

Alva J. Carter

The Story of Nick's Life:

Alva J. "Nick" Carter, noted American Radio Authority, Inventor, Manufacturer, Business Executive and President of the Carter Motor Company was born at George, Iowa, February 22, 1882. He died in Chicago, Illinois, January 24, 1943.

He first became associated with the electrical world constructing automatic telephone plants in the Middle Western states. Working up from a lineman in the field, he became manager of an Independent Telephone Company's plants in Ida Grove, Corydon, and Seymour, Iowa, at the age of 21. The following year he perfected one of his first inventions, a device for simplifying the testing of telephone lines. Coming to Chicago in 1904, he was associated with the Monarch Telephone Company and nine years later he was made General Sales Manager of the Kellogg Switchboard & Supply Company.

In 1922 when Radio first appeared as reality he quickly envisioned its magnitude and boundless opportunity for advancement and service. As a result, the Carter Motor Company was established, which later became the largest radio parts company in the world. Nearly all the 600 items that comprised the Carter Radio parts line were designed by him.

In 1923 he became Chairman of the Radio Parts Division of the American Manufacturer's Electrical Standards.

Later he contributed much time and energy to the organizing of the Radio Manufacturer's Association, one of the strongest and most effective trade organizations in the country. His little office in the Republic Building in Chicago became the meeting place for the small handful of men who visioned, organized, and brought into being this vitally needed organization, more commonly known as "RMA". Since its inception he was for many years an officer or director of the Association.

In June 1928, he was the first in this country to pioneer a unique system of Television at the Radio Manufacturer's Trade Show in Chicago and New York. During these conventions for the first time in the world, Television pictures were received over a regular broadcast wave band.

Among many of the other "first" that were introduced by Nick Carter at these conventions were the first Television pictures ever received by an airplane in flight, the first commercial Transmitter to broadcast voice and picture simultaneously that were received over the same broadcast band, the first commercial Television system in the world to take full range views in the studio with artificial light, the first to reproduce objects at a distance of 30 feet

from a Televisor with ordinary illumination, and the first commercial Television system ever to demonstrated to the public. These were some of his contributions to the Television Industry. The first motor-driven electrical push button radio with remote control was also demonstrated at the Chicago Radio Show in June, 1928, years before it was accepted by the general public.

The Carter Radio Company was the first company to offer a commercial broadcasting Television system to the broadcast stations. The first of these units was installed in radio stations WCFL and WIBO, both in Chicago.

When all commercial Television licenses were revoked, he immediately organized the Carter Motor Company and Cater Genemotor Corporation in 1932, which manufactured the first Dynamotor power supply units for mobile radio for Police use and the general radio trade. Continuing his record of "firsts" to the industry, he contributed many unique and original designs of rotary equipment in the following years, and was the first in the United States to introduce the double output or multiple communicator type Dynamotor in 1940, which has since become invaluable to all types of communication equipment.

In 1936 he designed and developed a new camera type shutter that made possible the photo-electric cell gun for amusement shooting galleries that has since enjoyed so much popularity.

His last development was a new type Permanent Magnet Hand-Generator of unusually high output capacity which will greatly extend the communication range of portable radio field equipment.

He was the Founder and President of the Carter Radio Company of Chicago and Toronto, and the former Vice President of the Utah Radio Products Corporation and the Resistelite Corporation. He was a member of the Institute of Radio Engineers, the Electrical Association of Chicago, the American Signal Corps Association, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, the Radio Club of Chicago, the Lions Club of Chicago, and the Independent Pioneer Telephone Association.

During World War I, he was a Lieutenant in the American Protective League, a division of the Department of Justice of the U.S. Government.

He married at Ida Grove, Iowa in June 1905 to Blanche Percival. He was survived by his wife and three children, Alva J. Carter Jr., Robert Warren Carter, Elva Jane Detsch and two grandchildren, Alva J. Carter III, and Dennis J. Carter. One Brother, Robert G. Carter, also survives.

There are a few men in the Radio Industry today, who contributed so much to its advancement, of who have enjoyed the friendships of so many, as Alva J. Carter, whose remarkable inventions and contributions to the electrical world will long be remembered.

INDUSTRY GRIEVES DEATH OF ALVA J. CARTER

One of Radio's Foremost Pioneers

The entire Radio Industry all over the country, as well as hundreds of close friends, were shocked upon hearing of the sudden death of Alva J. Carter, one of Radio's earliest and best loved Pioneers. He died of a heart attack early Sunday morning January 24, 1943.

Suffering no pain or long illness, his unexpected death ended a long, useful, and brilliant career that greatly contributed to the advancement of the Telephone, Radio Television, and Dynamotor industries.

"Nick", as the Radio world knew him, was loved, respected, and will long be remembered by everyone for his honest, straightforward character, dynamic personality, and unequalled sense of humor. His death not only is a great loss to the industry as inventor, designer, and manufacturer, but also to the many individuals to whom he so willingly gave his wise counsel and advice.

The tragic news was relayed in newspapers all over the country and broadcast from many of the leading radio stations.

In the chapel filled with flowers, the funeral services were held at 11:00 A.M. Wednesday, January 27th, and were presided by Dr. Preston Bradley of the People's Church, Chicago. Dr. Bradley's eloquent and memorable eulogy will long be remembered by the many hundreds of close and lifelong friends who were there.

From an advertising letter from the Carter Motor Company, provided by the current president, Keith Geisler:

In April 1922, Carter Radio Company was founded by Alva J. "Nick" Carter, in a small one room office in Chicago. Nick left an excellent position with Kellogg Switchboard to throw his lot with the embryonic radio industry. The same courage and foresight that prompted him to make that gamble brought about the amazing growth of the Company. Carter's early years are really the story of Nick Carter.

Alva J. Carter was born in 1882 in George, Iowa. While his formal education was limited, his informal one continued and broadened throughout life. By twelve years of age, he was

experimenting with electricity. At 19, he was manager of two small telephone exchanges in Iowa.

At first the infant company did no manufacturing. Nick would design a part needed by the radio industry and contract for its manufacture. So great became the demand for Carter parts, they were forced into manufacturing. Space in the old Republic Building was quickly outgrown, and in 1929, Carter moved into a new factory and became one of the most prominent manufacturers in the industry. Practically every one of the early radios used Carter parts.

Nick Carter's close friend was Thomas A. Edison with whom he frequently visited, speculating on the electrical industry's future. By 1930 Nick had become so interested in television; he had designed both receivers and transmitters.

In 1931 Nick founded his own television company, Carter Television. A short time later, he founded the Carter Motor Company, responsible for the design and manufacture of motors. The Carter Motor Company went through rapid growth, and several production plant changes. The company is still in business today, and have added electrical automotive switches, together with other components, to its electronic line.