

# THE GSPS RECORD

Being the Monthly Newsletter of the Golden State Phonograph Society,  
the California Chapter of the Michigan Antique Phonograph Society Inc.

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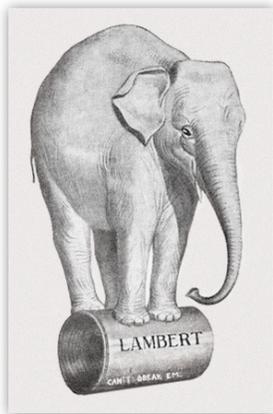
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In 1900, Thomas B. Lambert was granted a patent that described a way of mass producing cylinder records. The basic principles came quite close to Edison's gold moulding process, a new feature that Edison started to use in 1898 for internal master cylinder production. The most significant difference was the use of celluloid instead of wax. It had been previously used by Henri Lioret in France who had started in 1893 to successfully produce celluloid cylinders in his own format. However, Lambert was the first to produce Edison-compatible celluloid cylinders. For this purpose he founded the Lambert Company of Chicago, which held recording studios and factory plants. Over a few years the cylinder colors changed from beige, pink, blue and brown to black. The basis was always the beige celluloid that was then covered with a colored dye to reduce surface noise. These cylinders consisted completely of celluloid and had no additional inner core. The next significant modification was the reduction of used celluloid, an expensive material in those days, which made cylinders thinner and also lighter than

## Lambert Cylinders

by Norman Bruderhof



**Black Lambert and Pink Lambert cylinder record boxes, circa 1900**

their predecessors.

The unusual pink color was likely not a good sales argument and might have been to reason for the following changes over brown to black, because all other period cylinders were made from brown and later black wax. It is known that in the US several pink cylinders were recycled by the factory and then coated with a black dye over the pink [I own a black Lambert that has some spots of pink dye on the inside-Editor]. Brown Lambert cylinders were only made for a very short time and were made from completely solid-colored brown celluloid. The last Lambert cylinders were black (sold under the name "Ebony"). Many of them fea-

tured an inner core made from pressed cardboard.

Albeit its technical success, Lambert's company did only exist for about six years as Thomas A. Edison was bent to legally shut Lambert off and secure his own phonographic supremacy. The result was a series of expensive lawsuits, which Edison nearly all lost. Nevertheless, Edison was very aware of the advantages of celluloid but Lambert's patents remained active and he stuck to his fragile wax material. The most important Edison vs. Lambert litigation was because of the cylinder's compatibility to the mandrels of Edison phonographs. Edison claimed that Lambert was infringing his patents because of that format use. The court did not follow his point of view as Lambert cylinders did have an inner conical form but were totally straight and only touched the phonograph mandrel with each edge. Patent showdowns were not a real problem in Europe where Lambert started a joint venture with the British Edison-Bell Company to have

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...I challenge you to find one thing in your collection of machines, accessories, records, needle tins, books, catalogues etc that you would like to sell...

**GSPS IS NOW  
ON THE WEB!  
VISIT US AT  
[www.gsp1.org](http://www.gsp1.org)**

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## President's Message—by Don Henry

This month our President's message is absent due to our illustrious President having been called in to work on the date of the last meeting. Therefore, your humble Editor asked the host of that meeting, Ron Dethlefsen, for some of the highlights. In Ron's own golden words: "The April meeting at my home covered late Edison Blue Amberol cylinders, both electrically dubbed and

acoustically dubbed examples. Examples were played and the first released electrically dubbed Blue Amberol cylinder was identified as cylinder number 5650. However, there was a mixture of both acoustical and electric dubs until number 5700. From that cylinder onward to the last released BA, number 5719, all cylinders were electrically dubbed. I also mentioned that Blue

Amberol production ceased in July 1929, but cylinders were sold from existing stocks at the factory to mail order customers through October 1929. Finally, I noted that celluloid cylinders were manufactured by Thomas A. Edison, Inc. until 1960 for use as spoken word drill records in stenography school classes. Thanks Ron, for hosting and for a great program!

## Trash to Treasure

by John Robles

Hello all! I would like to ask if you have anything you want to sell that we can add to the GSPS Shopper. It has remained fairly static, or is that stagnant, and I would like to see it liven up and attract some more of you buyers/sellers/swappers! I challenge you to find one thing in your collection of machines, accessories, re-

cords, needle tins, books, catalogues etc that you would like to sell. Make it something that you can offer at an attractive price. I am sure we all have things that we think no one would want, but from my experience with having garage sales over the last several years, that item you think is junk is exactly what some-

one else is looking for. So let's get out those unused phono related doodads, jim-cracks and geegaws and put 'em in the GSPS Shopper. You never know when your trash might be someone else's treasure!  
[Disclaimer: Don't try to sell actual trash here. Put it curbside as scheduled by your city waste management program.]

## The GSPS Shopper

**Submit a free ad by email or by phone! See contact information at lower left. Sell it now!**

**FOR SALE:** Mahogany "New Columbia Grafonola", scarce model 24 Tabletop, only table model made by Columbia after the 1924 bankruptcy \$275.00 **WANTED:** Recordings by Vaughn DeLeath, disc or cylinder; Betty Brown, Gloria Geer on disc; Fiddlin' Powers and Family on Blue Amberol; Mexican, Greek, Indian (India, not Native American). **John Robles—(805) 320-0991, [john9ten@pacbell.net](mailto:john9ten@pacbell.net)**

**FOR SALE:** Brunswick Cortez, Victrola 8-35, Victrola 405 (1923) console, art model in three shades of walnut. **WANTED:** Edison Beethoven models. Edison Inlaid Sheraton. Also could use the number of a furniture restorer who can match woodwork on Schubert legs. **Marc Capralis—951-302-0750**

**WANTED:** Spanish or Mexican cylinders. **Nestor Guzman—909-627-0481**

**FOR SALE:** Edison Fireside w/10 panel cygnet horn, Diamond B reproducer, 100% original including original horn crane. \$1150. Victrola XI table model. Mahogany case with excellent original finish. Runs and plays extremely well. \$250 **Don Henry (310) 795-9144, [phonoworks@hotmail.com](mailto:phonoworks@hotmail.com)**

*(Continued from page 1)*

his indestructible cylinders sold as "Edison-Bell Indestructible Records", followed also by a continental sales subsidiary in Hamburg, Germany.

However, the expensive legal conflicts had taken Lambert's Company bankrupt. Edison may not have legally won this fight but certainly won it economically. In 1912 Edison was finally allowed to use celluloid for the production of his own cylinders and immediately released his brand-new and Edison-innovative Blue Amberols.

#### **Handling and playing**

Lambert cylinders are playable with virtually any 2-minute cylinder phonograph and normally do not require extra care as wax cylinder do. However, they are not indestructible at all! Especially black Lamberts are highly susceptible to cracks and breakage while being exposed to physical stress. Generally do always



avoid forcing any cylinder on the mandrel in case it does not fit!

Playback speeds vary between 120 to 160 rpm. The dye-colored cylinders seem to be furthermore vulnerable to sunlight and, like Blue Amberols, tend to bleach over period of daylight exposure! Therefore it is recommended not to leave such cylinders in any open display. Lambert cylinders in open boxes should be kept in a dark place or closed with a proper lid to avoid any fading. Please note that general colors tend to vary due to conditions of production. An overall seamless but light-colored is no evidence to have

'sunbathed'.

Lambert cylinders bear the serious risk of shrinkage. Because pure celluloid is too inflexible, camphor was added to the composition as a softener. However, camphor tends to evaporate from the celluloid, even after 100 years. As a result, these cylinders shrink and are getting constantly smaller in length and diameter. Practically, this means that most Lambert cylinders will not fit a standard mandrel anymore or only partially. Do not apply any force to the cylinder as this may easily cause the record to crack.

In most cases there is a pos-

sibility to fix this problem by using fine sandpaper (#600 or #1000) and gently ream the inner edges. When doing this it is highly recommended to verify in short intervals to insure that only the necessary amount of celluloid will be taken off. Never use a reaming tool intended for Blue Amberols as the applied sandpaper is too grainy for Lambert cylinders and can easily cause cracks. Be aware that you may have to ream a Lambert cylinder again after about 5 years of normal storage. Some Lambert cylinders are found shrunken so much that an ordinary Edison reproducer will not be able to touch the cylinder's surface anymore. In this case a modern electric playback system or the use of a different phonograph (such as a Columbia Graphophone with floating reproducer) is recommended.

*Thank you, Norm for this article on an interesting cylinder!*



## GOLDEN STATE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY

### June Meeting

Saturday, June 16th, 2012 at 12:00 P.M.

Home Of Mark Friend  
1914 8th Street  
San Fernando, CA 91340  
(818) 489-4472  
oxamoxa@msn.com

Please RSVP so Mark knows how many people to plan on!  
Don't Forget to Bring Your Tradin' Treasures!

GOLDEN STATE  
PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY  
290 Frances Street  
Ventura, CA 93003

### 2012 GSPS Schedule of Events

June—Mark Friend—Los Angeles  
August—CAPS Show—Buena Park  
October—TBD  
December—Scott & Denise Corbett—Ontario

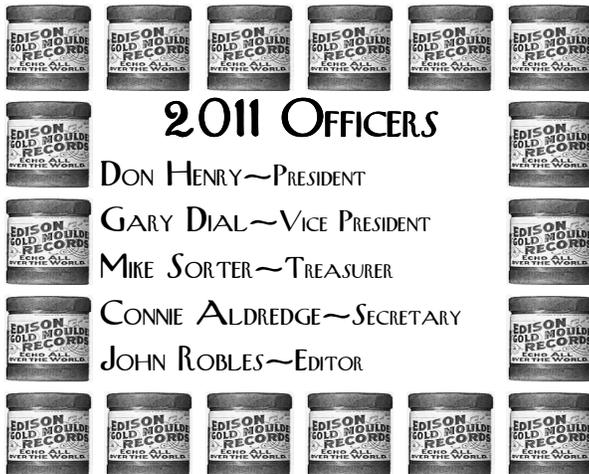
## Monthly Mirth

All the Humor that's Barely Fit to Print



"Hey you kids! turn that racket DOWN!!"

Concept submitted by Jerry Gray



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