

Identification of Öller, Lindholm & Wikström and L M Ericsson telegraph keys

Compilation by OH6NT, © Thomas Anderssen, 2020.

The three types of keys descending from Anton Henrik Öller's design are distinguished by typical signs, such as bearing blocks types, the way connection posts and the rear contact arm are arranged etc and of course by the makers' mark on top of the arm (but not all of them have that). To make identification harder, there are several other makers of these fine keys...

Below pictures of Öller, Lindholm & Wikstrom and LM Ericsson keys with the main differences listed. They might aid in identification.

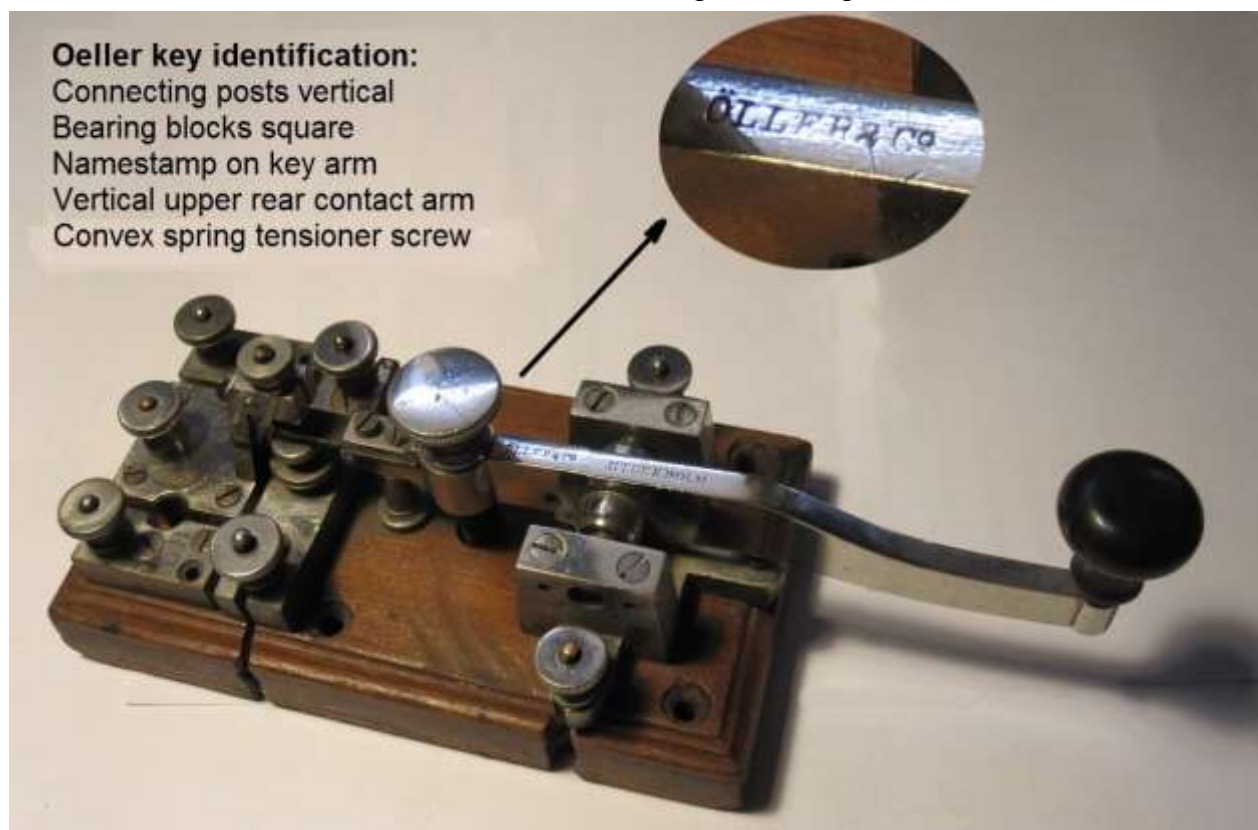
NB! There are "long" versions as well, with selector blocks at the rear end (Öller and older LME), and "short" versions with no selector blocks Lindholm & Wikström and the newer LME). I'm not sure if "long" and "short" versions were made by all three key makers.

The Öller biography, telling the story of all these companies (Öller, Lindholm & Wikstrom, and LM Ericsson) can be found here:

<http://www.tronico.fi/OH6NT/keydocs/Oller-biography.pdf>

Good luck with the identification!

A.H. Öller key, the long version with battery selector block rear is shown here. The selector pin is missing, as they often do, see next page for more on that. The slots in the wooden base are for hidden mounting of the signal wires.



Lindholm & Wikström, successors to A. H. Öller, also made their keys in Stockholm. Read more about them in the Öller biography (link on first page). Observe the arrangement of the rear contact blocks vs. Öller key. Differences are due to fear of patent infringements at the time.

Lindholm & Wikström key identification:

Front connection posts horizontal

Bearing blocks rounded

Concave spring tension adjuster

Makers stamp on arm

Rear contact block diff.



This is quite similar to the older L M Ericsson.



Below a selector plug in place used for selecting the Central battery at the station.



The plug is used to select either local battery (LB) or central battery (CB) current feed to the telegraph circuitry.

On telegraph recorders same type of plug was used for line selection and/or earthing. The grip is insulated with white or black turned insulation to shield the user from static discharge.



These plugs are VERY rare to find! Left are two replicas I made for the lightning arrestor on my landline telegraph recorder.

They are made of brass with insulated center screw as per an original drawing found in a catalog.

The older Lars Magnus Ericsson keys are clearly cousins of the two above. The spring tension adjuster screws here is replaced with newer, nickel plated ones. This key type first appears in the 1889 Ericsson catalogue. First (1886) assigned No. 92/93, in later catalogues (1902) No. 810/815.

L M Ericsson older key identification (single contact version):

Front connection posts horizontal

Bearing blocks rounded

Concave nickel plated spring tension adjuster nut

No (or existing) makers' stamp on arm: TELEFON AB LM ERICSSON STOCHOLM

Slanted rear connection arm



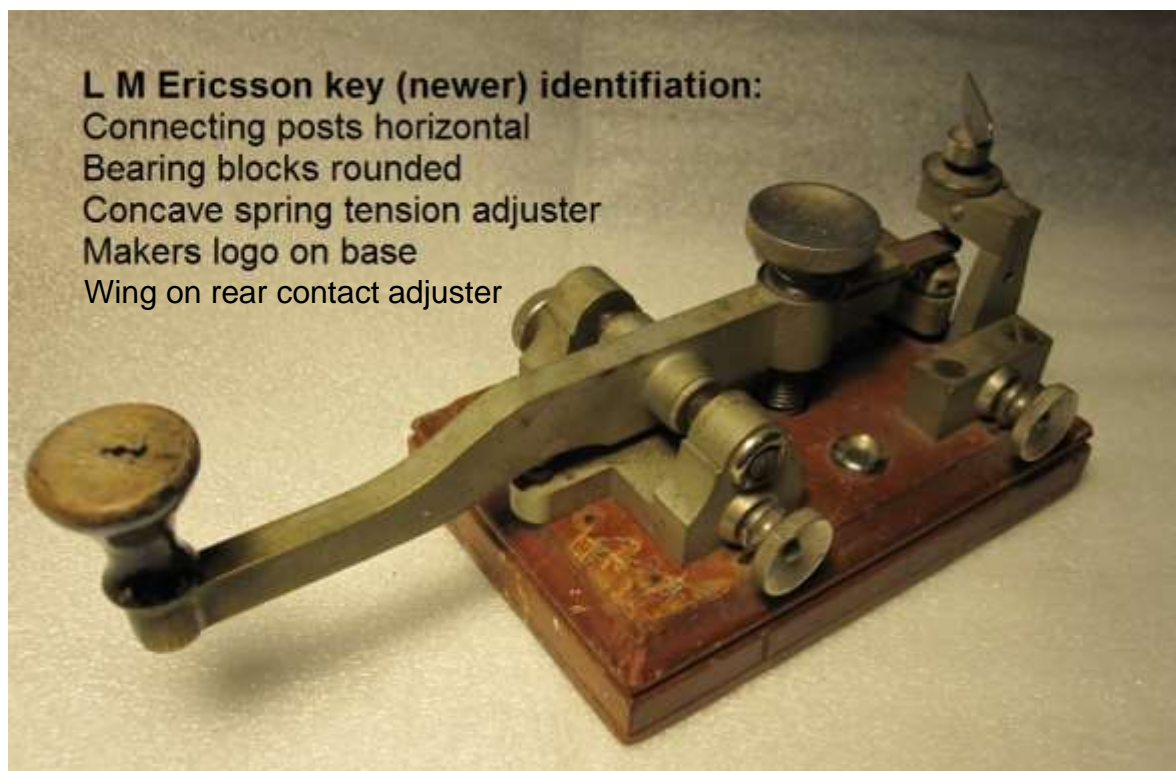
L M Ericsson older key identification (double contact version):

Mostly the same indicators as above.



Picture courtesy of Christer Nylander, SM3CZS

The newer L M Ericsson key. Observe the "wing" on the rear contact adjuster screw! That's present on the newer keys. The mechanism is glass blasted and nickel plated. This key type first appears in the 1889 Ericsson catalogue.



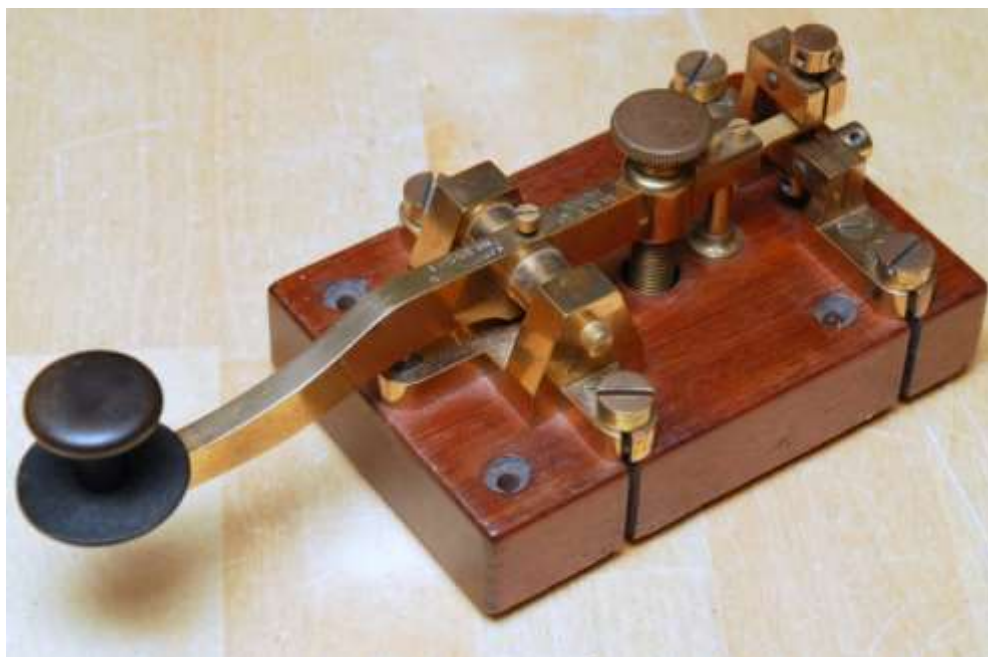
Picture: Thomas Anderssen OH6NT

Other manufacturers

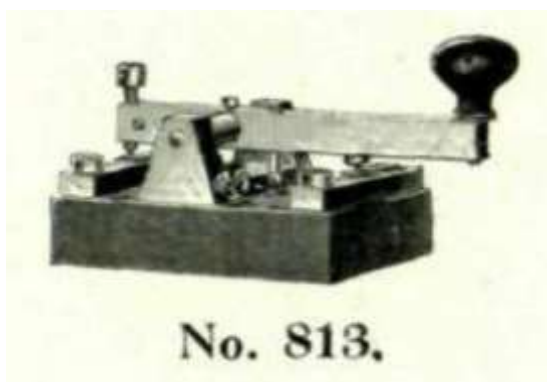
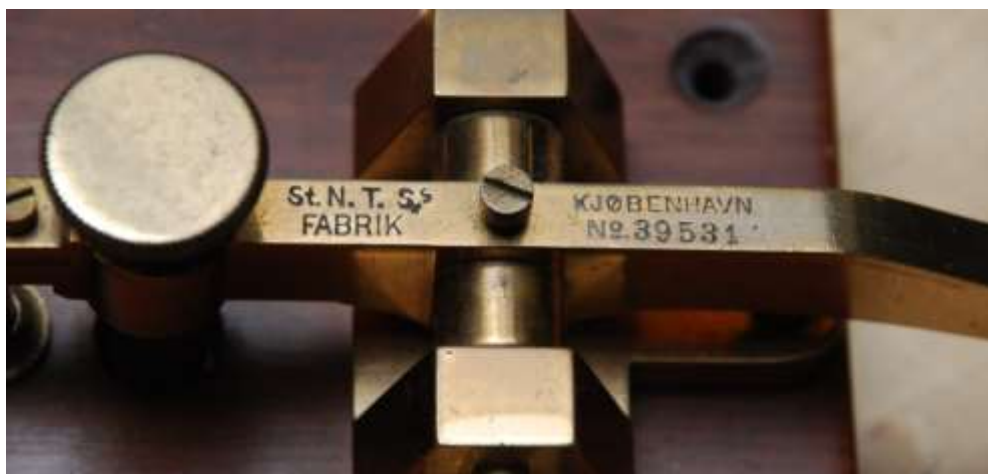
Great Northern Telegraph Company, Copenhagen.

Several other key makers are known to have made copies of the keys, either with or without license. Here is a photo showing an Ericsson key made in Denmark. The makers' mark is stamped on the key arm to the right of the spring tension adjuster. Note the differences; flat top on the tension adjuster nut and trapezoid shape of the bearing blocks. This is not a direct copy of none of the above keys, even if close!

The imprint on the arm says: Store Nordiske Telegraf Selskab's FABRIK KJØBENHAVN, and includes a serial number.



Photos courtesy of Mike Maguire, MODVO, who owns this fantastic key.



LME also made German style keys, here one from their 1902 catalogue, similar to Siemens & Halske and used for Siemens' style Morse ink registers.

Picture is from L.M. Ericsson catalogue 1887.

N. Jacobsens Elektriske Verksted, Kristiania (Oslo, Norway)

Here a photo from Norsk Teknisk Museum of a Jacobsen key, probably made under license from L.M. Ericsson. Reference: Jacobsen catalogue 1901, page 70, "Telegrafi". Maker's mark says: N. JACOBSEN KRISTIANIA. A close copy of the newer Ericsson type 810, but the rear contact adjustment screw has no wing and the nickel plated spring tension adjuster nut has a "peg" in the center.

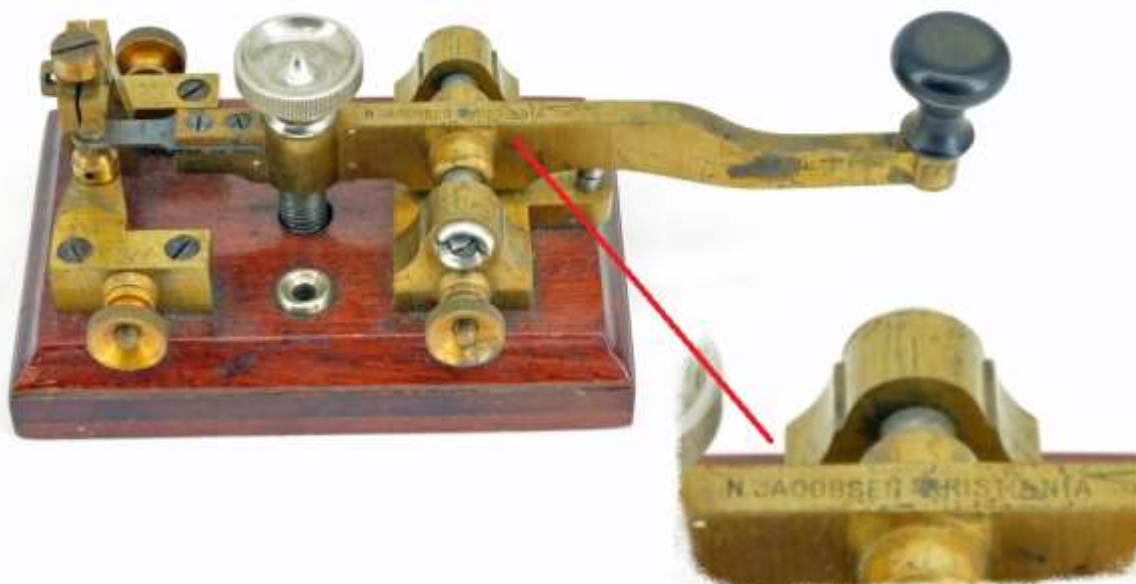


Photo courtesy of Norsk Teknisk Museum (license: Attribution - ShareAlike (CC BY-SA)).

This is a Norwegian key, constructed by Alf Sverre Jørgensen, and produced by **N. Jacobsen in Oslo**, timeframe is post WW2. This is similar to the original big Öller key. Mr. Jørgensen earned 1 NOK per key sold. There is no makers mark on the arm where expected, and thus probably not licensed. The tension adjuster nut is flat and not plated.

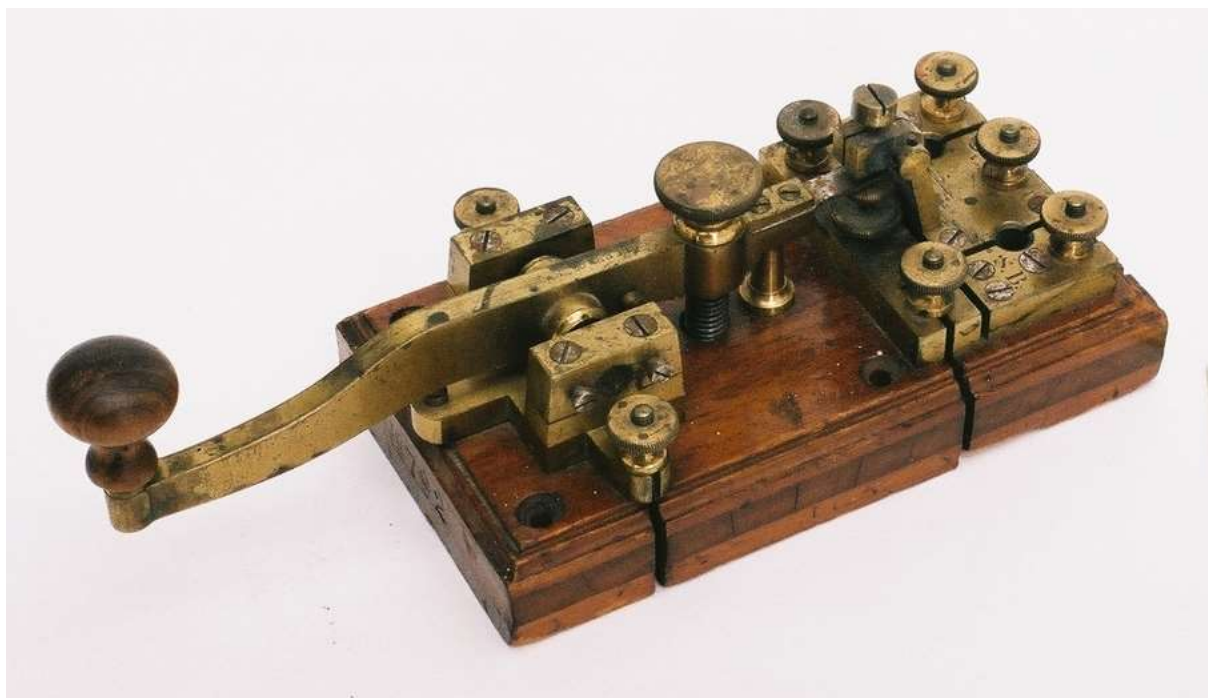


Photo courtesy of Norsk Teknisk Museum (license: Attribution - ShareAlike (CC BY-SA)).