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- FADA -

by Alan Douglas

Frank Angelo D'Andrea, s driving ambition was to get rich. From the time at age 11 when he stopped helping his father, a junk dealer, make his rounds collecting scrap, he tried a series of jobs: newsboy, prizefighter (using skills acquired as a newsboy), helper in an electroplating shop and finally a tool and die maker. This last position at the Frederick Pierce Co who did experimental work for inventors, led him to radio when they were asked by Emil Simon to adapt a German-designed radio receiver for war-time production. After a prototype had been made the contract was turned over to the De Forest Co for production and D'Andrea went along to supervise it.

In 1920 Andrea went into business for himself, making mechanical parts for American Marconi, and later, parts for sale to amateurs. Shortening his surname to Andrea he adopted his initials F.A.D.A. for his new company. His crystal detectors hit the market just when the 1922 radio boom got going, and he soon had a work force of 40 girls turning out 1800 detectors a day: detectors which cost him 96 cents to make and which sold for \$2.20.

Again in the right place at the right time, Andrea was one of the New York manufacturers who banded together in 1922 to buck RCA and who persuaded Prof. Alan Hazeltine to develop his Neutrodyne invention and license it to them. Fada was the first to market a neutrodyne; in March 1923 their 4-tube reflexed model 160 sold at \$120. It was soon joined by three kits: the \$25 165A consisting of three tuned RF coupling transformer assemblies and two neutralizing condensers; the \$64 166A 4-tube reflex, and the \$65.60 167A 5-tube non-reflexed Neutrodyne.

In August 1924 the 167A gave way to an improved 169A kit which had a symmetrical layout with binding post removed to the rear. Next month a line of factory-built sets, as distinct from kits, appeared: the 5-tube 175A, the 185A with built-in speaker and the 195A 3-tube reflex. The 160A was still available too.

The 195A was never popular in the U.S., in fact I know of no existing examples. Perhaps they were all exported to New Zealand?? More than a year later, in December 1925, the 175A and 185A were still being advertised, but it is worth noting that both reflexed models had long since been dropped from production. Reflexing, a good idea on paper, did create problems, and by 1925 tubes were no longer so expensive to buy or to operate as they had been in 1923, and thus the need to economise in the number used was of less importance.

Andrea continued to manufacture radios until he died in 1965 at the age of 77, although Fada and Andrea became two separate companies in 1939.

References: Men Who Made Radio, No 3, NY Herald-Tribune Dec 26, 1926.

The Road To Success, No 4, NY Post, Dec 6, 1962.

Biography in the NY Journal American, April 25, 1965

Hazeltine the Professor, Harold Wheeler, Hazeltine Corp 1978.

Advertisements in Radio News, Radio Broadcast and other sources.



**FADA Neutro Junior
No. 195**

Three-tube Neutrodyne.
A wonderful performer.
Price (less tubes, batteries, etc.) \$75.



**FADA Neutroreceiver
No. 175-A**

Mahogany cabinet. Inclined panel and roomy battery shelf. Five tubes.
Price (less tubes, batteries, etc.) \$160.