

Serial Number 183 Kenbak-1 Computer

The Kenbak-1 computer with serial number 183 was from the first and only production run of fifty computers by Kenbak Corporation. Since the serial numbers started with 167, this particular machine was the seventeenth in the sequence. During checkout, problems were found but never corrected and number 183 remained in limbo. When Kenbak Corporation ceased operations, a few completed machines were sold but John Blankenbaker kept the prototype and two production machines, one of which was number 183. The other production run computer, which was still operational in 1987, was given at that time to the Computer Museum of Boston and they in turn passed it along to the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, CA.

The problems in serial number 183 have been corrected and the machine is operational 39 years after it was first built in 1971. Bringing it to the finished state and fully operational was not easy. One handle had been lost and it was necessary to have a duplicate one machined. Three integrated circuits and one transistor were replaced. The main power supply filter capacitor was replaced though the original one was probably OK. The lamps were replaced with a different mechanical configuration though the same lamp type is used. The switches on the front panel were remounted and without the original alignment fixture the resulting positions are slightly in error. There are two very small scratches on the top surface.

Number 183 is operational and executing all of its instructions. It is the last production Kenbak-1 computer to be sold by John Blankenbaker who is now an octogenarian with other interests. (He is retaining the prototype Kenbak-1 computer for his heirs.) Serial 183 is shown below.

