

Texas Novelty Co. Beaumont

The company in Beaumont was founded in 1915 by Edmond Demitriou Clem, born the 12th September 1884 in Sistov (*Svishtov*) at the Danube River in Bulgaria, arriving 1907 in America. The company began as an operator on commission basis of coin-op mechanical pianos at 521 6th Street in Port Arthur, and after three years the company moved into office and workshop facilities at 1160 Laurel Avenue in Beaumont. The same facilities soon also housed the Standard Amusement Co., manufacturer of new pin-games and amusement machines employing more than fifty men. In 1926 the Texas Novelty Co. also purchased and operated profit-sharing pianos, with built-in slot machines, made by H. C. Evans & Co., but with the advent of commercial selective phonographs, the company gradually branched off to this end of the business.

When the founder and owner Edmond D. Clem suddenly died following an operation for appendicitis on the 9th April 1933, his two brothers Michael, arriving 1915 in America, and Theodore, arriving 1921 in America, took over company management. In the mid-thirties the Texas Novelty Co. operated amusement machines in twelve states on a commission basis and sold machines in many other states and in Canada and Mexico, and it was considered the largest operator of amusement and music machines in America. Around 1937 the expanding company operated about fifteen hundred phonographs of all makes and styles on routes in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and nearby states. On the 19th April 1938 the company was incorporated by Michael, Theodore, and sister Ekatherina B. Phillipova living in Sofia in Bulgaria. In 1947 she arrived in America and lived in the household of her brother Michael in Beaumont.

<p>WANTED! New Machines</p> <p>Large Distributor and Jobber covering Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and nearby states wants to handle new machines. Buys in large quantities and pays cash. Write immediately.</p> <p>The Texas Novelty Co. 1160 Laurel Avenue Beaumont Texas</p>
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Concerning the commercial phonographs, it is interesting that carpenter and building contractor Horace G. Humphrey assigned a cabinet design to the Texas Novelty Co., patent filed 10th August 1935 and granted 9th June 1936. The cabinet design has obvious similarities to that of Gabel Entertainer cabinets of the early thirties, but it is not known if the phonograph was made in serial for operation on routes. In case it was made and marked Texas Novelty it would have been manufactured at 1160 Laurel Avenue around 1936.

In August 1946 the Texas Novelty Co. divided its holdings. The senior partner Michael D. Clem remained head of the Texas Novelty Co., and his brother Theodore D. Clem

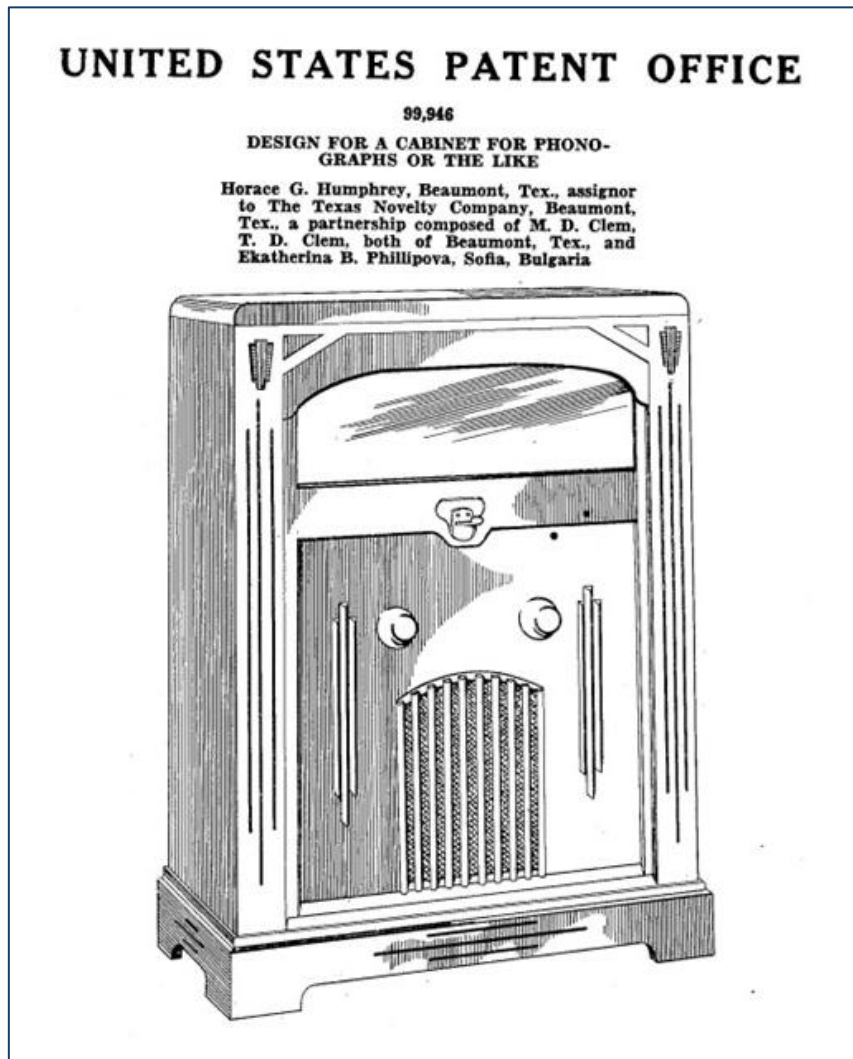
established a new company Sabine Novelty Co. based in Many in Louisiana. Theodore owned the Sabine Novelty Co. until 1960, then sold it to Martha C. Foshee (1929-2021), but remained with the company as a mechanic until he passed away in 1969.


However, it is uncertain what happened to the original Texas Novelty Co, after Michael D. Clem passed away in 1970, and information would be appreciated. The grave markers of all three brothers can be found at the Magnolia Cemetery in Beaumont, but the interment details of sister Ekatherina (*Katherine*) are unfortunately unknown.

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Gert Almind, Jan-2025


Reference: The Coin Machine Journal, April 1933.





Edmond Demetriou Clem
12/9 1884 – 9/4 1933

The Texas Novelty Co.
1160 Laurel Avenue



Magnolia Cemetery, Beaumont
Jefferson County, Texas



Horace Greeley Humphrey
23/2 1892 – 12/1 1979



Forest Lawn Memorial Park and Funeral Home
Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas
Garden of Faith



Michael Demetriou Clem
22/12 1882 – 16/2 1970
Magnolia Cemetery, Beaumont

The Texas Novelty Co.



Theodore Demetriou Clem
3/4 1890 – 18/1 1969
Magnolia Cemetery, Beaumont