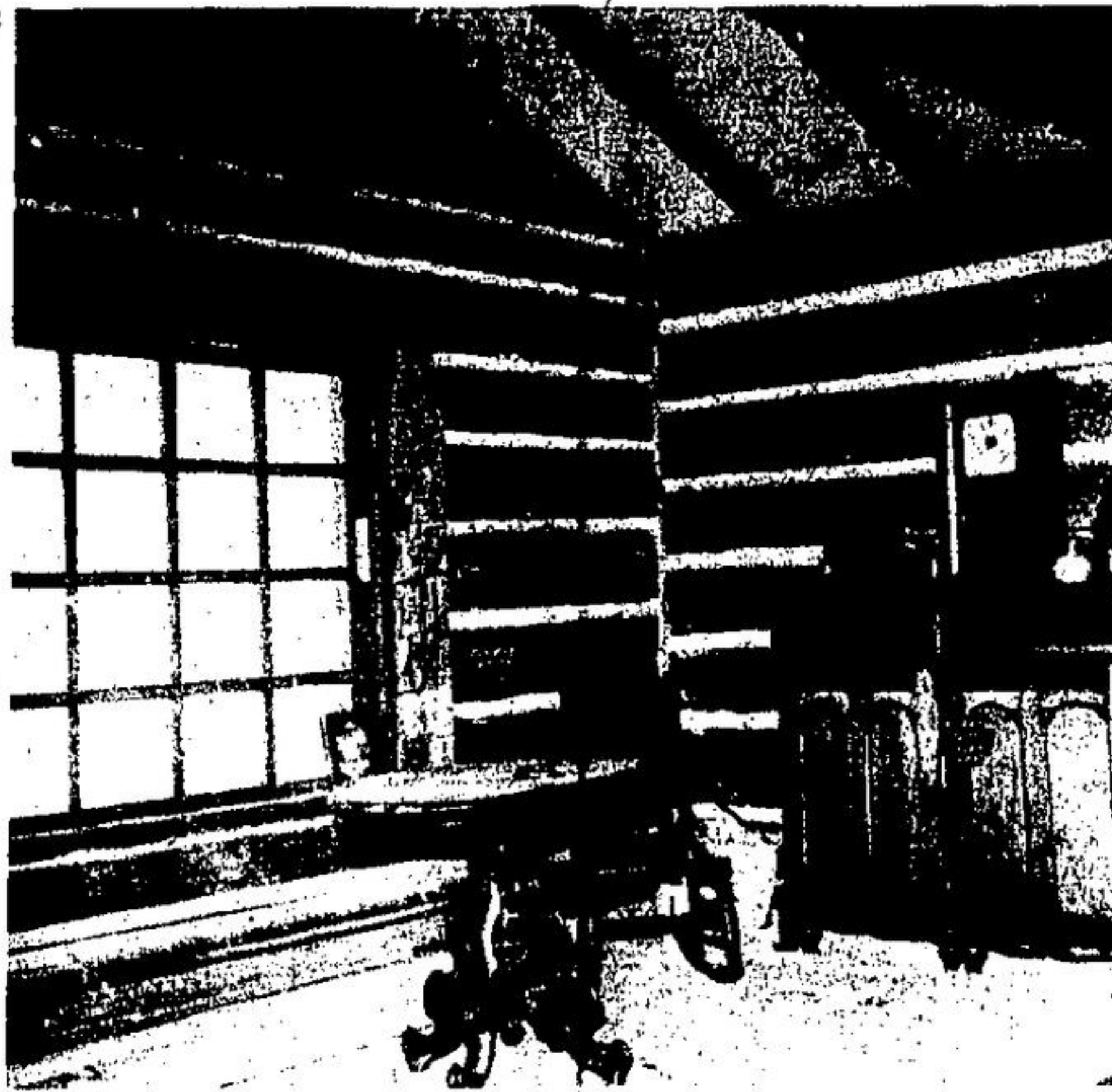


An early Canadian log home

TRADING POSTS built by the North West Company were made of the same post and sill construction as the home of Hugh MacMillan in Nassagaweya. The south side of the house shown at upper right, faces out from a hilltop over some of the most beautiful country in the township. Upper left photo shows the corner where the mortice and tenon idea is used. A grooved log fits into the post on the side and held with long hardwood pins. Lower left shows the early Canadian furniture in the home against the rough log interior. The windows were made in replica of the type used during the 18th century.

(Photos by J. Beaton)



EARLY CANADIAN pine table and wood box are shown in the living room of the MacMillan home. The open-type ceiling with side beams can be seen here. Logs from four Ontario barns were used to construct the home built in post and sill construction.

(Photo by J. Beaton)

Historian uses barn materials for "modern" rustic house of logs

NINETY-NINTH YEAR NO. 25

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1973

SECOND SECTION

Historian uses barn materials for "modern" rustic house of logs

by Joyce Beaton
The logs from four Ontario barns that dated back as far as 1820 have been used to build the home of Hugh and Muriel MacMillan. The hand-hewn house sits high on a hill on 10 acres east of the Guelph Line on 25 Sideroad in Nassagaweya.

Hugh MacMillan, a field liaison officer for the Ontario Government Archives, has always felt that not enough people in Canada build in log. He considers it no harder to build a log house than any other form of construction. "Considering the historical significance to the country as well as our abundance of timber, more Canadians should try it," he says.

To hear Hugh describe the building process is a history lesson in itself. Different from most log houses in Ontario, it is built by post-and-sill construction. For nostalgic reasons, the first basic logs were dismantled and shipped 350 miles from two barns in Glengarry County. His Scottish ancestors, one of whom was James MacMillan, a partner in the North West Company, settled in Glengarry County.

Local barns
Two local barns, one in Milton and one in Nassagaweya, were also used when Hugh realized he wouldn't have enough material. Each square log is secured by mortise and tenon into corner posts. This is the style used by the North West Company for all its trading posts. If a bottom log rots and starts to sag, the whole wall doesn't sag with it since each log is supported independently at each end.

Hardwood pins are used to tie it together.

French influence
However, it looks for all the world like an old fur trading post. This method of building originated in Brittany, France, and was introduced in New France by settlers from that province. The French influence in the fur trade spread the method still further to the building of trading posts. Outside of the reconstruction of Fort

Despite the fact the logs are old, the architectural plan is not patterned after a historical building. As a matter of fact Hugh borrowed the floor plan from friends of his.

William, Hugh figures it is one of the only buildings in Ontario built in that style.

The actual log construction was done by a local barn framer, John Simpson, and John Henry made the authentic-type windows. With the exception of the plumbing, heating and electrical work, Hugh and his three teen-aged sons worked weekends using broad axes to trim the logs down to the proper dimensions before fitting them into the walls. Concealed between the logs

as well as wooden stuffing are strips of insulation which give added protection against inclement weather.

Historical
The house provides 3,000 square feet of living space. Upstairs is a living room with a big stone fireplace and log mantel. The wide barn beams enhance the open-type ceiling. Living room, kitchen, three bedrooms and bathroom all look out on a glorious view of Nassagaweya countryside. A wooden balcony runs along

the whole of the south side of the house.

The lower level has a family room panelled in barn siding, with a second large stone fireplace. Also downstairs is another bedroom, a bathroom, cold storage room, workshop, and Hugh's office.

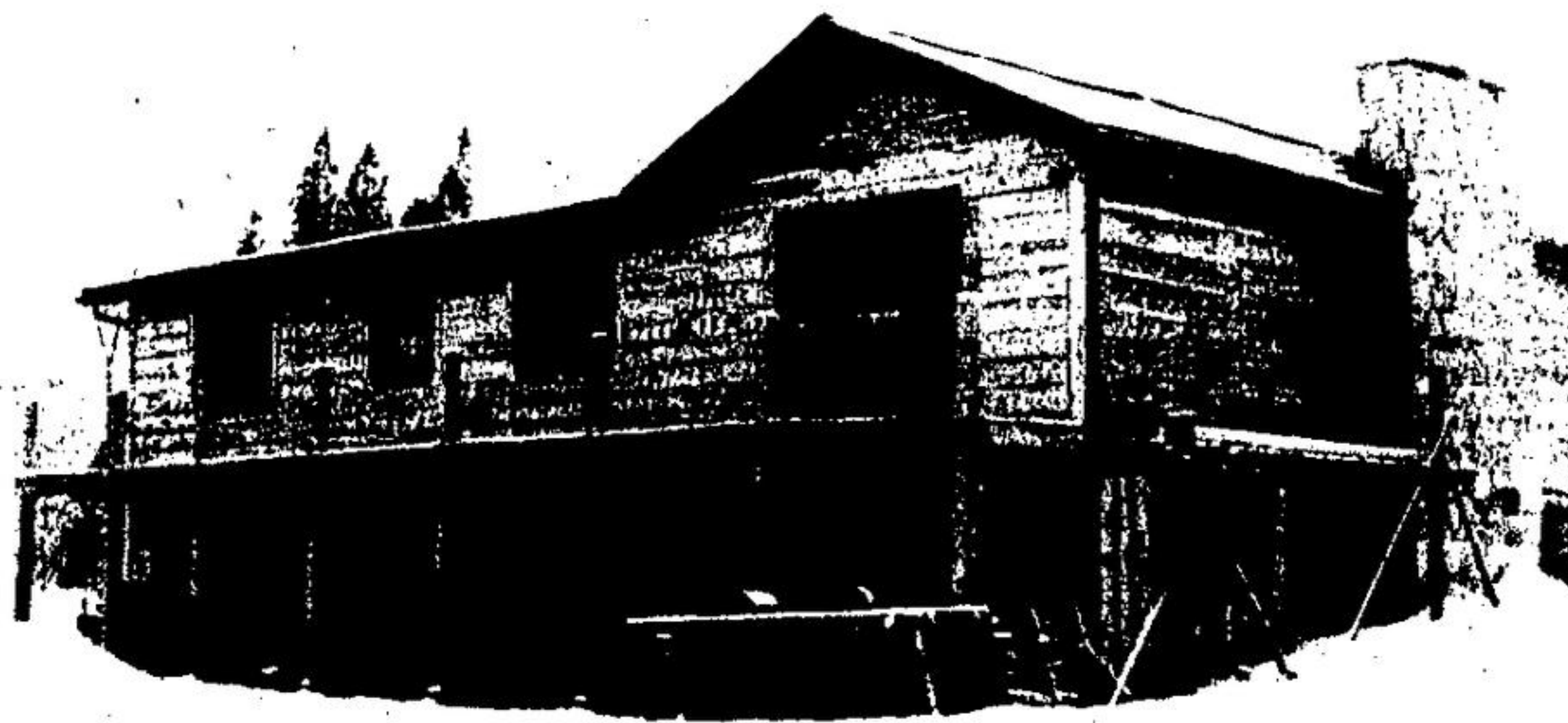
Hugh is a fascinating man to talk to. His job as archivist takes him all over the country tracking down historically important documents, pictures and other material.

He and a group of friends have re-chartered the North

West Company. They have made canoe trips, retracing the voyageurs routes and preserving their traditions. Brigades of the NWC have travelled in Interior British Columbia, the length of the Great Lakes, across the prairies and on many of the river routes of the Hudson's Bay and St. Lawrence watersheds.

Authentic
The 26 foot long canoes are replicas (in birch, cedar or fibre glass) of the famed Montreal and North canoes. The brigades are self-contained, carrying all their own food and gear. Even the clothing worn by brigade members is as authentic as possible. The routes themselves are living history lessons.

He and his friends are also interested in the reproduction of guns used by traders and formed a group called the Upper Canada Rifles. Last January they gathered at the then partially-constructed log house in Nassagaweya for a shoot, costumed in the authentic dress of the fur trader. Only muzzle loading rifles are used by the group. Hugh MacMillan is intent upon bringing Canadian history alive. He publishes a journal called the North West and is a speaker on subjects related to the fur-trade. He no doubt receives much inspiration from living in his own log house and surrounded by early Canadian furniture and artifacts.

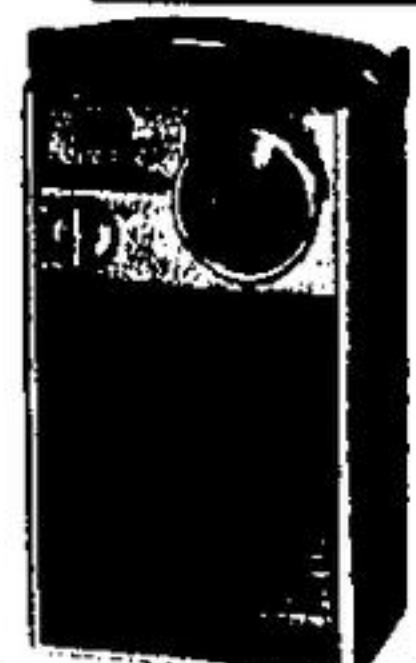


ARCHIVIST HUGH MACMILLAN sits before a roaring fire burning in the stone fireplace of his log home in Nassagaweya. Mr. MacMillan is an historian who thinks it a pity that more Canadians

are not using log construction when building new homes. He is surrounded in the living room by pieces of early Canadian furniture.

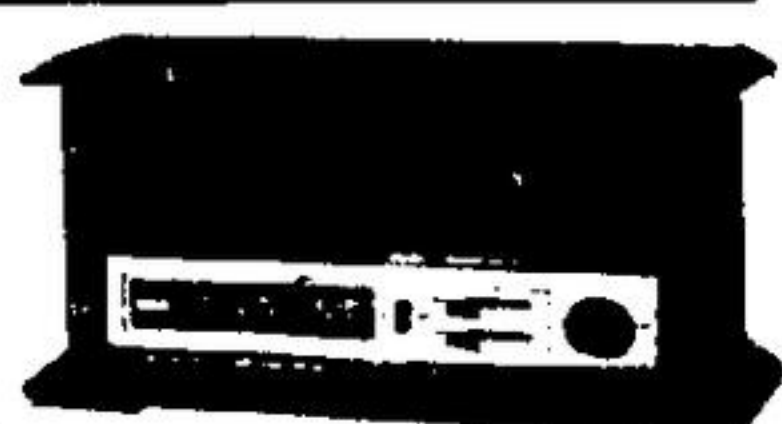
(Photo by J. Beaton)

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