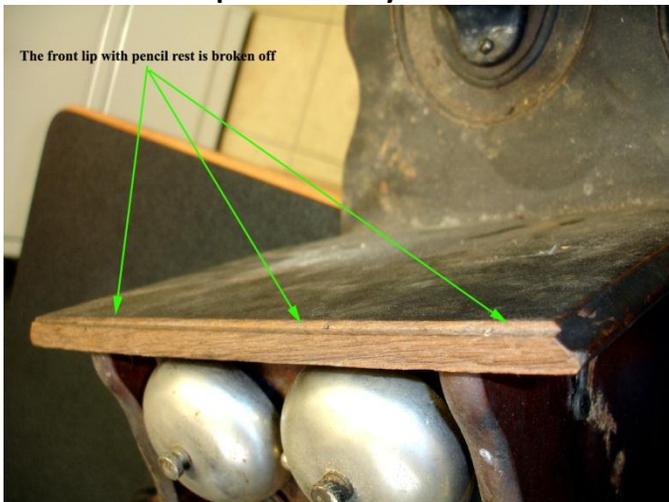


**Rawson Electric Company Orator  
Dean Electric Company, Elyria, Ohio  
By Tom Adams ATCA #213**

I found this beautiful telephone on Craigslist two months ago. As you can see it was in dire need of restoration. It took me two months to complete the process.



My first preference is to carefully clean the original wood finish and metal parts. In this case the wood finish was beyond saving and the writing shelf was broken off where the pencil rest sets. I located a piece of 100 year old walnut and



sent it along with the broken shelf to Selmer Lowe to repair. As you can see, the repair turned out great, near impossible to tell it was ever broken.



I was talking to both Scotty Poling & John Dresser right after I got the phone and both having owned the phone, told me there should have been a label

located below the transmitter arm. There was so much dirt and crud on the phone that I could not see any evidence that my phone ever had a label in that location. But knowing that there should be, I started cleaning the area very carefully with a wash rag dipped in New Life Furniture Masque (found in Antique Malls or online), wiping off with a clean rag almost as soon as I put it on. To my amazement I discovered the label was still there and almost intact. Once I had the crud removed from the label I still had to strip the phone. I covered the label area with a piece of cardboard and then taped it over with masking tape. I used Sovogran Kutzit to strip the entire phone cabinet. Once I had it stripped I removed the tape from around the label and then very carefully with a rag dipped in Kutzit and pin knife removed the old finish up to the label.

Rawson Orator Label Discovery and Resurrection



As I stripped the phone I soon realized I had another problem, there was a piece of walnut sap wood running down the middle of the backboard. You can see this in the bottom photo of the label on the left side running through the letters "ORA". You can also clearly see in the middle label photo that the wood was originally dyed to match. Leaving the sap wood was just not acceptable to me. The fix for this is to make the sap wood

disappear. This is not an easy fix and is rather expensive. I purchased red, blue, yellow, and black 1 oz. bottles of water soluble TransFast powered wood dye and custom mixed a solution until I got a near perfect match on the finish. Cost was around \$65 for the dye, brushes and bottles to mix the solution in. For anyone that is interested there is an excellent article on how to do this at:

<http://americanwoodworker.com/blogs/tips/archive/2011/06/06/tips-for-finishing-walnut.aspx>



Once I had the sap wood dyed to match, I stained the entire phone with a coat of Minwax special walnut and allowed the stain to dry overnight. I then applied two coats of Deft Semi-Gloss Clear Wood Finish to the cabinet. Once this finish was dry, I used 0000 steel wool to tone down the gloss and then used an old clean t-shirt to hand rub the final finish until I was satisfied with the look. The last step was to apply a coat of fine furniture wax and rub out again.

The next challenge I had was on the magneto, the gears and end plates were made from pot metal and the small gear drive was in pieces. Being unable to locate another magneto, I looked through all my magneto parts and found a small brass gear that lined up with the cogs on the large gear, but the hole for mounting it was too small to fit the armature shaft. I used my drill press to enlarge the hole and was able to make it fit. While not perfect, it does work and the bells do ring.



Shaft is 5/16" diameter



Has pin hole for carter key

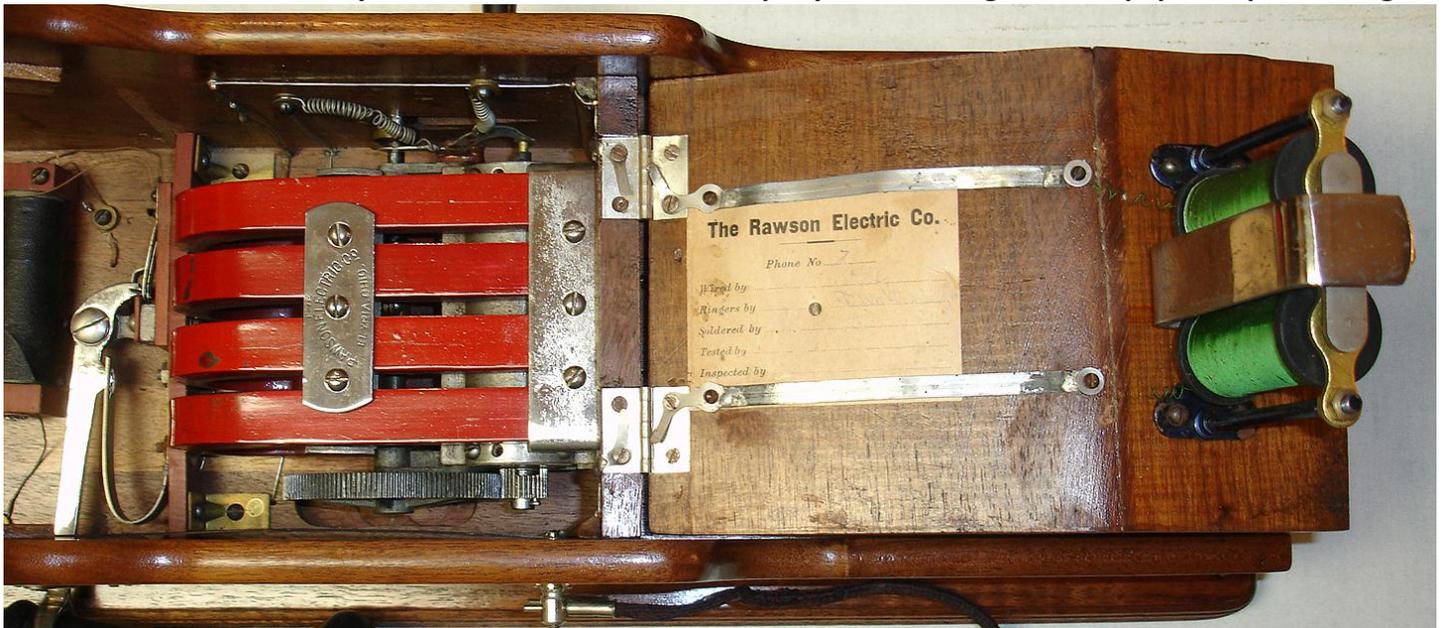
Hole through center needs to fit over a 5/16" shaft

Rawson/Dean Magneto

The metal parts to my amazement were well protected by all the dirt and grime that was caked on them. I used household ammonia to clean all the parts and the original nickel and paint turned out to be quite nice.



A look inside shows a nicely marked Rawson Electric Company marked magneto and paper inspection tag.



The receiver and transmitter cup carry the Dean Electric Company markings.



February, 1904.

# Telephones

## The Dean Electric Company

### Elyria, Ohio

A New Telephone Manufacturing Concern



S. B. Rawson, President.



W. W. Dean, Vice President.

Around 1894 Samuel Bela Rawson had become interested in the telephone business, and had made some improvements of a practical nature, on which he took out patents. Capital was enlisted and the Rawson Manufacturing Company began the manufacture of phones in a small way. The business grew substantially from the start, and the establishment of independent telephone companies began to occupy the attention of Mr. Rawson and his business associates. The plan to merge into one company the manufacture of the component parts of a telephone system resulted in the building of the Dean Electric Company's plant in Elyria in 1904. In this undertaking Mr. Rawson engaged with W. W. Dean, of Chicago, and others, and was honored with the position of president of the new organization.

