

Archeophone Archives



Edison Blue Amberol Records Domestic Popular Series *Vol. 6 (1651–1656, 1711–1720, Specials A–K, Selected School Series)*

The EDISON PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY

VOL. XI

April-May, 1913

Nos. 4-5



MAKING A BAND RECORD

***The original cover for the April and May 1913 release of
The Edison Phonograph Monthly.***

Series Rationale: *The Blue Amberols Worth Having*

Thomas A. Edison, Inc. introduced the Blue Amberol cylinder in November 1912. With celluloid surfaces made quiet by the aniline dye that gave them their distinctive color, these well-recorded and durable pressings were rightly hailed as the epitome of Edison's recording art. Blue Amberols comprised the longest-running and most extensive of any cylinder series—extending the commercial life of the cylinder format until 1929.

The U.S. domestic catalog began with number 1501 and concluded in June 1929 with number 5719—well over 4,100 titles released over nearly 17 years. Quality was high during the first two years of manufacture. Then to cut costs, Edison began dubbing Blue Amberols from Diamond Discs. Whereas most domestic releases through catalog number 2500 had been recorded directly to cylinder, most releases after 2500 were dubbed from discs.

Three-quarters of all domestic Blue Amberols, more than 3,100 titles, were dubbed from discs. From an archival perspective these second-generation copies are eschewed in favor of the commercially-released first-generation discs from which they were dubbed—that is, when such discs are available. Between 1915 and 1929 Edison released approximately 360 domestic Blue Amberols from *unissued* discs. Today these performances survive only as Blue Amberols.

Other issues above catalog number 2500 are also of archival interest. As sales of both Edison discs and cylinders declined in the late 1920s and the cost of making new recordings became prohibitive, Edison padded its Blue Amberol catalog with more than 90 direct-to-cylinder performances made as early as 18 years before. Again, these recordings exist only on cylinder.

In short, one-third of the domestic Blue Amberol series (nearly 1,400 titles) exists only in the cylinder format. From an archival perspective, these are the Blue Amberols worth having, and these are the titles released in the Archeophone Archives *Blue Amberol Domestic Popular Series*.

WHY DUBS ARE INFERIOR

A quiet disc pressing and a careful engineer could produce a decent dub; indeed, when played on period equipment, some of the earliest and best dubs are difficult to distinguish from direct-to-cylinder recordings. But very quickly both the quality of the discs and care in dubbing deteriorated. Most dubs from 1915 through 1929 are readily identified by surface noise from the disc, attenuated high and low frequencies, acoustic resonances, mechanical noises, and playback issues such as skips in the disc or missing beginnings of performances.

Transfers and Restoration

Transfers of Blue Amberol cylinders in the Archeophone Archives are made to the highest technical standards. The surface of each cylinder is washed with liquid cleaning solution and polished with a microfiber cloth before playing. Surfaces free of fingerprints, dirt, dust, and other contaminants that plague the format yield the quietest transfers. The best among several styli is chosen to yield the most accurate transfer given the wear pattern in the groove and the condition of the pressing. Particular attention is paid to squaring the cylinders on the mandrel. Blue Amberols are notorious for bouncing off-center in relation to the axis of revolution—analogueous to playing discs with off-center holes. The ear is very sensitive to this wow, and much attention is paid to minimizing distortion in the time domain.

The best archival practice is to transfer acoustic recordings “flat”—that is, without equalization in the playback chain—and this is how all transfers have been made. But as the acoustic recording process was anything but flat, flat playback is a terrible way to listen to acoustic recordings. After removing the thumps, clicks, pops, and crackle inherent in Blue Amberol pressings, we judiciously corrected the most glaring deficiencies and distortions in the original recording chain. Archeophone's goal is to resurrect the life in these recordings that flat playback leaves buried.

Introduction to Blue Amberol Series, Vol. 6

SPECIALS AND SCHOOL SERIES

Special Blue Amberol Series: Edison sentenced the two-minute phonograph to obsolescence when it introduced the four-minute Amberol cylinder in 1908. The company gave its customers a choice. They could either purchase a new phonograph designed for the longer-playing records, or they could buy and install hardware to retrofit their existing machines. To promote the retrofit attachment Edison announced a set of ten “special” records in the spring of 1910. Dealers could “offer the Attachment at its original price and ten special Amberol Records for only \$1.00—a present to the customer of \$4.00.”

The company forced a second round of upgrades in 1912 when the Blue Amberol made the Amberol obsolete. Edison initially told dealers, “The ten special Records formerly offered with the attachment being wax, they cannot be used with the Diamond point and are, therefore, discontinued.” But quickly the company realized yet another round of retrofits would be good business. On April 1, 1913 Edison announced the Special Amberols had been “remade” as Special Blue Amberols to be given (at no charge this time) to customers purchasing Blue Amberol upgrade kits.

The four-minute “Specials” were well chosen to cover the full range of the company’s repertoire. We include all ten here, all initially recorded as wax Amberols sometime before April 1910.

School Series: Concurrent with the introduction of the Blue Amberol in 1912, Edison announced an initiative to get the phonograph into the schools:

The Phonograph is rapidly coming into its own for, after conquering the amusement field, it has made a successful invasion of the business office and has now come to be recognized as a positive educational force. Educators have for some time seen the advisability of using the Phonograph in the schools, but there has never before been a machine suited to the purpose. The new Edison School Phonograph, however, has been especially constructed for use in school-rooms. (*EPM* Dec. 1912, p. 4)

In addition to commending to educators a range of records from its regular catalog, the company prepared a number of recordings specifically for the classroom:

Painstaking study has resulted in the arrangement of the first list of fifty-four Records containing a series of lessons in dictation and spelling, drill work in addition, table drills, problems in measurements, analysis and proportion, fractions, business practice, percentage and various other subjects. In another division are six Records giving excerpts from world-famous speeches. (*EPM* Dec. 1912, p. 4)

Surviving School phonographs are scarce and records from the School Series are scarcer still. Numbered in the regular domestic series from 1657 through 1710, these are in fact the rarest of all Blue Amberols—even more so than the elusive 5700s that command premium prices when traded among collectors. No public archive or private collection has a complete run. We include two examples in this release.

The six “excerpts from world-famous speeches” (1651 through 1656) were available in the regular domestic catalog for many years—so long, in fact, that at least one, “Lincoln’s Speech at Gettysburg,” was dubbed (at breakneck speed) from a Diamond Disc without Harry Humphrey’s explanatory prelude heard on the original Blue Amberol release. We include this remake as a bonus track. A second bonus is an alternate take of Golden and Hughes’ “Darky School Days” (1712); in the first version, Hughes’ character went to school in Alabama, but in the second version it is North Carolina.

Archeophone Archives’ digital-only releases can be purchased at [iTunes](#), [Amazon](#), and [Google Play](#). These [album notes](#) are free to everyone. Learn more about our new [Archeophone Archives](#) imprint at [Archeophone Records](#), the Grammy-winning leader in historical reissues from the acoustic era of recording.

RECORD DESCRIPTIONS from *The Edison Phonograph Monthly*

1651	Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg	Harry E. Humphrey
1652	Patrick Henry's Speech	Harry E. Humphrey
1653	Finch's "The Blue and the Gray"	Harry E. Humphrey
1654	Washington's Farewell Address	Harry E. Humphrey
1655	Webster's "Speech in Reply to Hayne"	Harry E. Humphrey
1656	Henry W. Grady's Speech on "The New South"	Harry E. Humphrey
1657	Dictation and Spelling 2d Year 1st Half Lesson 1	Harry E. Humphrey
1705	Fifteen Review Problems in Denominate Numbers	Edward Meeker
Special A	The Four Jacks—March (<i>Losch</i>)	New York Military Band
Special B	Father's Eccentricities (<i>Hill</i>) <i>Vaudeville specialty, orchestra accompaniment</i>	Murry K. Hill
Special C	If I Must Say Farewell, Kate, Let Me Kiss Your Lips Good-Bye (<i>Helf</i>) <i>Tenor solo, orchestra accompaniment</i>	Manuel Romain
Special D	The Ninety and Nine (<i>Sankey</i>) <i>Sacred selection, mixed voices, unaccompanied</i>	Edison Mixed Quartet
Special E	Scenes that Are Brightest—Fantasia (<i>Wallace</i>) <i>Saxophone solo, orchestra accompaniment</i>	H. Benne Henton
Special F	Two Rubes Swapping Horses (<i>Porter</i>) <i>Rube sketch, melodeon accompaniment</i>	Porter and Meeker
Special G	I'm Looking for a Sweetheart (<i>Burnside</i>) <i>Conversational duet, orchestra accompaniment</i>	Ada Jones and Billy Murray

- Special H Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! (Root)** **Harlan and Stanley**
Descriptive selection, orchestra accompaniment
- Special J The Hermit's Bell—Overture** **American Symphony Orchestra**
- Special K The Peerless Minstrels** **Peerless Quartette and Company**
Minstrels, orchestra accompaniment
- 1711 Manhattan Beach and El Capitan Marches (Sousa)** **Sousa's Band**
- 1712 Darky School Days (Poldini)** **Golden and Hughes**
Vaudeville sketch
- 1713 The Vacant Chair (G. F. Root)** **Elizabeth Spencer and Chorus**
Soprano, orchestra accompaniment
- 1714 Uncle Josh Keeps House** **Cal Stewart**
Talking
- 1715 I Will Sing of My Redeemer (James McGranahan)** **Edison Mixed Quartet**
Sacred, organ accompaniment
- 1716 Medley of Country Dances** **E. A. Jaudas**
Violin solo, orchestra accompaniment
- 1717 Sympathy—The Firefly (Rudolf Friml)** **Charlotte Kirwan and Harvey Hindermeyer**
Soprano and tenor, orchestra accompaniment
- 1718 Oh! What a Beautiful Dream (Joe Cooper)** **Walter Van Brunt and Chorus**
Tenor solo, orchestra accompaniment
- 1719 When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam' (Berlin)** **Collins and Harlan**
Coon duet, orchestra accompaniment
- 1720 Wearing of the Green** **Marie Narelle**
Soprano, orchestra accompaniment

[Descriptions of Special Series records assembled from various sources by the producers.]

ARCHIVE ARTIFACTS

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EDISON PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY FOR DEC., 1912

BLUE AMBEROL SCHOOL RECORDS

(THIRD LIST)

50c. each in the U. S.; 65c. each in Canada.

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------|
| 1651 | Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg | Harry E. Humphrey |
| 1652 | Patrick Henry's Speech | Harry E. Humphrey |
| 1653 | Finch's "The Blue and the Gray" | Harry E. Humphrey |
| 1654 | Washington's Farewell Address | Harry E. Humphrey |
| 1655 | Webster's "Speech in Reply to Hayne" | Harry E. Humphrey |
| 1656 | Henry W. Grady's Speech on "The New South" | Harry E. Humphrey |
| 1657 | Dictation and Spelling 2d Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1658 | Dictation and Spelling 2d Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1659 | Dictation and Spelling 2d Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1660 | Dictation and Spelling 2d Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1661 | Dictation and Spelling 3d Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1662 | Dictation and Spelling 3d Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1663 | Dictation and Spelling 3d Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1664 | Dictation and Spelling 3d Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1665 | Dictation and Spelling 4th Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1666 | Dictation and Spelling 4th Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1667 | Dictation and Spelling 4th Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1668 | Dictation and Spelling 4th Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1669 | Dictation and Spelling 5th Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1670 | Dictation and Spelling 5th Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1671 | Dictation and Spelling 5th Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1672 | Dictation and Spelling 5th Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1673 | Dictation and Spelling 6th Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1674 | Dictation and Spelling 6th Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1675 | Dictation and Spelling 6th Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1676 | Dictation and Spelling 6th Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1677 | Dictation and Spelling Review Exercises 6th Year | |
| 1678 | Dictation and Spelling 7th Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1679 | Dictation and Spelling 7th Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1680 | Dictation and Spelling 7th Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1681 | Dictation and Spelling 7th Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1682 | Dictation and Spelling Review Exercises 7th Year | |
| 1683 | Dictation and Spelling 8th Year 1st Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1684 | Dictation and Spelling 8th Year 1st Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1685 | Dictation and Spelling 8th Year 2d Half Lesson 1 | |
| 1686 | Dictation and Spelling 8th Year 2d Half Lesson 2 | |
| 1687 | Drill in Rapid Addition | |
| 1688 | Table Drill | |
| 1689 | Problems in Rapid Drill Work | |
| 1690 | Ten Problems in Measurements | |
| 1691 | Ten Problems in Analysis and Proportion | |
| 1692 | Finding Part of a Number | |
| 1693 | Ten Problems in Fractions | |
| 1694 | Twelve Problems in Business Practice | |
| 1695 | Practical Business Problems | |
| 1696 | Practical Review Problems | |
| 1697 | Problems in Percentage Groupe 1 | |
| 1698 | Problems in Percentage Groupe 2 | |
| 1699 | Problems in Percentage Groupe 3 | |
| 1700 | General Problems in the Application of Percentage | |
| 1701 | Ten Business Problems in Percentage | |
| 1702 | General Problems in Percentage | |
| 1703 | Denominate Numbers | |
| 1704 | Drill in Denominate Numbers | |
| 1705 | Fifteen Review Problems in Denominate Numbers | |
| 1706 | Miscellaneous Problems First Groupe | |
| 1707 | Miscellaneous Problems Second Groupe | |
| 1708 | Miscellaneous Problems Third Groupe | |
| 1709 | Miscellaneous Problems Fourth Groupe | |
| 1710 | Miscellaneous Problems Fifth Groupe | |

The following Grand Opera, Concert and Regular Amberol Records are also considered to have a sufficiently educational value to permit of their use in connection with the School Phonograph:

BLUE AMBEROL CONCERT AND GRAND OPERA RECORDS

75c. each in the U. S.; \$1.00 each in Canada

- | | | |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 28101 | Barcarole (Tales of Hoffman) | Marie Rappold and Chalmers |
| 28102 | Meditation (Thais) | Albert Spalding |
| 28105 | Hymn to the Emperor | The Olive Mead String Quartet |
| 28106 | Ave Maria | Marie Rappold and Albert Spalding |
| 28109 | The Angel's Serenade | Margaret Keyes |
| 28111 | The Day Is Done | Christine Miller |
| 28113 | Il Trovatore—Ah! Si Ben Mio (Italian) | Martin |
| 28114 | Cavalleria Rusticana—Racconto di Santuzza | Labia |
| 28115 | La Traviata—Di Provenza il mar | Galeffi |
| 28116 | La Gioconda—Cielo e mar | Albani |

- | | | |
|-------|--|---------------|
| 28117 | Freischütz—Wie nahte mir der Schlummer | Marie Rappold |
| 28118 | Thais—Alessandria | Polese |
| 28119 | Tannhäuser—O du mein holder Abendstern | Feinhals |
| 28123 | La Sonnambula—Cavatina | Galvany |
| 28124 | Die Meistersinger—Preislied | Knote |
| 28125 | Mignon—Polonaise | Arral |
| 28126 | Prophete—Ah! mon fils | Delna |
| 28127 | L'Africana—O Paradiso | Albani |

REGULAR AMBEROL RECORDS

50c. each in the U. S.; 65c. each in Canada

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1501 | Semiramide Overture | American Standard Orchestra |
| 1502 | Trio from Faust in English | Agnes Kimball, Reed Miller and Frank Croxton |
| 1506 | Over the Waves Waltz | New York Military Band |
| 1509 | La Paloma | Edison Concert Band |
| 1525 | The Rosary | Elizabeth Spencer and Knickerbocker Quartet |
| 1527 | Serenade | Florentine Instrumental Trio |
| 1537 | List! The Cherubic Host | Chorus of Female Voices and Frank Croxton |
| 1548 | Good-Night, Good-Night, Beloved | Emo's Quartet |
| 1553 | Bells Solo from The Magic Flute | Charles Daab |
| 1558 | Menuet, Op. 14, No. 1 | American Standard Orchestra |
| 1564 | Sounds from the Operas | National Promenade Band |
| 1570 | Serenade | The Tollefsen Trio |
| 1578 | The Shepherd Boy | Venetian Instrumental Trio |
| 1581 | Edelweiss and Almenrausch | Venetian Instrumental Trio |
| 1604 | Heimweh (Longing for Home) | Venetian Instrumental Quartet |

The school Records listed on this page will not be available for use in Canada but are appropriate for use in any part of the United States. Dealers should make a big effort to place these School Phonographs in the local schools—and homes.

Thomas A. Edison

A NOVEL WINDOW

R. MONTALVO, JR., Edison Dealer in New Brunswick, N. J., surprised the populace by what is undoubtedly the most remarkable window display ever shown in that city. In enclosing the following clipping this Dealer showed that he appreciated the value of such advertising and there is no doubt but what his windows will receive regular attention in the future:

One of the most remarkable window displays ever seen in this city is to be found in the window of Ramon Montalvo's store. Included among the many interesting things to be found in the room are: the first Phonograph made by Thomas Edison, the first Record made, on tin foil, and which reproduces the voices of Mr. Edison and Sarah Bernhardt.

This unique collection was loaned to Mr. Montalvo by Albert Carman, son of ex-Sheriff Carman, who was associated with Mr. Edison when the latter had his laboratory at Menlo Park.

Thomas A. Edison

TO THE TRADE

We wish to call the attention of Dealers to the fact that window displays are shipped regularly through Jobbers. When orders are received late, necessitating shipment direct to Dealers, the Dealers must pay the transportation charges.

The complete list of the School-Series Blue Amberols, top left (numbers 1651-1710), announced in Dec. 1912.

SELECTED EDISON TALENT



**HARRY E.
HUMPHREY**
Recitations



**H. BENNE
HENTON**
Saxophone



MARIE NARELLE
Soprano



FRANK C. STANLEY
Baritone

Frank C. Stanley died in Dec. 1910 but is preserved on two Blue Amberols in this collection, Special H, with Byron G. Harlan, and Special K, with the Peerless Quartet.

RELEASE INFORMATION

Edison's School Series cylinders were announced in December 1912 and released around January 1913. This unusual list of selections, which included 60 titles (eight of which are included here, plus a bonus dubbed version of No. 1651), was actually the third set of Blue Amberol releases, breaking up the popular series.

The Special Series of Blue Amberols were available in April 1913, right about the time that Nos. 1711–1720 came out as the first part of Edison's sixth list of Blue Amberol issues.

Besides the Special Series (see. p. 4 for details), the following selections were originally released as Edison four-minute wax Amberols. The master molds from the original recordings were used to make the corresponding Blue Amberols.

BA #	Title (Artist)	Amberol # (Release date)
1711	Manhattan Beach and El Capitan Marches (Sousa's Band)	319 (Dec. 1909)
1712	Darky School Days (Golden and Hughes)	151 (June 1909)
1713	The Vacant Chair (Elizabeth Spencer and Chorus)	788 (Sep. 1911)
1714	Uncle Josh Keeps House (Cal Stewart)	75 (Feb. 1909)
1715	I Will Sing of My Redeemer (Edison Mixed Quartet)	208 (Aug. 1909)
1716	Medley of Country Dances (E. A. Jaudas)	322 (Dec. 1909)



Five lids from the Special Series of Blue Amberols. The records are easy to find—but not in the high-quality condition heard on this collection.

CREDITS

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EPM transcriptions by Richard Martin

The Archeophone Archives sourced the David Giovannoni Collection and Archeophone Records Collection of Edison recordings and ephemera for this release.

Selection no. 1705, "Fifteen Review Problems in Denominate Numbers," courtesy of René Rondeau.

Essential reading:

Dethlefsen, Ronald. *Edison Blue Amberol Recordings, 1912–1914*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Mulholland Press, 1997.

Archeophone Archives is dedicated to issuing extensive runs of early sound recordings in digitally downloadable form. Like the CDs for which Archeophone Records is known, our digital downloads are carefully transferred from the best-available copies and meticulously restored to bring out the best-possible sound.

Our commitment to these critical details differentiates our releases from the free downloads available on the Internet. Archeophone Archives delivers the best sound from the best copies.

Our premiere endeavor, *The Blue Amberol Domestic Popular Series*, draws its recordings from the collection of David Giovannoni. The collection offers extensive runs of relatively common acoustic recordings in uncommonly nice condition. And it is highly curated. Each Blue Amberol is physically cleaned before it is aurally assessed; alternate takes are identified through A:B comparisons; the best copy of each take is identified; a second copy is retained when a quality duplicate is available; and digital transfers are made at archival-level resolution on state-of-the-art equipment.

The Giovannoni Collection makes its holdings available for historic CD and digital reissues, and to radio, television, and film productions. It is the first privately-held collection chosen by the Library of Congress for inclusion in its National Jukebox. And it is the primary source of choice for Archeophone Archives' *Blue Amberol Domestic Popular Series*.

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