



Artifact Showcase:

Westinghouse Battery Charger

Vacuum tube radios of the mid-1920s generally required three batteries: a 6-volt lead-acid “A” battery (an automobile battery), a 90-volt dry “B” battery, and a small dry “C” battery of a few volts. The A battery powered the tube filaments and had to supply a fair amount of current. Of course the battery would wear down and have to be recharged. (The B and C batteries were just replaced when they wore out.) Some radio listeners would lug the heavy A battery to an automobile service station down the street and leave it there overnight to be recharged for a small fee.



Before long, that got to be a nuisance, and so many radio owners purchased a battery charger that plugged into the wall to use to recharge the A battery at home. This Westinghouse “Rectigon” brand charger is a good example of such a device. The charger usually contained a gas-filled rectifier tube (or sometimes a copper-oxide rectifier) and a transformer to convert the 110-volt household alternating current to the 6 volts DC needed to recharge the battery.

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!