

Phone with dial

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Dial telephone. Brown in color, it's made of plastic and metal. In the center of the dial is a handwritten inscription

Accession Number 2008.8

Fabricant / Éditeur Northern Electric & Manufacturing Company Limited

Period 2nd half of the 20th century

Materials metal, plastic

Measurements 13 x 23 x 22,5 cm

Historical context

The era of telephony in Canada began in 1877, and by 1880 the first Montreal telephone directory already contained 244 entries. Such was the success of the telephone that, by the end of the 19th century, the poles and wires needed for communication invaded the Canadian landscape. From the 1920s onwards, telephones became commonplace in the home, and were constantly improved. For example, the dial telephone appeared in 1922. The model shown here, however, is more recent, dating from the second half of the 20th century.

The letters visible on the dial of the telephone shown here were introduced in the 1950s. At that time, the number of telephone subscribers in Quebec reached 100,000. As numbers grew longer, letters were introduced to make them easier to remember. The word thus formed corresponds to the name of the telephone exchange to which the subscriber is connected. From there, a switchboard operator connects users to each other.

In 1961, the use of exchange names came to an end. Seven-digit numbers were introduced. The letters on the dials continued to appear after this date, however, as their presence made it easier to memorize the numbers.

This telephone was produced by the Northern Electric & Manufacturing Company Limited. Founded in Montreal in 1895 and located in the Pointe-Saint-Charles district near the Lachine Canal, it manufactured telephones for the Bell Telephone Company. The company quickly grew to colossal proportions as it later moved into the manufacture of electronic devices.

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On display