

Penny Phono
AND PENNY PHONO RECORDS
are taking the Country
by Storm!



Information gladly supplied to interested operators, distributors and jobbers on request.

**CINEMATONE
CORPORATION**

1107 N. HIGHLAND AVE • HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

Cinematone Corp. of Hollywood - Penny Phono –

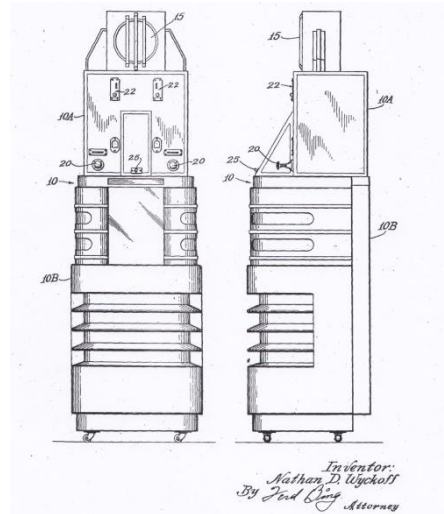
The Cinematone (Varieties) Corp. was founded early in 1938 and headed by the dentist and inventor Gordon Keith Woodard as president. Treasurer was the mechanical genius William P. Falkenberg, who came to Los Angeles from Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he had been involved in the fair ground business for more than a decade, and he was also well known in the coin-op machine industry as president of the Rayolite Distributing Co..



It seems the management did have high hopes for its first priority, a Coin Operated Motion Picture Machine with cabinet design, consulted by either Sol Freedman (1900-1964) or Don Heyer (1901-1975). The film projector for coin-operation took Woodard three years to perfect, but he did not have the resources and connections to compete against the Panoram musical jukebox for Soundies, soon to be introduced by Mills Novelty Co., and designed by Everett Byron Eckland (1904-1957). The Cinematone originally played 16mm film clips, and several machines were tested locally in Los Angeles taverns, the first experimental machine with Victor Animatograph Sound equipment was installed at Lindy's Café in Los Angeles. Gordon K. Woodard even tried later, but without success, to convert the machine to play 35mm clips. The Cinematone was a pioneer in the field and proved that modern electrically amplified jukeboxes could play musical film clips, but Gordon K. Woodard as a pioneer with ideas soon withdrew from the Cinematone Corp. to take care of a healthcare clinic and other activities. However, the effort to improve the film jukebox concept was continued by Falkenberg, but it was not his first priority. From April 1940 the company was headed by Erle Miles Burnham (1879-1943), and the manager of the motion picture factory was Fred J. Alberti. Both Woodard and Falkenberg withdrew from active participation and became stockholders. It seems Fred J. Alberti and the factory manufactured the first machines for the new company Phonovision Inc. founded 1940 by Frank P. Orsatti and Samuel Sax in New York. The Phonovision company installed the first 8-film machine in Jack Dempsey's Broadway Bar in June 1940. Both companies ran into problems in manufacture, and it was difficult to compete against Mills Novelty Co., the major player in the coin-op field. On

the 12th February 1940 James (*Jimmy*) Roosevelt (1907-1991), oldest son of president Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the Mills Novelty Co. joined forces and formed Globe-Mills Productions to market the Panoram movie jukeboxes formally introduced in September. It is not known today how many Cinematone and Phonovision machines were actually produced until 1942. The projector system for the new machines was developed by Ralph Martin Like (1894-1955) in Los Angeles, and the mechanism was patented and in 1942 assigned to Phonovision by John Frazer Eakins (1892-1978), who also worked for J. P. Seeburg Corp. in Chicago, but a possible contact between the companies has not been found yet.

The second priority of the Cinematone Corp., the compact Penny Phono coin operated phonograph for odd speed records, was developed by William Peter Falkenberg, who had been working for several years in the coin-op business with mechanics and designs for coin-op rifle shooting machines, patented and assigned to the Rayolite Rifle Range Co. in Chicago. The cabinet design for the Penny Phono has not been found, but the only patent showing an image of the special cabinet was filed in June 1941 by Russian born Nathan D. Wyckoff (1900-1963) of Sterling in Illinois. The image is part of a full patent for an amusement apparatus.



The first coin operated phonograph from the Cinematone Corp, at 1107 North Highland Avenue in Hollywood left the assembly line in August 1939, and the first 250 machines to play hit tunes for one cent produced during the first month were shipped to impatient operators nationwide, and there were high hopes in the company.

The Cinematone Corp. had several factory facilities in the Los Angeles area that manufactured parts for the new Penny Phono, and the odd records to be played in the machines. The assembly line building, the recording studio, and

the cabinet and phonograph processing plant were ready to work day and night to hit the market, but would it be a success?

The original features of the new 'Music for a Cent' phonograph were based on inventions owned by Cinematone Corp. for special recording and playback devices to cut and play twenty numbers on a twelve-inch disc, ten numbers on each side. The phonograph then contained only one record that played at an ever increasing speed starting at 20 rpm and ending at about 60rpm. The phonograph could not play ordinary 78rpm records, so the recording studio at Gordon Street produced the odd speed discs with a mixed selection of hit tunes and old favourites. In September 1939 the company had about eighty musical numbers stored, and the Music Department was headed by the musical genius Lindley Armstrong Jones, later to be known by the name Spike Jones.



Illuminated lithographed 'Tune of the Week' card

At the time the company expected that the initial cost of manufacture, which was only about a half or a third of the usual cost of phonograph manufacture, would be a plausible selling point. Also it was expected that the lower record cost would attract a possible operator's interest in the Penny Phono. Usually the music machine operators received 12 to 24 records per week, but in this case they only needed one or two records per week. Important was of course, so the company, the eye appeal of the Penny Phono, and the easy to maintain mechanism of the machine with no delicate parts to get out of order. The machine with an illuminated colourful lithographed card on front, that was changed every week, was small compared to most automatic phonographs at the time. The Counter model with external wall speaker was 17½ inches high by 20½ inches wide by 16 inches deep, and the Console model with enclosed speaker was 42½ inches high by 22 inches wide by 18 inches deep.



The recording studio at 1357 Gordon Street headed by the busy drummer Lindley Armstrong Jones could not attract the 'big name' artists of the week, but Jones invited musicians he knew into the Cinematone Recording Orchestra, a few to be mentioned were Del Porter and Perry Botkin, who both became members of the coming group Spike Jones and his City Slickers. And they made some remarkable recordings. A story of the musical Penny Phono recordings can be found in the great book "An Illustrated Guide to the Recordings of Spike Jones" by Scott C. Corbett (published 1989), and today it really is sad to realize that so many of the odd speed *Penny-Funnies* discs were destroyed. The records would indeed be considered American cultural heritage.

CONTRACTOR'S ELECTRICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS AND PHONOGRAPH RECORDINGS REPORT																																																																																																																							
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<p>NOTE: Time for Rehearsing and Recording. 15-minute units of LIBRARY SERVICE, is only ONE HOUR, as compared with ONE HOUR AND FIFTEEN MINUTES allowed for Sponsored Transcriptions. Overtime necessary to complete that particular program must be paid for at the rate of \$6.00 for each one-half hour or fraction thereof, contractor double.</p> <p>CONTRACTOR shall be held responsible for the correctness of the report and collection of the Local Tax from every member employed, based on the Minimum Scale governing the work. Have the report READY FOR SIGNATURES immediately following FINISH OF ENGAGEMENT and mail same at once to the Steward-Tax Office. Payment for tax must be made promptly after pay has been received. Contractor's signature hereon is his certification of data in this report.</p> <p>1 Report and Remittance to GERGEN, Steward-Tax Office.</p> <p>TOTAL \$ <i>300.00</i> TAX 21% \$ <i>75.00</i></p> <p>FOR OFFICE STAMP SEP 3 1940 {11}</p> <p>Signed: <i>Spike Jones</i></p>																																																																																																																							

Spike Jones' handwriting

After 1942 not much can be found about the Cinematone Corp., but Gordon Keith Woodard was later registered as manager of a pharmaceutical product company (Vivian Woodard Cosmetic) together with his wife, and he had eight patents and two trademark registrations to his name in the sixties. In 1940, when Gordon had returned to his own practice, his wife Vivian was registered as a stenographer at the County Health Department. Gordon's wife passed away on the 15th April 1978 (born Cammack, 6th February 1913). It seems Vivian had been married on the 5th October 1932 to William Spain Anderson, and therefore she was named Vivian C. Anderson, when Gordon Keith Woodard married her on the 22nd December 1937. Finally, on the 16th January 1982 he married Patricia A. Sylvester. Gordon Keith Woodard was born in Lincoln in Nebraska on the 24th August 1911, and he passed away in Thousand Oaks in California on the 14th May 1986. His widow Patricia passed away aged only 57 on the 17th November 1997 (born on the 21st September 1940), and she was interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Cemetery in Panama City, Bay County in Florida.

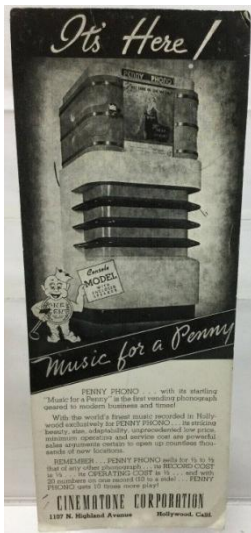


William P. Falkenberg



Andrew E. Anderson

William Peter Falkenberg, named *Willie* by his Danish immigrant family, was born in Yankton in South Dakota on the 24th May 1889, and he married Carrie Pearl Tralle in Yankton on the 25th March 1912, and they soon moved to Tulsa. In west Tulsa the Electric Amusement Park had opened by 1921 and featured a dance hall, rides, concessions, swimming, and a memorable miniature train, and in the mid twenties William P. Falkenberg established Crystal City Amusement Park next to and eventually absorbing Electric Park, helped by his younger half-brother Andrew Emanuel Anderson (19th March 1897 – 23rd June 1960). William and Andrew added an ever-growing number of rides, including the large Zingo roller coaster. The park became known for its Casa Loma dance hall. However, the dance hall and bath house burned down in the mid fifties, and the park soon disappeared. The Lakeview Amusement Park saved some of the Crystal City rides and opened near Mohawk Zoo. William and Carrie had a son, Curtis Gene Falkenberg, born on the 18th July 1929 (passed away on the 9th February 1977). Around 1950-1951 William P. Falkenberg divorced Carrie, and it is registered that he married Anne Gershowitz in Los Angeles on the 18th March 1952. Anne came from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was registered as a lodger at the Falkenberg household in Los Angeles in 1950. It seems that Carrie may have been struck by illness at the time. William's first wife Carrie Pearl passed away on the 25th October 1954 (born 20th September 1889), and William's second wife Anne passed away on the 24th May 2000 (born 14th February 1909). William Peter Falkenberg passed away on the 12th November 1973 in Tulsa, and he was then interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, Los Angeles County in California. His wives were both interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, and his son Curtis was interred at the Sunset Hills Cemetery in Eugene, Lane County in Oregon.



The pride and joy of the inventor William Peter Falkenberg, the Penny Phono, was a short lived phenomenon, and the adventure ended some time in 1940. It seems the *New De Luxe Model* was used mainly for the Voca-Tele wired music system introduced in September 1940, and there were also some cabinet design similarities to the Select-A-Tune wired music units introduced and patented by the phonograph operator Fred A. Hadel (1897-1965) a little further down North Highland Avenue in Hollywood. The Cinematone sound studio, the former Associated Cinema Studios bought by the Cinematone Corp. in February 1939, was taken over early in 1943 by the film producer George W. Weeks (1885-1953) of Monogram Pictures.




Modified table-top Penny Phono model

Aug-23, Gert Almind
Updated, Jan-24



Select-A-Tune

852 North Highland Avenue



LIKE THE 49ers OF OLD...

... CINEMATONE CORPORATION fearlessly pioneered twin fields and against great odds produced in their PENNY PHONO, a new machine that has literally set the music and coin machine industries on their heads. Keyed to the times—for this quality automatic phonograph *rends hit tunes for but one cent*—PENNY PHONO is the result of years of careful planning, of minute, painstaking research, both scientific and mechanical.

CINEMATONE CORPORATION is a permanent, firmly established organization in Southern California—well-financed, well-managed, employing scores of skilled workmen for the manufacture of PENNY PHONO units.

Five great, modern plants, housing three-quarters of a million dollars worth of specially designed equipment, contribute to the manufacture of PENNY PHONO machines and records. These include the mammoth Hollywood assembly plant, the up-to-the-minute recording studio and the cabinet-making, die-casting and phonograph processing plants—all constant, living guarantees that CINEMATONE CORPORATION is geared to produce and deliver PENNY PHONO units and PENNY PHONO records in volume.

Information gladly supplied to interested Operators, Distributors and Jobbers on request.

CINEMATONE CORPORATION
1107 NORTH HIGHLAND AVENUE, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

August 1939

PHONOGRAPH OPERATORS

Now! YOU CAN GIVE YOUR LOCATIONS 1001 Selections!

Revolutionizing the coin-operated phonograph field, VOCA-TELE gives the customer not one or two dozen, but AS MANY as 1,000 or more different musical selections to choose from.



GORGEOUS CABINETS
Modernistic, fluorescent lighted. Blends into the swankiest cocktail lounges.

UNLIMITED CHOICE
One record library serves 20 to 50 locations, giving the patrons thousands of selections to choose from. Constant attention by girl "operators" assures quality reproduction.

DOUBLES and TRIPLES INCOME

VOCA-TELE actually increases location income as much as 500% and costs operators no more than ordinary automatic phonographs. The friendly "personal touch" multiples play tremendously.

PATENTED AND GUARANTEED
VOCA-TELE equipment is fully patented and protected, and is guaranteed for one year.

IMMEDIATE DELIVERY ANYWHERE

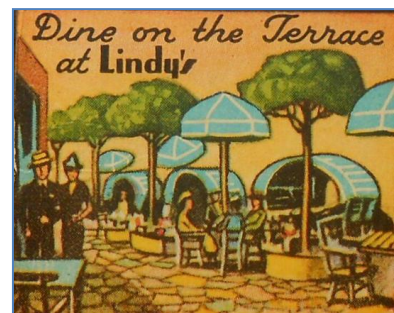
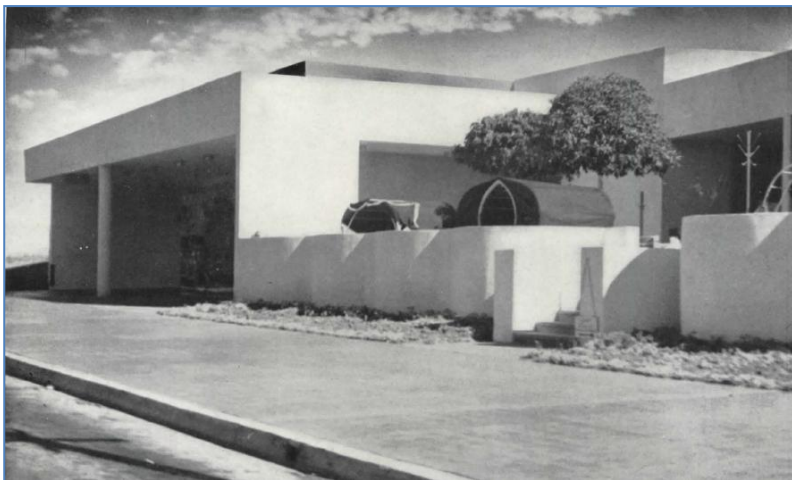
REGARDING EXCLUSIVE TERRITORIES, WIRE OR AIRMAIL.

VOCA-TELE COMPANY
1107 North Highland Ave., LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

"WIRED MUSIC" SYSTEM
Here's how VOCA-TELE works. All VOCA-TELE location consoles are connected by direct telephone wire at nominal cost to a central office where a cheery girl presides over all turntables and records. Customers make selections over microphone atop console, and, without pressing a single button, he gets his favorite tune. Magically VOCA-TELE backs up its slogan, "You say it—we play it!"

September 1940

Note 1:



The first Cinematone experimental coin operated machine was installed at Lindy's in March 1938. Lindy's on the corner of Wilshire and Hobart in Los Angeles since 1934 was originally designed by architect Rudolph Michael Schindler. The building was remodeled in 1938 as shown in the photo above.

The experimental Cinematone film projecting machine was eight feet high, projecting the images with sound to a screen four feet square. It is possible the first cabinet was designed by Sol (*Solomon*) Freedman, and that the cabinet was manufactured by the furniture factory owned by Erle Miles Burnham. A smaller cabinet was design patented by Don Heyer.

Note 2:

The cabinets for the Penny Phono machines were made at the furniture factory owned by Erle Miles Burnham (1879-1943) and his wife Wilma Hazel (1902-1986) at 1935 South Los Angeles Street, the former Burnham Phonograph Corp. facilities.



1935 South Los Angeles Street
(Photo January 2023)

Note 3:

The Phonovision presented at Jack Dempsey's in New York, June 1940. From left to right: Jack (*William Harrison*) Dempsey (1895-1983), Frank Paul Orsatti (1893-1947), and Sam (*Samuel*) Sax (1896-1986). On the screen: Abe Lyman (1897-1957) and his Californians, the first band to be *Phono-vised*.

