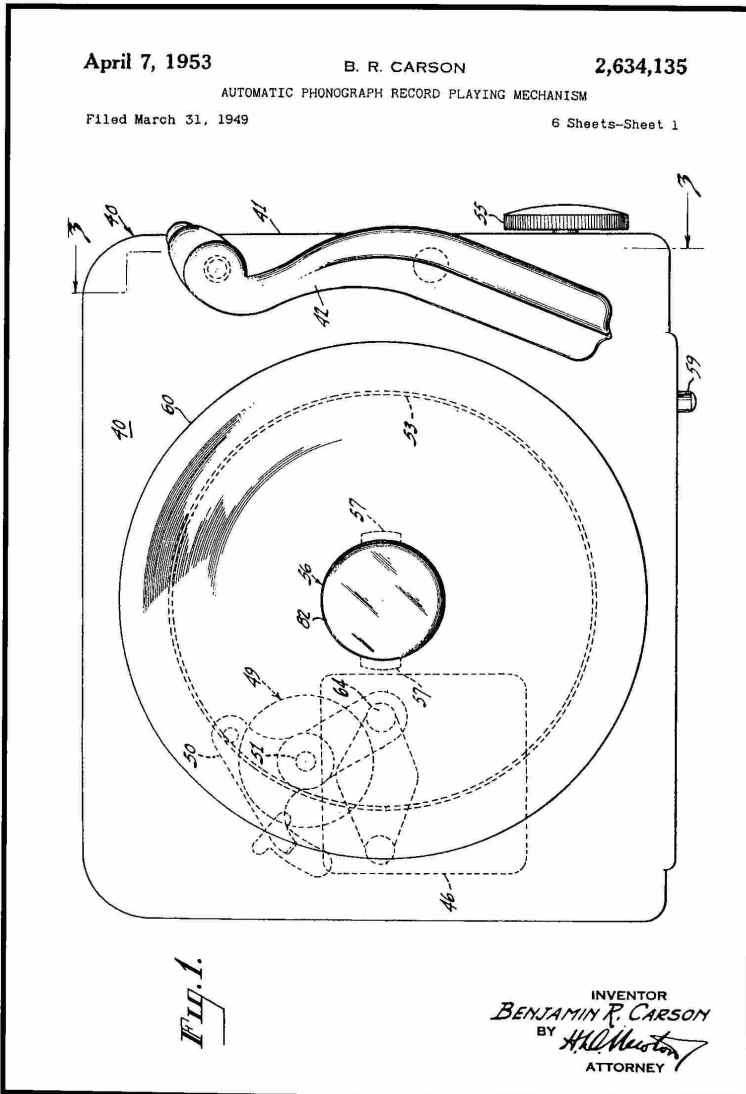
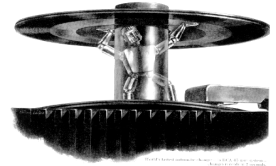


The 45rpm Phono Gazette

Part II Design and introduction of the 45 rpm system of recorded music



Top view of 45 rpm record changer in patent application. Notice the tonearm which was definitely early forties style. The tonearm was updated before production started in late 1948. Patent was not filed until March 31, 1949 because of secret project status (project x). Picture courtesy of Camden County Historical Society.

Part of this article contains text taken from "The Fabulous Victrola 45", of which Chapter 2 was written by Alex Magoun.

Last issue we discussed how the challenge to make a better record and player was made in 1939 and the prototype was demonstrated in 1942 to RCA Victor management. A lot had changed during the years from 1939 to 1942. The country was committed to World War II. This meant that the only consumer product that RCA Victor was allowed to produce was records. No radios, no phonographs, etc. It made perfect sense to shelve the system until the war was concluded.

The corporate staff and structure changed at RCA Victor from 1942 to 1945. Frank M. Folsom was hired in 1943 to run the RCA Victor division. He decentralized the division in 1945 changing it from a functional to a product-based organization. Each product line would have their own separate engineering, production, and sales groups. In the past, with no one directly responsible for the outcome of an innovation, RCA Victor engineering, manufacturing, and marketing groups had to cooperate to develop new systems like the 45 system. With Folsom's change to a product orientation, developing new products became less important than selling the ones RCA already had. Thus RCA Victor Records' advertising agency, J Walter Thompson did not find out about the 45 system until 1948! In addition, Folsom brought in his own people or new managers who had no allegiances to the RCA culture.
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