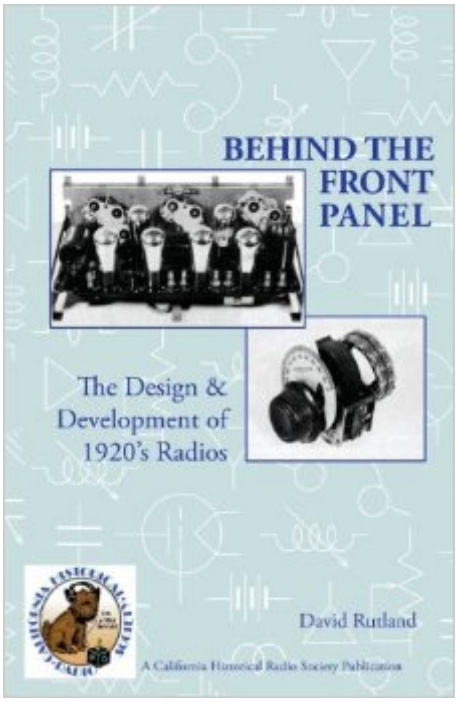
Behind The Front Panel: The Design & Development Of 1920's Radio



Synopsis

Behind the Front Panel by David Rutland, an electronics engineer with over 25 years of experience in the design of vacuum tube circuits, explores the whys and wherefores of the components and circuits of the first broadcast radios. By using simplified descriptions and illustrations, supplemented by 25 photographs of actual radio component parts, he provides a readable explanation of what goes on inside the old battery radios. His story begins with the invention of the radio tube at the turn of the last century and concentrates on the engineering design and development through the 1920â ™s. Design examples are taken from over 45 actual radios manufactured in the decade that saw broadcast radio start as a national pastime and end as a national necessity. This book is a classic in radio history. This edition is carefully re-mastered from the original and published by the California Historical Radio Society.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book explains the circuit and and mechanical design elements of the common 1920 radio sets. For most of the 1920's, at least in the USA there were very few tube types available to the Radio Set designer and manufacturer. There was only the triode until the screen grid tube (tetrode) was developed and available in the late 1920's and these tubes had DC filaments. That meant that radio set designers were competing primarily with circuit techniques to establish their own niche and meet their customers need for radios that were reasonably easy to operate, could pull in distant stations, and were reliable.In this book the author explains the various radio techniques used in the 1920s in

their historical context. This includes regeneration, TRF (Tuned Radio Frequency - the most popular approach for most of that era), neutralization, superhetrodynes, and reflex circuits. The author also describes the tuning capacitor designs, variable inductors, and the RF and then IF transformer design principles.I am an RF engineer with an interest in radios from this era when radios first started going into many homes. The explanations are sufficiently clear, I beleve; for a person with some minimal electronics background and interest to gain a better understanding and perspective on radio sets of the 1920's. It won't make you an engineer, but it will give you a better appreciation of the various types of radio sets from that era.The writing is very good, the schematic diagrams are clear, and there are photos of representative radio "guts" and the important components such as tuners, variometers, and RF coils and their layouts. My only disappointment was that the pictures were not as clear as might have been possible on glossy paper. But on the whole I was very pleased with this book.

With all due respect to the author, who is undoubtedly a master of what has now become a hobby to us old enough to remember the fascinating glow of a tube! The book IS a good technical explanation and provides some of the interesting back stories behind the development of the circuitry. BUT it is really in need of an overhaul and not just a reprint. It is obvious that the book was edited for and printed on old-style printing presses. The black and white pictures are placed in a separate area in the book so one has to continually flip back and forth to view the picture referenced in the text. The pictures are black and white and not of very good quality. Thankfully, the schematic drawings are displayed within the text that is explaining them. That's a plus. Look, I understand that this subject will never be a blockbuster for the masses and I am very happy that the author did the research and condensed it into a book for us youngsters in our 50's lol! I just think that to have any chance of getting the attention of the newest generations of engineers and turning them on to the simple beauty of these "ancient" designs, a major, modern, redo with clear, glossy pictures of each unique component would be great.

This is one of the best books available on the development in the 1920's of radio broadcasting receivers. While a reader should have a basic knowledge of radio theory, the author's descriptions are clear and well organized. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the technical details of the radios of this era or is a collector of those radios. Fortunately this book has recently been reprinted and the reprint contains the complete text of the original.

Excellent book.Starting from the absolute basic tube radio, it progresses through the developments of the 1920's.Regeneration, Grid Leaks, Neutrodons,..., all the way up to AC powered circuits.It's all here in an easy to follow journey, with some of the politics behind the scenes.

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