

Determining What You Have

Collins 75A-4 receivers were manufactured from March 1955 through October 1959. As many as 6,000 rigs may have been produced, mostly in Cedar Rapids but an unknown quantity was built by Collins Radio Company of Canada, Ltd. in Toronto so indicated by markings on the rear panel.

Serial numbers, unlike the S-Line equipment, were sequential so we can get some idea of the changes which were incorporated in the production line over the life of the receiver. In a recent survey of 100 owners of the 75A-4, the lowest serial number found was 11 and the highest was 5808.

Radios produced in Canada generally fell in the 4011-4191 range (in our survey) but oddly, not all radios in this range were built in Canada; none were found *outside* this serial number range however. A couple of these Canadian-built rigs had inspection dates indicating manufacture in late 1956. To further confuse matters, some resources indicate a small number of units above serial number 5000 were also built in Canada toward the end as production lines in Cedar Rapids (Anamosa) shifted to S-Line assembly. We found no evidence to support this however.

We found no serial numbers in the 1100s, 2200s, 2600s, 2800s, 3000s, 3700s, 4200s, 4800s, and 5100s. This is not to say there were no radios built in these number classes, just that none was found in the survey. No company records survive so the missing numbers will remain a mystery until such numbered rigs surface.

Only five examples were found bearing staggered lettering of the Noise Limiter control and AM-CW-SSB switch— numbers 11, 32, 43, 133 and 1962. On other units the nomenclature for the controls is in a straight line. Strangely the photographs of the front panel in all manuals show the staggered lettering but photos in some of the promotion literature show the "straight" lettering. We have no data to support any firm conclusion to explain the vast difference in serial numbers between 133 and 1962.

On the units with staggered lettering, the Rejection Tuning control is also lettered differently than those with straight lettering. A range scale consisting of the numbers "3-2-1-0-1-2-3" appears around the circumference of the control on staggered-lettered rigs where as simple "tick" marks appear on the straight-

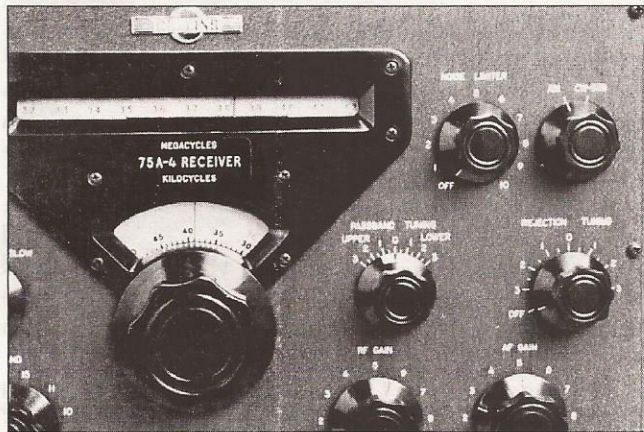


Figure 2 Note the uneven or staggered lettering on the Noise Limiter and AM-CW-SSB switch and the standard skirted main tuning knob on this early model receiver. See also the scalar numbering on the Rejection Tuning control common to units with staggered lettering.



Figure 1 The 75A-4 was the first commercial single sideband amateur receiver. It remains probably one of the most prized possessions of any Collins enthusiast.

—Photo by KK5IM

lettered versions. See figure 2.

The drum dial on the 15 meter band shows a range of 20.8 to 21.8 mc. on serial numbers 3548 and below (on our survey). On higher-numbered rigs the range is 20.5 to 21.5 mc. It is very important to note that the 15 meter oscillator crystal (Y5) frequency corresponds to the scale used on the drum dial. For dials marked 20.8 to 21.8, the proper crystal frequency is 23.3 mc. For dials marked 20.5 to 21.5, the proper crystal frequency is 23 mc. Replacement drum dial overlays are available, so careful inspection may be necessary to determine true vintage.

The date of this change is June 1, 1957 as indicated by an Addendum to the manual. No reason is given for the change—there were no changes in FCC regulations so it is assumed to be an engineering revision.

The 75A-4 was first released with a standard skirted knob but the familiar 4:1 gear reduction and bell knob quickly became standard. A kit (part number 307E-1) was sold in 1956 to make the aftermarket change. It is not possible to tell at what point the production change over was made to the 4:1 knob. However if a rig is marked "Dial Drag" rather than "Dial Lock," it is safe to assume the 4:1 knob was added after purchase (see below).

Three types of antenna connectors are found on the receivers. Early units (up to about serial number 2100) probably came with the Type-N chassis connector. Most units in the survey however had either a SO-239 UHF connector or a BNC connector.

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