

## **The Henry Ford Acquires Original 1972 Blue Box, First Joint Business Venture Between Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs**

*The Henry Ford announced today the new acquisition of a 1972 Blue Box, designed and built by Steve Wozniak and marketed for sale by Steve Jobs.*

Dearborn, Mich ([PRWEB](#)) December 08, 2017 -- The Henry Ford announced today the new acquisition of a 1972 Blue Box, designed and built by Steve Wozniak and marketed for sale by Steve Jobs. Created to make free illegal phone calls for pranking, Blue Boxes were the first joint business venture between the two innovators, three years before the founding of Apple Computer Inc. in 1976. The new acquisition joins The Henry Ford's collection, which also includes an original 1976 Apple I Computer. The Blue Box was purchased at Bonhams' History of Science and Technology Sale.

“The Blue Box, an early invention of Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs gives us insight into two innovators who went on to change the world,” said Patricia Mooradian, president and CEO of The Henry Ford. “At the time when this device was created, they were just young adults who had an unbridled passion for learning how things worked, and making things for their own use. This artifact speaks to ingenuity, curiosity and resourcefulness and fits perfectly within The Henry Ford's Archive of American Innovation.”

Blue Boxes would artificially support the voltage of a phone line, suppressing the telephone billing activator and allowing its user free incoming calls. These devices became popular amongst “phone phreakers”, a group interested in experimenting and learning how the phone system worked. Wozniak and Jobs first bonded over their mutual interest in pranking and electronics, and in the early 70s explored creating their own version of the device. They were soon selling the blue boxes in the San Francisco and Los Angeles area. Wozniak, who built the boxes himself, believes that no more than 40 boxes were built, while Jobs once stated that they made 100 total.

“The Blue Box played an essential role in the growth of hacker culture, electronics, information exchange. It was the foundational building block that led to Apple Computer Inc,” said Kristen Gallerneaux, curator of communications and information technology at The Henry Ford. “It's an artifact that speaks not only to how one of the most innovative American companies came to fruition, but it also documents the 1970s-era “phone phreaker” as a cultural force—or even as cultural hero. These sophisticated pranksters tested and broke down the boundaries of technological systems.”

The Blue Box acquired was once owned by David Claxton, brother to Bill Claxton who helped Wozniak assemble the boxes and distribute them in 1972. By 1973, the FBI began to pay close attention to the tricks of the “phreakers” and hackers and began to confiscate the boxes. Because of this, as well as the illegal nature of the devices, not many have survived. While other museums own blue boxes, this is the first known box to be included in a public auction.

### **About The Henry Ford**

The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan is an internationally-recognized history destination that explores the American experience of innovation, resourcefulness and ingenuity that helped shape America. A national historic landmark with an unparalleled Archive of American Innovation, The Henry Ford is a force for sparking curiosity and inspiring tomorrow's innovators. Nearly 1.8 million visitors annually experience its five attractions: Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, Greenfield Village, Ford Rouge Factory Tour,



Benson Ford Research Center and The Henry Ford Giant Screen Experience. A continually expanding array of content available online provides anytime, anywhere access. The Henry Ford is also home to Henry Ford Academy, a public charter high school which educates over 500 students a year on the institution's campus. In 2014, The Henry Ford premiered its first-ever national television series, The Henry Ford's Innovation Nation, showcasing present-day change-makers and The Henry Ford's artifacts and unique visitor experiences. Hosted by news correspondent and humorist, Mo Rocca, this Emmy®-winning weekly half-hour show airs Saturday mornings on CBS. For more information please visit our website [thehenryford.org](http://thehenryford.org).



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