

Norman Baker's General Merchandise Catalog (1929)

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Looking up information for a collector about the Tangley Calliaphone in my archived hobby material gave me the opportunity to inspect an otherwise-forgotten catalog, one without an exact title but with writing in script saying "Hello Folks" "'K-TNT'"; signed by N. Baker and at the bottom more script *This is my 1929 catalogue, and it chuck full of bargains. P.S.--address use Muscatine Iowa Best luck Norman* (Figure 1). Dated 1929 this is the only such catalog that I am

aware of that was produced by Norman Baker for general merchandise.

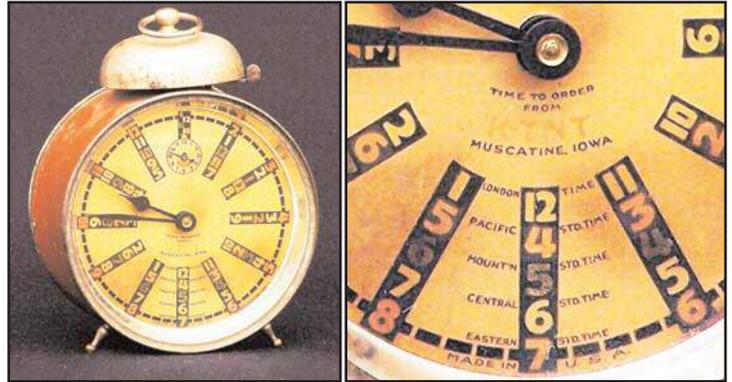
As elucidated in my article "Norman Baker (A Life History)" which appeared in issue #28 of the *Carousel Organ* (July, 2006), Norman Baker had his interests in many different activities besides the well-known-to-us Tangley Calliaphone. Some of these included the Tangley school of Art; the radio station, KTNT; the Tangley Tire Company; his magazine *TNT*; *The Naked Truth* and of course, his later endeavors into the medical field.

This general merchandise catalogue hit home with many domestic articles that most households probably needed. Some of these have survived today. One such item of interest is what was advertised as a "Radio Clock" on page two (Figure 2). The title is misleading if the reader interprets this as a combination radio and clock. What is meant, after reading the description, is that the clock helps you tell time when listening to a radio station in a different time zone. What is meant, after reading the description, is that the clock helps you tell time when listening to a radio station in a different time zone. The advertisement notes *It's nice to know the exact time in different places when hearing a distant station*. Interestingly enough this clock would be useful for those of us calling Europe, such as the many times I had occasion to do when scheduling trip events for the recent Bumbling Bruder Tour.

Actually it is quite an attractive clock (Figures 3 & 4) and the statement at the end of the advertisement on page two of the



Figure 1. The 1929 general merchandise catalog.



Figures 3 (left) & 4 (right). An existing example of Baker's Radio Clock. Figure 4 details the time zones including London time.

catalog follows through with the notation: "Makes a dandy souvenir of "K-TNT." All for just \$1.25. Of concern, however is the addition of "London" on the time ring—were American listeners able to listen to a London radio station? According to COAA member and ham radio operator, Burl Updyke, the BBC began shortwave broadcasts in 1932. Other amateur shortwave operators began about a decade earlier according to Burl "it was not something the average person would have been engaged in."



A second item in the catalog that has some crossover interests with mechanical music collectors is the Tangley Radio (Figure 5). The radio pic-

Figure 5 (left). The Tangley Radio.

Figure 6 (below, left). The Tangley radio as advertised.

Figure 7 (below, right). The "TNT" Midget radio.



RADIO CLOCK

Tells the time in all parts of the country. You need one.

Every listener needs this clock. Regular size alarm clock, good time keeper. The dial is arranged so that immediately you can tell the time in different parts of the country. It automatically gives Eastern, Central, Mountain, Pacific and London time. It's nice to know the exact time in different places when hearing a distant station. Use it for an alarm clock and daily time keeper. Comes in beautiful colors, Red, Blue, Green, etc. Makes a dandy souvenir of "K-TNT." Prepaid.....

\$1.25

Figure 2. Advertisement of the Radio Clock.

"All Electric 7"



Model 85A10

Complete with Dynamic Speaker

\$98.00

"Master 6"



Model 15

Battery Console with Magnetic Speaker

Unusual Selectivity... "Grant to Coast"

\$59.95

"All Electric 7"



\$54.95



"TNT" Midget

Accomplishes All and More

PREPAID WITH tubes... everything

\$58.95

This Challenges All Battery Sets

Try it -- If You Don't Like it -- Don't Buy it

6 TUBE - SCREEN GRID DYNAMIC SPEAKER. A PEER



PREPAID with tubes and batteries

\$69.95

TNT MAGAZINE CO.

tured as well as a second radio are in the collection of the Muscatine Art Center. Although not exactly as pictured in Norman Baker's catalog (Figure 6) it is similar and has the Tangley decal on the front. Featured are three large Bakelite dials ("Tuner's 1, 2 & 3") as well as two smaller dials for "Filament Control" and "Volume." On the left is the speaker grill.

A second page of radios (Figure 7) advertises the "TNT" Midget, a tabletop radio that "accomplishes all and more." Priced at \$58.95 I would certainly hope so.



Figure 8. Two varieties of Tangley brand of coffee.

Leaving the mechanical and electronic items an interesting food item found is the Tangley coffee (Figure 8). Offered both "Culture Ripened" and "Melo-Ripened" the coffee was advertised to *not affect your sleep – not a headache in a carload*. Catalog advertisements can be seen in Figures 9 & 10. It is noted that if you buy a 3 Lb. *Can that you may try enough for two meals and if not satisfied, return the balance and all money refunded*. On the same page you can save money by buying five pounds of coffee in a towel sack and perhaps use the sack later (*Sacks of good toweling, makes towel worth 10 to 18 cents*).

Folks, listen a minute . . .
Here's Bakers Melo-Ripened
COFFEE
With the excess acids neutralized. Does not affect your sleep—not a headache in a carload

BAKER'S MELO-RIPENED COFFEE is the purest because all excess acids are neutralized by a special ripening process consisting of ripening the coffee in high temperature rooms for 14 days, with fungus growth. The same fungus growth that rots your fruits. The fungus growth tries to rot the green bean coffee, but first brings it to a ripening stage, and when it is ripe we take it out before it over ripens. Then roasted just the right length of time. We do in 14 days almost what nature requires one year in ripening. Drink it before retiring, it won't keep you awake. No headache or heart burn. Delicious taste and pleasing aroma of Old Government Java.

5 POUNDS
A dandy container with 5 lbs. packed in a tin bucket with airtight lid. Order your first 5 lbs. in a bucket to get a good airtight container, then order in towel sacks, saving 9c per pound.

ONLY . . . \$2.54
(Postage 15c Extra)

5 POUNDS
Save 9c by ordering 5 lbs. in towel sack. If you have no airtight container for 5 lbs., order first 5 lb. order in tin bucket above. Sacks of good toweling, makes towel worth 10 to 18c.

PRICE ONLY . . . \$1.55
(Postage 15c Extra)

ONLY . . . \$2.45
(Postage 17c Extra)

10 POUNDS
The right quantity for large family, comes in sack made of good grade toweling, making

Figures 9 (left) & 10 (right). Catalog advertising for the "Cultured" and "Melo-ripended" coffee.

Another consumable product offered by the Baker catalog was the flour product. Catalog advertisement (Figure 11) promotes this flour as "Baker's Best," noting that *you ladies will surely fall in love with this flour*.

Figure 12, however, is a photograph of K-T-N-T flour that boasts (by Norman Baker) *If he says it – it's true!* Well, we know he lived up to the quality of the Tangley Calliophone.

Not many catalog items survive—these are just a few of the products that were offered in the catalog of 1929. Figure 13 is a collage of several pages from the catalog. While not mechanical music it is interesting to see what was offered by the man who made the calliope famous. The general merchandising is just one aspect of his fantastic life history.

FLOUR
Baker's "All-Purpose" Hard, Winter Wheat

You ladies will surely fall in love with this flour. You will like it because each sack is uniform, and batch after batch of your baking will come out alike. Made of the finest choice and selected hard winter wheat. This flour mill is located at the edge of the wheat belt, where they have first choice of the finest wheat shipments and can be "choicy." Mills located outside the wheat belt cannot be so particular. I could sell you a cheaper flour, but I chose not to do so.

\$3.75 Per 98 lbs. Can ship in 98 lb. sacks
\$7.20 Per Barrel (contains two 98 lb. sacks)

Figures 11 & 12 detailing the K-T-N-T flour.

Baker
If He Says It - It's True!

K-T-N-T
Highest Quality Hard Wheat - FLOUR -
Manufactured Expressly for **NORMAN BAKER**
MUSCATINE, IOWA.

BLEACHED
K-T-N-T

The author wishes to thank Brian Walter, Muscatine, IA and Virginia Cooper, Registrar, Muscatine Art Center, Muscatine, IA for allowing me to use photographs from the Norman Baker Collection.

27 Figure 13. Several pages of the general merchandise catalog.