Additional Notes for Timesharing BASIC 1.1

Saving the Hardware Configuration

After completing the "Reconfiguration Dialog" detailed in Section 4-2 of the Timesharing BASIC 1.0 manual, the new configuration can be saved to the disk as follows:

1) After making the required configuration changes and again reaching the "Reconfigure (Y,N,L)?" prompt, it is important to respond "N" and press return to exit the reconfiguration routine before executing step 2.

2) Stop the computer and jump to octal address 70000 (7000h) to write the new configuration to the boot disk. When disk and front panel activity stops, the save routine has completed and the computer idles in an endless loop. At this point, hard stop/reset the computer and repeat the cold-start boot procedure to boot with the new configuration.

Booting Timesharing BASIC 1.x

The boot process outlined in the version 1.0 manual can be followed as a reference for booting versions 1.x with a front panel machine. In short, after examining the boot ROM address (FF00h), return A15-A8 to zero, then depress RUN.

The strings used in the boot dialog have the MS bit (bit 7) set to terminate strings. Therefore, garbage characters may display if you're using a terminal emulator as a console. Settings to ignore bit 7 are available with most terminal emulators. Under Teraterm, for example, select "7 data bits" and "space parity" to ignore bit 7. Under HyperTerm, you can choose "Force incoming data to 7 bit" under the "ASCII Translation" setup option.

Format of Altair Timesharing BASIC 1.1 Floppy

This following paragraph serves as an addendum to "Appendix H, Disk Information" in the 1977 version of the Altair BASIC manual. Appendix H documents the disk layout for Altair BASIC on Altair's 8 inch floppy drive. This addendum documents the differences between the normal 8 inch floppy content and the format used for Timesharing BASIC 1.1.

Timesharing BASIC reserves 8 tracks for the bootable image of BASIC instead of 6. The track number in sectors on these tracks is not set correctly and apparently is not verified during boot. Unused sectors in the 8 boot tracks (e.g., past the boot image) are not initialized and may have garbage or other formatting if it is a previously used floppy.

Single User BASIC Disks under Timesharing BASIC

Files on disks written under single user BASIC may appear to be password locked when accessed under Timesharing BASIC. The program shown in the file "TS BASIC Password Fix" can be run under single user BASIC to remove "junk" password bytes that may be in the directory. The disk will then work properly under both single user and Timesharing BASIC.