



HISTORY

Behold, Some of the First Apple Computer Photos Ever

Apple's first dealer shares his 1976 photos of the Apple-1, the company's first product.

By Harry McCracken | Nov. 22, 2012

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Paul Terrell opened the Byte Shop in Mountain View, California in December of 1975. It was one of the first computer stores in the world, and did a lot to help popularize a business which just barely existed at the time. And it earned an even more legendary spot in tech history in 1976, when a couple of local proto-computer geeks tried to convince Terrell to sell the rudimentary PC they'd cobbled together.



Paul Terrell

The Byte Shop opens for business on December 8, 1975

Those geeks were Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. They called their machine the Apple-1, and it was a do-it-yourself kit; any buyers would have to solder the necessary chips onto the circuit board themselves, then supply accoutrements such as a power supply, keyboard and display.

Terrell was intrigued, but told Jobs that what he really needed were fully-assembled computers. In fact, if Jobs could come back with an assembled version of the Apple-1, the Byte Shop would buy fifty of them. Jobs did, and the Byte Shop became the first Apple dealer (it eventually offered the Apple-1 in a wooden case with keyboard and power supply).

Terrell's deal helped turn Apple from a project into a company. Just as important, it steered Jobs and Woz in the direction of making gadgets which were unusually approachable. Apple kept that concept going with 1977's [Apple II](#). It's still at it today.

I've written about Terrell before; here's an [old post](#) which is mostly him telling the Apple-1 story in greater detail. But he knocked my socks off recently when he used Facebook to share some photos of the first Apple-1 from his fifty-machine order, which he took in 1976, when there were very, very few Apple products in existence. They're Polaroids — which seems like the right sort of photos for them to be, somehow — and if you know of any earlier Apple photos which survive, I'm impressed. Here they are, with Paul Terrell's kind permission.

This is the naked-but-assembled Apple-1 with an uncased keyboard (the aesthetic kind of reminds me of the [original iMac](#), with its see-through case):

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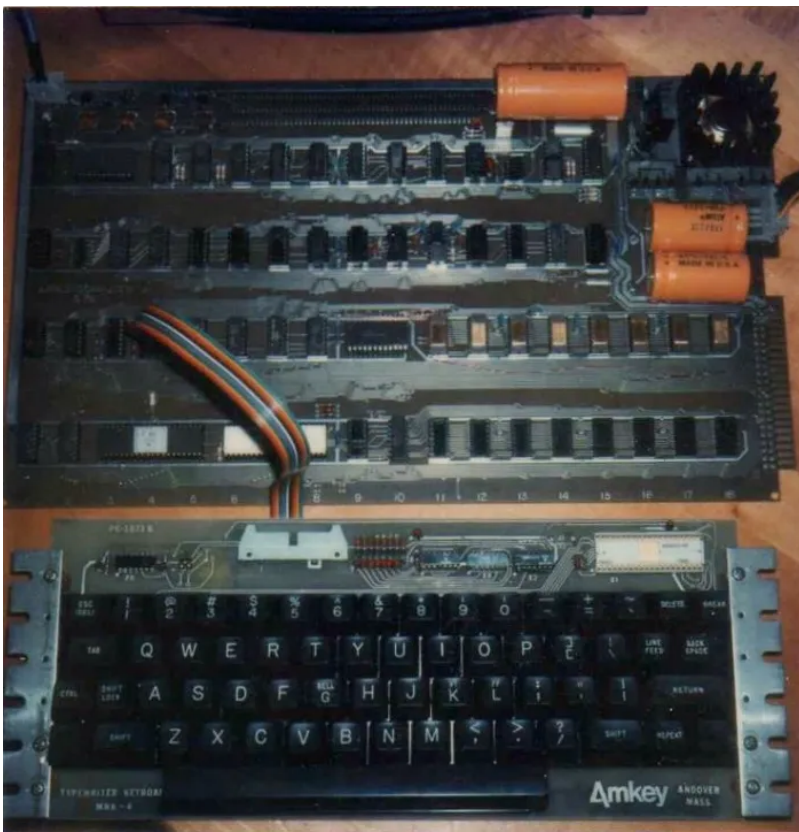
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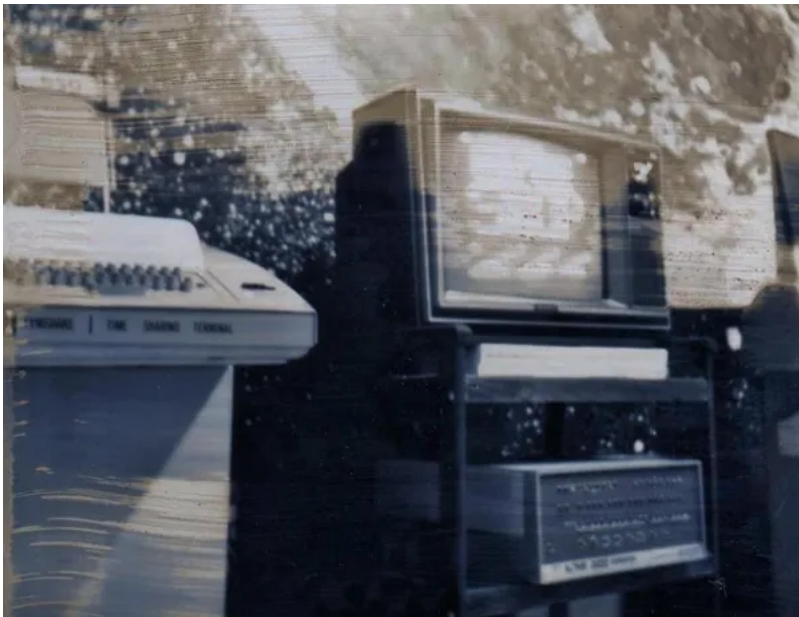
Here they are with a video monitor:



And here's the Apple-1 running the sort of program you'd write if you were learning to program in BASIC in the 1970s:



Just for good measure, this is another iconic system which the Byte Shop sold: MITS' Altair 8800, running Bill Gates and Paul Allen's BASIC:



The Apple-1 famously sold for \$666.66. On Facebook, Terrell says that he paid \$500 apiece (wholesale!) for his fifty systems, for a grand total of \$25,000. The units which are still with us — I saw one [during a tour of the Computer History Museum](#) led by Steve Wozniak himself — are among computing's most valuable relics. (In June, Sotheby's sold an Apple-1 for \$374,500.) And Terrell's original Polaroids? As far as I'm concerned, they're priceless.