

1946 Telechron GE Musalarm 8H59, First Radio Alarm Clock

Telechron 8H59 Musalarm, a 1946 4-tube TRF Radio Alarm Clock and the First ever made Alarm Clock Radio, Serviced and Perfectly Working

In a Nutshell

It's a Telechron Musalarm radio alarm clock - it is the first alarm clock radio ever made, and possibly the last TRF radio ever made

Introduction:

When you google "**first radio alarm clock**" you get 54 answers, when you forbid "**Reynolds**" in the search you get 32 answers less, the remaining ones having nothing to do with history, but with birthday presents. The 32 answers with Reynolds all show the same sentence: "**The first radio alarm clock was invented by James F. Reynolds, in the 1940s and another design was also invented by Paul L. Schroth Sr.**", which is Wikipedia wisdom. When you try to find who these two gentlemen were, you are by your own. That's the power of Wikipedia - and its danger.

I claim the first radio alarm clock was invented by **Francesco Collura** (representing Telechron), and it is exactly this **Telechron 8H59**. His patent with number 145'996 "**Design for a Combination Radio Receiver and Timer Clockcase**" was submitted on Jan.21, 1946 and granted on Dec.3, 1946 (ref.2 and pict.s 19,20). "Clock radio" is understood here as a device combining an alarm clock to a radio with the purpose of waking up, not just a radio and a clock sharing the same cabinet, or a radio switched on by a clock to warm up in time.

It was **Henry Ellis Warren**, who in 1908 started to develop what is today known as a **Telechron clock** (see ref.3 below). The trademark was registered in 1923. **General Electric** acquired 50% of Telechron sometime in the 1930's, but took over the prospering company completely shortly after the war, ran it into the ground over a period of several decades, and then sold what was left to Timex. Starting in 1932, Telechron and GE began giving initial model numbers to their clocks to match their function. The 8 Series was for novelty clocks, timers and radios, odd-numbered models were Telechrons, even-numbered were GE. **Two of the novelty clocks were radio alarm clocks (Musalarm), the 8H59 and the 8H67**. The first is the Collura radio alarm clock, the second probably was designed by Collura too, and was made i.a. in a very rare and collectible mottled UREA cabinet (see ref.5). **The 8H59 and 8H67 Musalarm were the first alarm clock radios and due to a shortage of alarm clocks in general so shortly after the war, sold like hotcakes** (see pict.23). The cabinet design was also used by Telechron for the **8H61 "Switch Alarm"** clock.

Additional information:

ref.1: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alarm_clock

ref.2: <http://www.google.com/patents?id=GdNyAAAAEBAJ>

ref.3: <http://clockhistory.com/telechron/>

ref.4: <http://www.telechron.net/postwar/8h59.htm>

ref.5: http://www.greenhillsgf.com/Project_Telechron_8H67.htm

About my radio alarm clock:

The radio has one little blemish, its **right clock control knob is not original, but from its cousin, the GE 50, also for sale** (pict.12), I am trying to get one. The radio comes with its original cardboard back plane (pict.s 4,6), its original paper sticker (pict.10), and with all 4 original General Electric tubes. **It works with a sensitivity, selectivity and volume that is amazing for a 4-tube TRF**. Please [e-mail](mailto:kris@greenhillsgf.com) me (Kris) for any questions, ich spreche Deutsch, je parle Français.

For techies only: Often **Telechron clockworks** stop working because of missing **lubrication**. Ref.3 above shows pictures of rotors, i.a. of an "H" rotor, and it can be seen, that there is only one hole, for the output pinion. Many people attempt to lubricate the gear inside by trying to open the case or by drilling holes in it. I forgot where I read this recipee, which is working perfectly in all cases I applied it: remove the rotor, put it pinion up into an oven preheated to 125°F for 15 minutes, take it out, position it with the pinion up, and drop oil, drop by drop, on that pinion. You'll see the oil disappearing immediately, sucked inside the rotor by the only hole available to equalize the underpressure, generated by the cooling-down rotor case. Fortunately I did not have to do this to the clock of this radio, because it works fine and accurately like a charm.

One word about the radio part of this item: the radio is a **TRF (Tuned Radio-Frequency, as opposed to a Superheterodyne) receiver with only 4 tubes**, one of the last TRF's ever built. The chassis has also been used in the 1946 GE 50 and CGE C50 (for sale too) clock radios. In Riders Vol. XV pages 15-1 to 15-4 (covering 1946) we read for GE model 50: "To overcome a **shortage of 35Z5GT tubes**, for a large portion of the model 50 production we have had to substitute the miniature 35W4 rectifier tube. This tube has similar characteristics to the 35Z5GT". The clock radio offered here features this substitution.

Here are the specifications:

Technical Description of Item

Manufacturer	Telechron Inc., Ashland, Mass.
Model	8H59
Type	4-tube AM/BC TRF radio alarm clock
Production Year	1946
Serial Number	82395
Cabinet	Brown mottled bakelite
Frequency Range	AM 550-1600 kc
Controls	Volume, tuning, 2 clock control knobs
Tube line-up	35W4(Rect.), 12SG7 (RF), 12SQ7 (Det.), 50L6 (Audio)
Size (WxDxH)	11 " x 5½ " x 6 "
Weight	5 lbs
Comment	Utterly undervalued pioneering first clock radio, perfectly working

Gallery: (watch descriptive legends under pictures, when mousing over thumbnails)

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and here to [my website](#) (permanently under construction)

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