

Bet you don't have this (very) early Apple product

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Apple fans are known to hold onto the company's products long after they've been eclipsed by new models.

But it's unlikely these two very early Apple touchstones are sitting in anyone's collection: Steve Wozniak's fabled "Blue Box," and the very first Apple 1 computer produced by Woz and his younger buddy Steve Jobs. Both Apple artifacts are up for sale Dec. 6 at Bonhams' New York auction.

The "Blue Box," which is expected to fetch between \$30,000 and \$50,000, was built around 1972 when Woz was a sophomore at the University of California at Berkeley and Jobs was still in high school.

The simple box with a keypad tethered to a crude ear piece was essentially a hacking device designed to fool the [phone](#) company's switching systems by reproducing its specific tones. The result: free phone calls in an era when making a long-distance call could be a pricey affair.

The so-called Phone Phreak phenomenon of the era even prompted an Esquire piece titled: "Secrets of the Little Blue Box: A Story So Incredible It May Even Make You Feel Sorry for the Phone Company."

Wozniak's particular contribution to the box that fooled the [phone company](#) was to dismiss the often glitchy analog boxes in favor of designing a then-novel digital variation. Jobs' immediate entrepreneurial

thought? Market it to Berkeley students eager to make no-cost calls.

Fast forward a few short years and the two Steves were in business together after founding a company they chose to call Apple. Woz handled design of the circuit boards while Jobs hustled to both source parts cheaply as well as land customers for their garage-based effort.

The first Apple I computers, copyrighted in 1976, sold through a network of Silicon Valley stores called the Byte Shop. Its founder, Paul Terrell, had told Jobs that he couldn't sell solitary circuit boards and instead encouraged the young tech entrepreneur to provide his stores with complete computers, featuring both a keyboard and monitor.

Just such an example is what Bonhams has up for sale. Sourced from the collection of an early Apple aficionado named Steve Fish, this Apple I (expected to sell for between \$400,000 and \$600,000) apparently still works. But with only 4KB of memory, try and load Mac OS High Sierra and watch this baby explode.

The two iconic items are part of Bonhams' "History of Science and Technology" auction, which will also include items such as a rare copy of Alan Turing's doctoral dissertation (\$20,000 to \$30,000), a hastily filled out 1973 employment application by Steve Jobs that suggested he had bigger things to do (\$20,000 to \$30,000) and a 1687 copy of Sir Isaac Newton's seminal scientific treatise *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* (\$300,000 to \$500,000).

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