

General Electric's P780 High-Performance AM Portable Radio



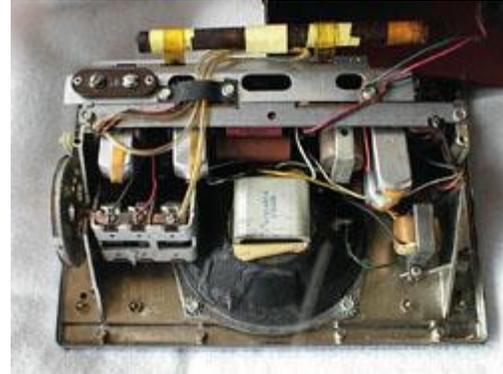
Photo courtesy of Lee Wexler

The P780 was General Electric's first attempt at building a high-performance transistorized AM portable. Size was sacrificed for performance, and the P780 is a weighty radio that accepts 6 "D" size batteries. These batteries, however, gave a life of between 500 and 700 hours per set! This set was also built for extreme durability--the cabinet is an early use of thick ABS plastic, and the front was a thick chrome-plated metal stamping. The radio I own, shown in the photo to the right, was actually recovered working, but very, very dirty, from a dumpster.



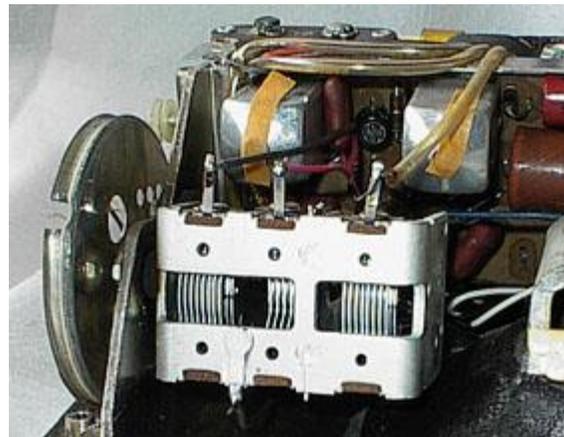
The plastic part of the case is ABS, and appears very sturdy. Although the radio I have shows obvious signs of abuse, there are no cracks or chips anywhere on the case. The P780 was manufactured in this reddish-brown called "Ginger". The case is pebbly to resist fingerprints (a technique adopted almost universally by other manufacturers a decade after this radio appeared). No phone or external power jacks, but a pair of terminals for connecting a long wire antenna.

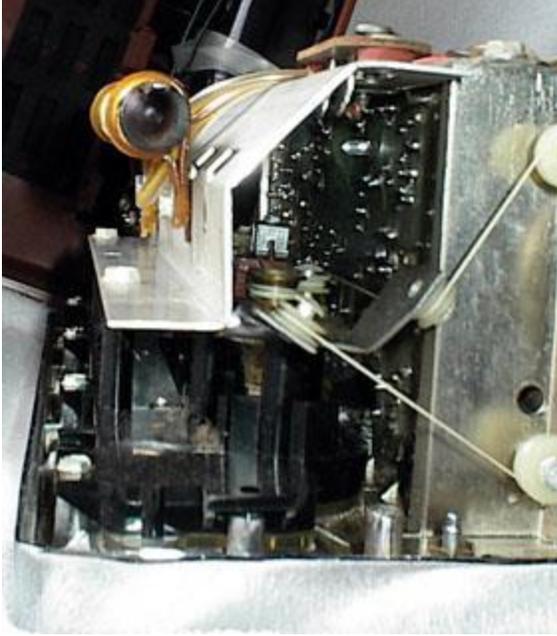
The P780 chassis reflects the concerns of durability and performance. The circuit board is protected within a steel "girdle", and hangs upside down. The speaker is quite large, offering excellent audio quality. Use of full-size components helped keep cost down while increasing performance--note the large tuning capacitor at the left. The antenna ferrite is very large for extra sensitivity.



A view looking at the radio from the bottom. Notice the large (and taped!) IF transformers and capacitors.

A close-up of the tuning capacitor and some of the circuit board. Note the black transistor topped with the GE logo. Restoration of this radio was essentially cosmetic--the only electrical problem noted was noise in the volume control, cured with cleaner.





Shown here is the chassis from the side. The ferrite is seen to the left, and note the complex dial cord arrangement. The P780 even has a pushbutton dial light!

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