

# Aireon



## Jukeboxes

## Company History

The history of the Aireon Manufacturing Corp. in Kansas City goes back to 1932, when the skilled machinist Thomas Lee Siebenthaler founded his personal enterprise, the Thos. L. Siebenthaler Aircraft Accessories Corp., as a one room plant with a floor space of only 500 square feet. Thomas L. Siebenthaler was in his younger years in the printing business as employee at the Barnhart Bros and Spindler type foundry based in Chicago, and later at the Printers Exchange in Kansas City. However, his personal company established 1932 had to move into larger facilities in the 3rd District of Kansas City on the 1st April 1936, and a year later the company was incorporated as the Thomas L. Siebenthaler Manufacturing Co. with partners Gerald R. Parker and Edward J. Flynn. The company was by then a well reputed supplier of radio accessories to aircraft companies, among them also the newly established Aircraft Accessories Corp. founded in 1937 in Burbank, California, by William Judd Hosmer and Randolph Charles Walker. In need of capital to finance the expanding business requirements, and due to problems in securing local funding, the Kansas City based company became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Aircraft Accessories Corp. on the 15th April 1939, and renamed Aircraft Accessories Corp. of Missouri. The Aircraft Accessories Corp. was at first a west coast distributor of aircraft parts, but soon started production of aircraft hydraulics needed by Lockheed Aircraft Corp. founded by Malcolm Loughead, and as time was right the management decided to merge with the Siebenthaler electronic company in Kansas City. Thomas Lee Siebenthaler was for another few years member of the board of directors until he according to his military registration card was employed by the Lake City Ordnance Plant of the Remington Arms Co. established in 1941.



The main production of the Aircraft Accessories Corp. during the first few years was hydraulic equipment for the aircraft industry, but very soon due to the new subsidiary in Kansas City also a complete line of aircraft radio equipment and test systems were developed and manufactured for the American aircraft industry and especially the air force. Early in 1940 due to a well earned, good reputation it became apparent, if the company should obtain government contracts that changes had to be made in both

management and production. As a result the parent company in Burbank headed by Randolph Charles Walker decided to move its headquarters to a new plant built on the corner of Fairfax Road and Funston Road in Kansas City ready for use in May 1941. The new facilities were just round the corner from Fairfax Field and the manufacturing plant for the B25 Mitchell bombers. At the time Donald M. Stoner was executive in charge of production at the Siebenthaler Division of Aircraft Accessories Corp., and due to federal contracts the company was successful and acquired several production facilities nationwide including the Cinaudagraph Speakers Inc. in Stamford (CT) and Slater (MO), the Lewis Electronics Inc. in Los Gatos (CA), the Oxford-Tartak Radio Corp. in Chicago (IL), and all subsidiaries were known simply as the AIRACO factories, and a few would be important after the corporation changed its official name to Aireon Manufacturing Corp. at the end of December 1944. At the time the company was divided as the AAC Power Controls Division, 166 West Olive Avenue, Burbank, and the AAC Electronics Division, Fairfax & Funston Roads, Kansas City, and the division in Burbank was sold.



8th April 1941



September 2023

Here it ought to be mentioned that in August 1943 the corporation headed by Randolph C. Walker also acquired the Phonette Co. in Los Angeles. The Phonette Co. was at the time operating systems of Penny-A-Tune music vending devices developed and patented by William Sears Farrell on the basis of older patents by

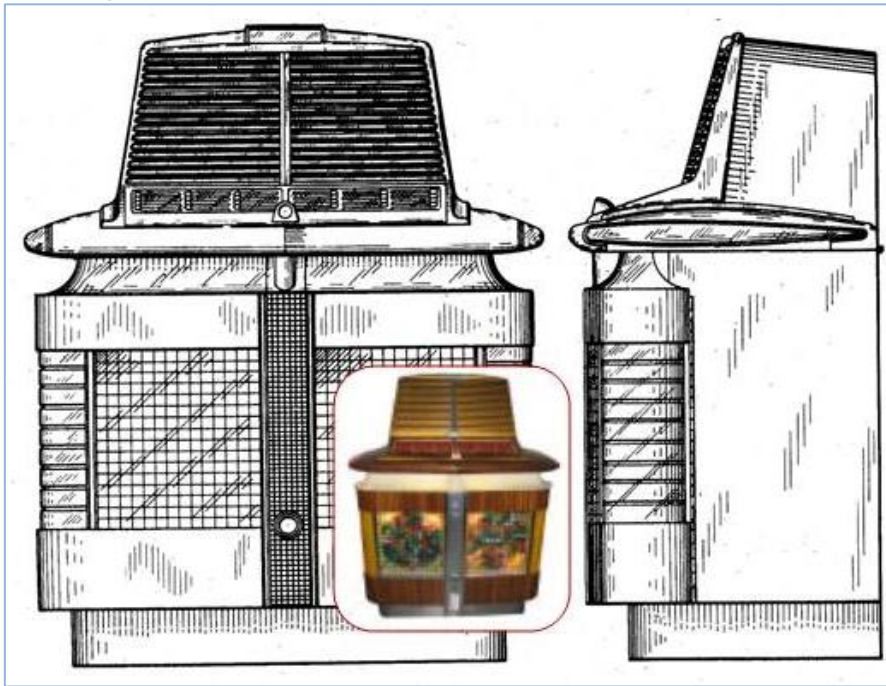
Frank J. Hoke, and in this way the corporation entered the music operator industry. The Phonette Co. continued with electronic war related production under the management of William S. Farrell.

In October 1945, the management of Aireon Manufacturing Corp. decided to hunt for a new field of peacetime production to secure jobs in the Kansas City area after the war production was coming to an end, and the victim of the hunt was the commercial phonograph industry. This may well have been caused by the employment of Rudolph Ruvean Greenbaum, the former sales manager of the Packard Mfg. Corp. until he served as regional chief of manpower utilization with the WMC in Kansas City. It seems the commercial automatic phonograph advisory committee to the War Production Board in Washington was very concerned about the home market, and especially about the plan revealed in August 1945 to establish a new major production by giving federal loans to the Aireon Manufacturing Corp. only to secure post-war jobs. The members of the committee were: James E. Broyles from WurliTzer, Carl T. McKelvey from the Seeburg Corp., Robert Gabel of the John Gabel Mfg. Co., David C. Rockola from the Rock-Ola Mfg. Corp., Elmer E. Rullman from AMI Inc. (taken over in May by an investor group), and Vernon G. Wahlberg of the Mills Industries Inc., and it is right to understand that all the old companies were reluctant to see a market for yet another major player in the field.



The general offices of the new AAC Radio & Phonograph Division would at first remain in the building on the corner of Fairfax Road and Funston Road, and new factory facilities in the former food terminal at Fairfax Trafficway were leased from the investor group Minnesota Avenue Inc. headed by James W. Perry to give the company ample space for large-scale assembly line production. The company production was at the time scattered among five buildings in the Kansas City area. The production of a line of electronic phonographs, as a result of know-how gained during the war manufacturing radio and radar equipment, started with an old style 24 sel. mechanism based on patent by William H. Daily granted in 1932, and patent by Charles V. Kissinger granted 1931. The AAC president Randolph C. Walker stated that one of the engineers, who had been connected to the Homer E. Capehart phonograph company, refined the mechanism to be used by Aireon. This could only be Charles Vernon Kissinger, as William Henry Daily passed away in June 1937, but it is possible it was the free lance consultant Paul Ulrich Lannerd. Both mechanical patents were acquired by the Reconstruction Finance Corp. in the late 1930s.

The cabinet for the first electronic jukebox was designed by Ernest Fredrick Thomson, who was associated with the Raymond Loewy design studios in New York. The then famous designer Raymond Loewy was one of the architects of the American Streamline Movement. The designer Jay Bernard Doblin, who designed the line of wall speakers for Aireon, was associated with the Raymond Loewy Studio for twelve years. The cones and parts for the Aireon speakers were made at the facilities in Slater, Missouri, owned by the subsidiary Cinaudagraph Speakers Inc., and it is interesting to note that the pickup system for the phonograph was based on a patent assigned to Cinaudagraph in 1941. The pickup system, the reproducer, was developed by the Danish immigrant John F. Nielsen.



The aim of Aireon was to introduce the new electronic jukebox in February 1946, but due to several mechanical problems with the improved record changer the works manager Joseph A. Bush struggled to get the jukeboxes ready for the market in time. The first deliveries of the Super Deluxe 1200A model to operators nationwide followed in May 1946, but then it took only six months to reach serial number 10,000 from the assembly line in November. The electronic jukebox was designed to have special features like an automatic volume control that listened to the noise level in the room and adjusted the volume output of the jukebox accordingly. Also it was a novelty that the remote controls contained a miniature radio transmitter sending electrical pulses via a single wire, and that the pulses were sorted out by a radio receiver in the jukebox to make sure the correct record was selected. After the 1200A Super Deluxe with electronic fluorescent illumination it was 'fiesta' time, and the Aireon 1207A Fiesta Deluxe designed by Ernest Fredrick Thomson was introduced in February 1947. Only a few months later, in July 1947, the Blonde Bombshell version of the Fiesta was introduced with a few refinements in the

mechanism, and the line of juke boxes was then comprised of three models, the 1200A Airliner, the 1207A Fiesta Deluxe, and the 1207A Blonde Bombshell. The following models were introduced after the manufacturing company ran into serious financial problems, and management was changed. Randolph C. Walker withdrew from daily management on the 12th February 1947, but he was still chairman of the board. Walker had also six months earlier resigned as president of the well managed subsidiary Cinaudagraph Speakers Inc., but he continued as chairman of the board.



The model 1209A Coronet 400 was introduced in January 1948. The new model, which was not design patented, was produced in three cabinet colours with different plastics, and it was intended to be an inexpensive jukebox able to compete on end price. A few months later, in July 1948, the company tried again with the big Airliner model, but used the improved Coronet mechanism. The model was named the Super Deluxe 1949 Golden Bell with cabinet in blonde wood with additional illumination and animation. It is obvious the company struggled with financial problems, and really tried to survive by introducing new features on the jukebox models. In October 1948 a special jukebox-television combo was introduced to the public. It was a 1209A Coronet 400 with a separate 10-inch RCA television set that could be placed anywhere. Also the new model had a two-way 78rpm to 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ rpm switch for playing both types of records available to the operators. It is fair to say the combo was not a success. The next version of the Coronet was called 500, and the model had the special Tōnar feature. The Tōnar was a circular glass showing the sound waves of the music, a special feature never seen before on commercial phonographs. The new Coronet 500 also had a simplified mechanism and a combined amplifier and control box to make it lighter than earlier models. The speakers designed by Jay Bernard Doblin and manufactured by Cinaudagraph at the facilities in Slater, Missouri, were used as auxiliary speakers for all models, and also the Solo Remote Control was used,

but it seems the last Trio Remote Control was made in very limited quantity. Not many known to exist. The Coronet 500 with Tõnar was the last model to be produced with the Aireon name, and it was certainly not easy to compete against the new hundred selection models introduced by the Seeburg Corp. in December 1948.

**Only Aireon Automatic Volume Control**

*Keep the Coin Slot Buy All the Time!*

Notice on the left when the customer can't hear the music because of the noise in the room or when they return from playing because the music is too loud. That's why you need an Aireon Automatic Volume Control. The automatic feature permits programming volume in a changing level when the music is quiet. From then on the music will be heard at the volume level you set. It works like a charm and it's so simple to use that anyone can operate it. It's the only automatic volume control on the market today. Aireon's Automatic Volume Control.

**Aireon MANUFACTURING CORPORATION**

General Office: 1455 Pacific Parkway, Kansas City, Mo. In Canada: World Corp. Ltd., 4801 St. Andrew St., Montreal, Que.

**Aireon SETS NEW STANDARDS IN REMOTE CONTROLS AND SPEAKERS...**

Your old listening time has gone with it. You probably don't know it, but you're missing out on a lot of new music. The new Aireon remote controls and speakers are the answer. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds.

**MELODEON, IMPRESARIO, CARILLON PERFECTION IN Aireon SPEAKERS**

These new speakers are the answer to your prayers. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds.

**TRIO and SOLO PAY BIG PROFITS**

These are the only ones that give you the best of both worlds. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds. They're the only ones that give you the best of both worlds.

**Aireon**

**Your Invitation TO fiesta TIME At All Aireon Distributors**

**You're Invited!** You are cordially invited to the Fiesta Time party given by your Aireon Distributor. His door never will be a gay machine... with music, good music, and good music... a night of still paper in sunshine and music, singing, or something.

It's the evening we party for Aireon's debut, the new Aireon De Luxe Fiesta model. We want you to see the new Aireon De Luxe Fiesta... best of all, it's easy to see. You'll want to see it in the store. You'll want to see it in the store. You'll want to see it in the store.

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Also the not so happy ending of the Aireon Manufacturing Corp. has to be told in this story, and as mentioned before the phonograph manufacturing plant in Kansas City was financially problematic due to material shortages and mechanical problems in production. On the 23rd January 1947 the company was granted a 1.5 million dollar loan by the Reconstruction Finance Corp. to pay off short-term loans and to provide capital to pay employees and suppliers, plus additional loans of 500K dollars from commercial banks. In March 1947 the actual operation of the company was in the hands of sales manager Rudolph R. Greenbaum, production manager Joseph A. Bush, and the treasurer Bernard D. Craig, since Randolph C. Walker withdrew from his position as head of the Aireon Manufacturing Corp. in February, and soon replaced by Harold L. Pearson, a former vice-president and treasurer of Montgomery Ward & Co.. After several court cases and management reconstruction plans in 1948, and the new model Coronet 500 was introduced in January 1949, the company mainly took care of repairs on delivered phonographs and maintenance.

**Aireon**

**EVERY ONE AGREES**

**The Top Location Getter With the New Improved Trouble-Free Mechanism**

**AIREON HIDEAWAY**

Come in and see why this smallest of all Hideaways has taken the town by storm.

**Aireon Presents Coronet TELEVISION WITH COIN-OPERATED TELEVISION**

**Another Aireon First!**

Check the coin slot on your Coronet. It's the only one of its kind. It's the only one of its kind. It's the only one of its kind.

**Coronet Controls TV**

Operating through the CORONET TV, you will have the best of both worlds. You will have the best of both worlds. You will have the best of both worlds.

**2 Models Available**

Two new models are available now. The CORONET TV is available in two models. The CORONET TV is available in two models. The CORONET TV is available in two models.

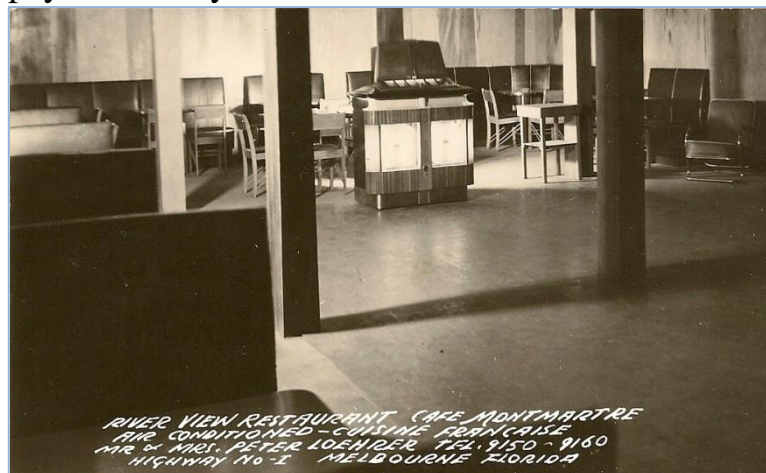
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On the 17th January 1950 it had all come to an end and the company was taken over by the RFC to be liquidated with bank and RFC loans totaling about 1.3 million dollars. Two television companies were interested in taking over the production facilities in Kansas City, but the efforts of RFC's manager David H. Powell to find a suitable company to take over the facilities were not successful. One of the companies was New England Industries Inc. and the other was Starrett Television Co., but the owner, Jacob Freidus, was under indictment for income-tax frauds at the time, and the Starrett company, preferred by the RFC officials as a good bidder, had in fact falsified its financial statements to be able to get the Aireon factory facilities. As it could be read in the newspapers it was all a political mess, and as a result both Jacob Freidus and vice-president Larry Knohl, who had a record of bankruptcy violations, were indicted on the 17th October 1952 by a federal grand jury for giving false statements to the RFC. In December 1953 Larry Knohl was acquitted but Jacob Freidus was convicted.

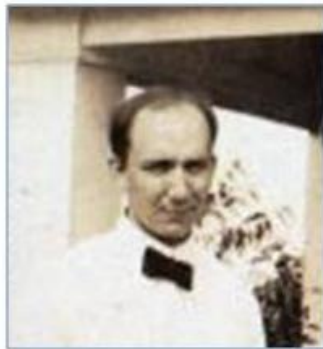


All assets of the Aireon Manufacturing Corp. and lease on production facilities were sold at auction beginning the 29th January 1951 conducted by auctioneers Aaron Krock & Co. of Worcester, Massachusetts, and the government obtained about 700K dollars. The rest of the debts in the once so great Aireon Manufacturing Corp. were paid by tax payer's money.





Finally, it is reasonable in this story to mention a few data about the founders of the company structure that made it possible for us to enjoy the Aireon jukeboxes as collectible music machines. Thomas Lee Siebenthaler, a talented technician and inventor, was born on the 13th November 1886 in Kansas City, and he died on the 19th October 1962. Thomas L. Siebenthaler was buried at the Mount Washington Cemetery in Independence, Missouri. Randolph Charles Walker, former stock broker and talented businessman known to have a temperament but to be fair to employees, was born in Oakland in California on the 5th December 1899, and he died on the 25th January 1958 in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles. Randolph C. Walker was buried at the Bethel Cemetery next to Linwood Avenue in Sharon, Miami Township in Missouri. The co-founder William Judd Hosmer was born on the 28th September 1914, and after the period as vice-president of the AAC he joined the US Army Air Forces. He passed away aged 96 on the 1st February 2011, and was buried at the Eternal Hills Memorial Park, Oceanside in California.



Thomas L. Siebenthaler



Randolph C. Walker

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*Almind/02-2011  
Revised/02-2024*



Phonographs, speakers, and remote controls produced by Aireon Mfg. Corp.

Prod.	Description	Sel
	Record Player ( <i>custom</i> )	
1200A	Airliner Super Deluxe	24
400	Super Deluxe	24
1207	Fiesta Artesian	24
1207A	Fiesta Deluxe	24
1207A	Fiesta Deluxe Blonde Bombshell	24
	Deluxe 1949 Golden Bell	24
1209A	Coronet 400	24
	Coronet 400 - RCA Television Combo	24
	Coronet 500 Tōnar ( <i>Airaco</i> )	24
	Hideaway Unit	24
	Impressario Speaker ( <i>Cinaudagraph</i> )	
	Carillon Speaker ( <i>Cinaudagraph</i> )	
1262A	Melodeon Speaker ( <i>Cinaudagraph</i> )	
	Solo Wall Remote Control	
	Trio Wall Remote Control	

**Tally Ho!  
Two Flat Toppers!**

The rugged business traveler and pilot in these beautiful planes of highly mechanical nature can be assured by the performance of a single piece of equipment. As in the great hands of the Great One, one brief radio message... and the air is clear, the message that puts it through... and the air is clear, the message that puts it through... and the air is clear, the message that puts it through...

Creating equipment for such vital service is more than a responsibility. It is a glorious privilege. You can see the results on the face and in the confidence of the men and women on every shift in each Aircraft factory. They see in this way, not in the children. From their hands this very day come the one accessories by which men have will meet the nation in the future hours of the most important Victory in the entire history of mankind. Aircraft Accessories Corporation... Burbank, California; Kansas City, Kansas; New York, New York; New York, New York; Boston, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

**AIRCRAFT ACCESSORIES CORPORATION**  
Hydraulic Aircraft Controls ★ ☆ ★ Precision Radio Equipment

**"All our planes returned safely"**

GETTING the big bombers over and back calls for accuracy in both men and equipment. Despite unusual shock and strain, for instance, all of the controls of these huge aircraft must perform as well coming back as when going out. Anything short of complete dependability simply adds up on the wrong side of the score.

The many new and rugged in Aircraft factories are proud of the role they are privileged to play in this epic struggle. They realize well that the products of their efforts are vital parts of our nation's fighting aircraft, units - equipment that perfection is the only acceptable standard. What they are doing today cannot be left... but their contribution to America's national progress will be evident for many years after the Victory which is now their only goal. Aircraft Accessories Corporation... Burbank, Calif.; Kansas City, Kan.; New York, N. Y.; Dayton, O.; Chicago, Ill.; Sioux Falls, S. Dak.

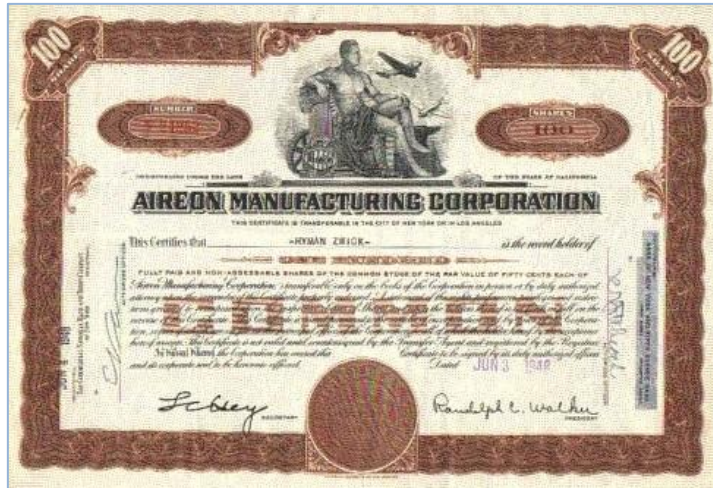
**AIRCRAFT ACCESSORIES CORPORATION**  
Hydraulic Aircraft Controls ★ ☆ ★ Precision Radio Equipment

Patents related to products manufactured by Aireon Mfg. Corp.

No.	Title	Filed	Granted
D147,627	Design for phonograph cabinet	28/03 1946	07/10 1947
D148,151	Design for a loud-speaker casing	10/05 1946	23/12 1947
D149,800	Loud-speaker casing	10/05 1946	01/06 1948
D149,801	Loud-speaker casing	10/05 1946	01/06 1948
D149,849	Design for phonograph cabinet	28/05 1946	01/06 1948
1,800,645	Record-handling mechanism for Phonographs	19/09 1928	14/04 1931
1,885,005	Automatic phonograph	13/08 1926	25/10 1932
2,109,322	Automatic record changing Phonograph	13/03 1936	22/02 1938
2,137,276	Automatic phonograph	11/03 1935	22/11 1938
2,139,812	Automatic phonograph	03/12 1936	13/12 1938
2,207,240	Sound reproducing apparatus	12/02 1938	09/07 1940
2,247,640	Reproducer	14/11 1939	01/07 1941
2,486,480	Volume control	08/02 1946	01/11 1949



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Photograph for The Kansas City Star,  
February 18, 1945.





Vice-president William Judd Hosmer,  
Aircraft Accessories Corp., Burbank.

