

## PACIFIC ELECTRIC HEATING

In 1904, Earl Richardson, a meter reader working for a local power generation company, left his employer to form the Pacific Electric Heating Company in Ontario, California. Richardson's experiments with electric irons showed commercial promise. After some field testing, he developed an iron that was hotter at its point instead of its center, and the name "Hotpoint" was born. Richardson's company was later absorbed into General Electric, but the Hotpoint name endured as a widely known brand name for a full range of appliances.



### Pacific Electric Heating (circa 1906)

This iron was made earlier than most of the early Hotpoint irons. The evidence and reasoning to support this include: (1) The first irons produced by Pacific Electric Heating were reconfigured as improvements developed, and labeling of the irons also changed, so there is a lot of variety among them; some irons have the name "Hot Point" cast into the top, while others have "Pacific Electric Heating." This iron has neither. All information is stamped into the rear of the cord receptacle or along the edge of the lower body; (2) The layer of asbestos between the body and the handle is unique and was not duplicated on nearly all other versions; (3) The handle is sleek with decorative grooves, aspects not found on presumably later irons; and (4) This variant is quite rare, adding to the impression that it is the earliest version of them all. This iron also has a copper-painted finish to the upper half of the body and this aspect is, so far, unique.

### Pacific Electric Heating (circa 1906)

This iron is identical to the other Pacific Electric Heating iron, with two exceptions. The trivial difference is that it does not have decorative grooves in the handle. The salient difference is that all the metal parts are copper plated. I have no evidence that it came from the factory this way, though copper plating was sometimes offered by period manufacturers of metal housewares, so this finish certainly could have been an option. (The fact that the other Hotpoint iron pictured has a copper-painted finish seems to lend support to this possibility.) Nevertheless, this iron will be the only Hotpoint seen this way until another is found.

