

## TELEVISION RECORDING – THE ORIGINS AND EARLIEST SURVIVING LIVE TV BROADCAST RECORDINGS

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1947 DuMont RA-103 TV Set  
Called the Chatham (or "Doghouse") model



Figure 3.14E. RCA Kinephoto Equipment. Courtesy RCA.  
Early Kinescope Recording Machine

**Introduction - Oldest Surviving Record of Live Television Program:** What is the earliest surviving live television broadcast recording? It is surprising how little definitive research and solid information is available on this topic. This article seeks to answer this question, based on what we know today.

**Lack of Prior Research:** While there has been a significant amount of research done on the oldest surviving live radio broadcast airchecks (from 1925 or earlier), there is a scarcity of comprehensive research on the earliest live TV transmission recordings that are still in existence. This dearth of information on what remains of the formative years of television was not anticipated, given the vital importance of the TV legacy to the "baby boomers" raised on the media. It is also amazing, given the relatively recent appearance of television during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (where more documentation of its earliest records would be thought to exist).

**Historic Means of Capturing Live Television:** First of all, we must understand how early TV broadcasts could be captured in the days before videotape and later analog and digital recording methods (as will be further elaborated below). The kinescope recording was filmed from the kinescope or cathode ray tube TV receiver, where these films of live television as taken from the kinescope device were soon themselves just called "kinescopes". The kinescope was the first viable commercial method for live television transmissions with both moving image and sound in synchronized and viewable form and for preserving the broadcast on film for subsequent viewing and re-purposing. As such, the emergence of the kinescope in 1947 establishes a "before vs. after" threshold in

time as to what early live TV programs still have extant and observable recordings.

***Kinescope Recording:*** The kinescope recording was enabled by use of a special camera set up to shoot reusable film directly off a TV screen, where timing and synchronization of the image were also addressed. As noted, this permitted the recording and later distribution of live shows for sale, or archiving. The kinescope was designed and used as a concurrent recording of live TV direct from the monitor, as not edited or pre-arranged as with pre-recorded filmed programs.

***Purpose of Article:*** This article will focus on electronic television broadcasting as first available to the public on a commercial basis, going back to the 1930's and 1940's, although some reference will be made to the earlier crude mechanical broadcasts and their remnants going back to the 1920's. It will discuss what programs were being shown in these virgin days of television, how any of it was captured for posterity, and what survives of the earliest recordings of live telecasts.

### **Before The Kinescope**

Before the kinescope was introduced two years after World War II, there were very limited and flawed methods for capturing the earliest TV broadcasts, and the number of TV sets receiving these seminal transmissions was very small (measured in hundreds and then a few thousand) through 1945.

***Early Mechanical TV & Phonovision Disks:*** Still photos had been transmitted using the telegraph as early as 1843 (Alexander Bain) to 1861 (Giovanni Caselli) which gave birth to the facsimile or "fax" machine (which actually pre-dated radio and other wireless technologies). The notion of extending this concept to wireless transmission of moving images began in earnest concurrent with radio with research starting after 1900 and advancing rapidly by the early 1920's.

There are restored brief segments of John Logie Baird's Phonovision disks as captured from early mechanical television, as done in Great Britain from 1927 – 1933, which can be seen on the Internet. These early mechanical TV sets usually had screens of only 1 – 2 inches in diameter, sometimes equipped with a lens to double the size of the image. The disk process recorded the primitive 30 line scanning transmissions of Baird's early mechanical TV, but they are barely discernible as images, only seconds long in most cases, and have no sound captured, among other defects. Baird was the first to commercialize television, however, and was a true pioneer. His vision for TV advanced the state of the art, despite the strong opposition of Lord Reith, the director of the BBC and Baird's long-time nemesis.

Baird's "televisors" were nonetheless remarkable for their time, and led to thousands of early mechanical TV sets being sold. While the Baird Phonovision images remaining are even more primeval than the still photographs of the 60

line image of “Felix the Cat” used in the first electronic TV tests (as conducted at the RCA laboratories of New York in 1928), this technology (based on the 1883 Nipkow disk) still succeeded in generating usable images. The actual broadcast mechanical TV images were much clearer than the remaining artifacts of them left today on the Phonovision disks.

***Electronic TV Images:*** There is evidence that General Electric conducted early experiments in capturing static and moving image records of electronic television in their Schenectady NY laboratories (site of the GE test station where some of the earliest TV transmissions were successfully done, dating back to the late 1920’s) as early as 1930-31 (although few surviving results of this research are documented to exist). Dr. Frank Grey of Bell Labs developed the first tele-recording equipment in February 1929. Shortly thereafter, in 1930, GE’s “House of Magic” Labs in Schenectady NY captured experimental TV images on film. These very brief 1930 film clip frames still survive, of man’s from shoulders up wearing various attire, as taken from GE’s pioneer W2XCW station (which started first regularly scheduled telecasts in 1928).

***Intermediate Film System:*** The Intermediate Film System, as also developed by John Logie Baird in 1932, had motion picture stock developed as soon as it was filmed, which could then run through a TV scanner for rapid transmission, if so desired. A side product of this process (to transmit new film over TV) was that the content to be broadcast over TV could be captured before it was transmitted, and this method was used at times by both the BBC (UK) and in Nazi Germany during the 1934 – 1937 period. Some of these intermediate films have survived, which provide some detail on pre-recorded TV content of the time. In any event, the intermediates were filmed before the TV live transmission, not during the broadcast, so they are still staged or pre-recorded film as then later shown on TV. They could be edited, elaborately staged, or suppressed before broadcast, and do not represent the immediacy and challenges of live TV.

***Early Attempts to Film Live TV in UK:*** Before the 1940’s, there are also indications that the BBC was actively working on recording live TV broadcast onto film before their TV service was suspended in UK with the coming of World War II in 1939 (and not resumed until 1946, as further noted below). There are anecdotal references to pre-war recording attempts from live telecasts (e.g. – recollections by BBC management team of filming a TV broadcast of “*Scarlet Pimpernel*” which was objected to by director Alexander Korda since he owned the film rights to the novel, who demanded the film be destroyed). There is allegedly documented film evidence of this recording’s destruction, showing that it did indeed exist (and certainly survives no longer).

There is also the BBC television demonstration film of 1937, showing films with sound from what are purported to show a variety of broadcasts dating back to 1935 (these may be cinema camera films done coincident with the live TV broadcasts).

**Early Attempts at Filming Mechanical & Electronic TV:** Notwithstanding the Phonovision mechanical TV disks as noted earlier, there are a few pre-kinescope film recordings of real and viable commercial electronic TV broadcasts that do exist. These are primarily “out of synch” home movie film excerpts of live TV broadcasts with video rolling on 8mm or 16mm film, again primarily without the sound recorded (with a few exceptions). Some were staged simulations, like the 1931 newsreel of a vaudeville show broadcast on experimental Chicago TV station W9XAP (mechanical 2 inch image with only 45 line scan, using simulcast audio from radio station WMAQ). Simulation after the fact was required as the dim, tiny TV image and speed differences between TV signal and camera shutter speed (along with TV scanning lines and poor tuning and reception) made it near impossible to capture decent moving TV images from this earliest broadcast era.

**Fragmentary Surviving Electronic TV Clips from 1930's:** 1934 – 1938 brief silent clips of purported early “slow frame” experimental kinescopes of TV drama and orchestral scenes recorded from live TV by NBC are featured in NBC 1949 *Kinescope* documentary, as further cited below.

W6XAO, Don Lee’s experimental TV station in Los Angeles which launched in 1931 (later as KTSL and subsequently KCBS) is reported to have pioneered one of the first tele-recordings from a live broadcast in 1936, although there is no available evidence of this film surviving.

**Susan & God Broadcast of 1938:** On June 7, 1938, the famous actress Gertrude Lawrence took a night off from her hit Broadway play *Susan and God* to enact some of its scenes as telecast from the RCA Building on NBC’s W2XBS -TV. She thus holds a special place in TV history as one of the first leading actresses to participate in a live TV drama. She, along with Paul McGrath and Nancy Coleman from the Broadway cast, perform a 22 minute selection of scenes, as believed to have reached about 60 pre-commercial TV sets at the time. These sets were primarily owned by NBC personnel and some local bars and hotels, and was also viewed by drama critics and radio columnists invited to the RCA Building to see the live program on receivers located many floors above the TV studio. Lawrence had previously appeared on Baird’s mechanical TV in her native UK.

Amazingly enough, a series of 10 very clear photographs taken of this live broadcast direct from the TV screen (including David Sarnoff’s opening announcement followed by introduction of the cast by producer John Golden; various scenes from the opening titles, the play itself, and RCA Building closing segment) appear in as feature article on this milestone of the time for “amateur television” in the June 20, 1938 *Life Magazine*. The article also discusses the complexity of capturing the TV moving images on film. The photographer took the still photos from the home-made TV set at *Electronics Magazine*. The images are very crisp for their time (with some minor distortion), the background sets show well on the screen, and very positive reviews on the play performance itself over nascent TV were delivered from the media critics watching the broadcast.

An audio tape of this live broadcast has also been discovered by this author to have survived, as mis-filed in the LOC SONIC archives (another audio tape of the telecast is found at the Paley Museum).

**1939 World's Fair:** A 1939 RCA promotional film called "*Television*" appears to show some very brief film shots of people watching TV broadcasts and shows scenes on a small TV screen for the 1939 New York World's Fair, a horse race, and an orchestral program. It is unclear whether this was a film of a live broadcast (without sound) or whether it was staged for this newsreel. As a side note, it is interesting to note from this film that multiple TV cameras for cutting to different angle shots during telecasts were already being used in television show production. Still photos of the New York World's Fair 1939 broadcasts, taken directly from the screen with some image distortion, also exist. Audio recordings of these telecasts (including opening speech by David Sarnoff) are also mis-filed in the LOC archives, as further noted below.

**Streets of New York – August 1939:** There is a 16mm home movie film taken from live TV broadcast on August 31, 1939 at 8:30 pm ET (from NBC's *Thursday Night Program*) of "*The Streets of New York*" (alternate title: "*Poverty Is Not A Crime*", the 19<sup>th</sup> century melodrama by Dion Boucicault) as directed by Anthony Mann (then Tony Bundsmann) with Norman Lloyd, George Coulouris, a very young Lloyd Nolan, Jennifer Jones (then Phyllis Easley), Joyce Arling, Whitford Kane, and a large cast engaged in "broad" acting with exaggerated movements and expressions, as often seen on the stage. This 11 minute film was taken from TV monitors of the live broadcast on NBC experimental station W2XBS of August 31, 1939 8:30 – 9:30 pm as featured at the New York World's Fair. The clip shows special effects used in the production, such as snow storm, and villain setting fire to a house. The film also shows the audience arriving at the theater and provides a list of performers.

The recording has notable clarity (if accompanied by some wobbles and shaking) for a cinema film recording from live TV. Norman Lloyd discusses his role in his 1939 experimental TV broadcasts (including this one and *Missouri Legends*, both directed by Anthony Mann) in his video interview on *Archive of American Television* Web site. He says that *Streets of New York* was shot at Radio City at its 3<sup>rd</sup> floor studio.

The surviving silent film of the live "*Streets of New York*" broadcast, now in New York's Museum of Television and Radio or Paley Center, is the earliest filmed record of a live American television drama. Ron Simon, the curator of the Paley Center, calls this "the Dead Sea Scroll of TV History" in 08/25/09 review of the film, accompanied by 1 minute video excerpt of the actual movie, as available on [www.tvobscurities.com](http://www.tvobscurities.com)

**Blind Alley – 1941:** It is claimed in the Internet Movie Database, or IMDB, that films made direct from live experimental TV broadcasts of November 21, 1941 also still exist, of live teleplay called "*Blind Alley*". This is a melodrama as directed by Thomas Riley (who also directed "*Pirates of Penzance*" and "*HMS Pinafore*", as

tele-plays of Gilbert & Sullivan musicals for live TV in 1939, which also featured Alma Kitchell later of 1947's *In The Kelvinator Kitchen* NBC TV show) which allegedly exists and has been supposedly viewed in its entirety. It is said to be of very poor quality, with one static view from a single fixed position TV camera (no pans or cuts). It may have been filmed with a regular cine camera direct from the TV screen, or of live action on the TV stage being filmed coincident with the TV camera scanning. This is subject to further confirmation. *Blind Alley* was also performed several other times in the days of early television, including on *Kraft Television Theater's* 09/15/48 episode.

***Other Early Attempts in U.S.:*** Other archived items in the Paley Center, like the *Hymn of the Nations* broadcast on TV on August 14, 1944 (with Toscanini at home being interviewed, and conducting, and opera singer Jan Peerce performing), are actually conventional films that were telecast. The David Sarnoff and Vladimir Zworykin Collections also have records of 1930's and early 1940's broadcasts, but these are primarily still 35mm photographs taken from the TV screen, such as Santa Claus visiting New York in 1940. There are numerous films and photos of TV shows being broadcast, showing the cameras, but few taken from the actual TV screen.

***Pre-Kinescope Experiments:*** Television camera experiments to film motion and sound from broadcasts were being conducted by NBC prior to their 1947 joint kinescope release with DuMont and Kodak. However, it is unclear whether these experiments were successful, and no remnants of any such recordings have surfaced to date. Likewise the 1944 trade press reported that Allen DuMont was filming live shows from all the NY TV stations from 1941 – 1944, and showing these at the Television Producers Association conference at the Hotel Roosevelt to document how little TV program quality had advanced during the war years (*Billboard*, April 8, 1944). The films and audio taken from TV before the kinescope, and other such pre-1947 artifacts of early live TV, are also further discussed below.

***World War II Military Research & Applications – Film of Live TV:*** On a related note, it is also known that during World War II, TV cameras were used on both U.S. and German guided missiles to aid in remote navigation and to document missile targeting and results. Joe Kennedy (oldest son of the Kennedy clan) died in 1944 while flying B-17 bomber fitted out with this TV camera recording equipment on trial. During this same WWII period, DuMont developed a system to remotely view battles for potential military applications. Both of these represent precursors to the technologies that could reliably record live TV after the war. Stemming from these airborne television recording experiments, the United States Navy made the first post-war black & white television recordings on March 21, 1946 at the Anacostia Naval Air Station in Washington DC. Capturing live television for re-viewing was on its way.

## Advent of Kinescoped Recordings of Live Television

***Dawn of the Kinescope – First Viable Audio-Visual Recordings of Live TV:*** The kinescope was commercialized for its first use by television in 1947. There are few existing kinescopes from 1949-50, and even more scarce are the earliest 1947 – 1948 kinescopes, filmed off the air as the live TV show was broadcast. It is important to differentiate these kinescopes of live TV from early films made for television which also began in 1947 with the TV program “*Public Prosecutor*” (produced independently by Jerry Fairbanks, initially targeted for NBC, but actually shown later on the old DuMont network), where these do not represent a record of a live broadcast.

***Origins & Development of Kinescope Recording:*** The kinescope was jointly developed by DuMont, which then joined with NBC to contract with Kodak to commercially manufacture the product. The 24 frame per second process from DuMont (to align with the 30 frame per second TV broadcast video, and also capture broadcast audio) provided for viable television recording. A patent by Harry Carter Millholland (on behalf of and assigned to DuMont) for a “*Device For Recording Television*” was filed on May 19, 1945 and issued to the Allen B. DuMont Laboratories in January 14, 1947 (U.S. Patent # 2,414,319), as pre-dating its commercial release with Kodak as manufacturer by the fall of 1947.

These DuMont patent dates for the kinescope imply that a working prototype or functional model of the kinescope was likely developed by 1945 and before the beginning of 1947. There is evidence that DuMont was filming live TV programs directly from the CRT by time of its announcements of December 13, 1945 of live TV recording commencement using 16mm equipment at its flagship New York City station (WABD). However, there is again no documentation yet that any of these experimental recordings are still in existence. Likewise, there were earlier patents for television recording devices, such as David Epstein’s of RCA from 1938 (issued: 1941), but it is not yet known whether such a prototype produced any surviving output from these earlier inventions.

Starting in late 1947 and early 1948, the kinescope device was initially used to record certain live television broadcasts on film for re-broadcast as well as for relay to other television stations, particularly before the emergence of the coaxial cable network connections between many cities, and preceding the later advent of commercially usable videotape in the 1950’s. Kines were also used to show TV advertisers examples of the “finished product”. The development of the “image orthicon” tube by RCA in 1946 had just preceded the roll-out of the kinescope technology to viably record the live TV broadcasts, as the new image orthicon provided “striking” images with sense of true “immediacy” for the first time, as worth viewing and preserving on film (*History of Television: 1942 – 2000*, Abramson & Sterling).

The first TV networks (NBC, DuMont, CBS) also were in favor of the kinescope as they wanted television to remain “live” and combat the emergence of independent “film for TV” producers, whose media could become a threat to

network produced shows to be marketed to affiliate stations. The kinescope facilitated this, in keeping TV live and network-controlled yet providing for a means for these live network programs to be recorded and distributed to the network affiliates. These kines were often shipped from station to station sequentially in a practice called "bicycling".

***Slow Start for Use of Kinescoping TV Broadcasts:*** Nonetheless, most shows were not kinescoped even after commercial availability of the Kodak kinescope machine beginning in 1947, due to cost or lack of perceived value in recording many of the programs. Furthermore, of those programs which were kinescope recorded, most of these recordings were discarded, wiped, or lost.

As further evidence of the needless destruction of the kinescope recordings of early live TV, the American Federation of Radio Artists declared as early as the summer of 1948 its desire to have kinescopes burned after one TV airing (to avoid free re-use of their TV performances), as reported in the August 28, 1948 *Billboard*.

The cost of TV video recording was a major limiting factor in their large-scale use, where the July 17, 1948 issue of *Billboard* cites NBC figures of \$480 - \$1,000 per hour for kinescoping a live program. Kinescope recorders through the early 1950's often used a blue phosphor on the cathode tube face (since the TV image was particularly sensitive to blue light), employing a very small (often 5 inch) and high intensity monitor image for recording. Horizontal shutter bars sometimes appeared on the recorded images.

In the same July 1948 *Billboard* article, NBC forecasts that it will increase kinescope output to support its West Coast affiliates, despite its high cost, but do so selectively, as further citing that it sees the Western US relying on kinescope copies for network programs until 1952. The low volume of kines produced was an alternative to network inter-connection of the stations in operation, as due to no economies of scale having emerged yet to support regular coast-to-coast coaxial or microwave relay networks.

Union costs and rights clearance problems are also cited by NBC in the October 2, 1948 *Billboard* as further obstructions to kinescoping more programs. The further litany of complex hassles involved in kinescoping a live TV show as to clearances to all parties is described in the article "*So You Wanna Clear A TV Show? 9 Commandments for Clearing*" in the March 5, 1949 *Billboard*.

***Commercial Kinescope Launch:*** Nonetheless, kinescopes began to be used with the various commercial and technical challenges once the recording equipment became officially available. On September 13 1947, Kodak and NBC, in conjunction with DuMont, formally announced the general commercial availability of "kinescopes" via the Kodak unit and process (officially called the "Eastman Kodak Television Recording Camera"). On that date, the unveiling of the kinescope was conducted at NBC affiliates convention held in Atlantic City NJ, where it was introduced as "landmark in the development of television" by

Frank Mullen, NBC general manager, as reported in the September 20, 1947 *Billboard*.

Thus, most (but not all) of the earliest known kinescopes such as from WNBT-TV (now WNBC-TV) in New York and at WMAL-TV (which later became WJLA-TV) in Washington DC all principally date from the October 1947 period, just after kinescope public release for TV applications. These are probably among the very earliest surviving kinescopes, as listed below.

For differentiation, NBC called their kinescope recordings “Kine-Photo” while DuMont introduced theirs as “Tele-a-scriptions” or “Tele-transcriptions”. In the UK, the kinescopes were called “Telerecordings”. However, it is well documented that DuMont pre-announced its development of the kinescope recording process (using lower cost 16mm film synched to live TV monitor) on March 22, 1947 to trade press (as reported in the March 29, 1947 *Billboard*) and April 7, 1947 to the general public, thus documenting that the technology was already in place for its release for commercial use later that same year.

***Surviving Pre-Release 1947 Trial Kinescopes:*** Could it be that there are some kinescopes exist of live TV shows prior to the September – October 1947 general commercial availability date? As will be further discussed below, there are earlier documented kinescopes from June (summer) 1947 of “*Party Line*” (early TV quiz show with Bert Parks) and of very early *Kraft Television Theater* broadcasts which may have been captured with precursors or experimental trials of the kinescope method prior to its commercial deployment.

Kinescope recording started to become more frequent and common from January 1948 forward, after its origination in 1947. Even then, there are a very limited number of surviving 1947 - 1948 vintage kinescopes.

***Kinescope Quality:*** As to the quality in viewability of the new invention, comments are often made about the flicker and graininess of kinescopes. There is no doubt that “kine” images were imperfect while still adequate for the time and purpose. However, it must also be noted that we are viewing them now as transferred from the original source media, and after years of aging often without preservation techniques being applied. Kinescope recordings also tended to crop out the boundary or outer sections of the image, to avoid showing the TV screen from which the transmission was being filmed.

Kinescope quality is better when viewed in its original film media format and source, as some quality and authenticity is lost when converted from the original kine films and transferred to today’s video or DVD formats. The kine films were also clearer before they were fed back for retransmission by TV of the time. Thus, the actual kinescopes that were broadcast did often provide grainy images that caused “strain on many viewer’s eyes” as cited as late as November 12, 1949 in *Billboard*. This same article cites TV’s reliance on kines as one of key reasons why AM Radio was still dominating over TV ratings even at the end of the 1940’s.

***Small Original Size & Slow Growth of TV Industry:*** The relatively small size of the infant television industry must also be considered when calibrating the range, volume, and perceived value of kinescoping programs of the time.

***1920's:*** Television had an early experimental “hobbyist” and scientific advocacy (primarily with mechanical TV in the UK and US) in the late 1920's. The August 27, 1928 issue of *Time* magazine reported optimistically that “seven U. S. radio stations last week were broadcasting pictures. Two were operating regularly, four irregularly. The last were testing out their frequencies. The stations (are): WGY, Schenectady, N. Y. (General Electric); KDKA, East Pittsburgh, Pa. (Westinghouse); WRNY, New York (Experimenter Publishing Co.- <Hugo Gernsback>); 3XK, Washington (Jenkins Laboratories); 2XAL, New York (Experimenter Publishing Co.) ; 1XAY, Lexington, Mass. (Donald R. Lafflin); 4XA, Memphis, Tenn. (Wrec., Inc.); (and) 9XAA, Chicago (Chicago Federation of Labor). These stations, one or another, are sending out still photographs, moving pictures. They are reproducing scenes enacted directly before their broadcasting machines, in grey silhouette and in complete shade tones. *Special home receiving sets are now so numerous (between two and three thousand)* and this visual experimenting so important that last week O. H. Caldwell, of the Federal Radio Commission, urged his associates to encourage it by all possible regulations”.

***1930's through World War II:*** Despite this promising start, the development and commercialization of television lagged during the 1930's depression era. *Life* devoted a full spread to the coming of television in its February 27, 1937 issue. A new launch initiative in 1939 led by RCA had great expectations (as also previewed by *Life* in its February 20, 1939 issue), then stalled with any further growth largely suspended during World War II. The post-war planned expansion of TV and technology improvements are foretold in the September 4, 1944 *Life*.

***Slow Post-War Re-Launch:*** Post-war initiatives moved slowly in 1945 – 46, given high TV set costs and low volume of available station programming. Even by the time of the launch of the kinescope in 1947, there was still a limited yet growing number of TV broadcast outlets transmitting in the U.S., beaming signals out to relatively small number of home and tavern TV set viewers. In 1947, there were only approximately 44,000 – 63,000 television sets operating in the US (of which an estimated 30 - 40,000 were in the metropolitan New York area, with less than 6,000 in Philadelphia and less than 1,000 in Washington DC, according to October 11, 1947 *Billboard* survey) vs. 40 million radios. This compares to 54,000 licensed television receivers in the U.K by the end of 1947, where Britain generally ran ahead of the U.S. in TV commercialization as aided by the government-funding sources for the BBC.

***Post-War TV Market:*** Television production figures (from Radio-Electronics-Television Manufacturers Association, or REMTA, on TV sets manufactured but not yet all sold, as many were in inventories including for following year potential sales) for year-end 1947 mirror the dichotomy on receivers sold and in use between TV and radio. 178,000 TV sets were produced by year-end 1947 in the

U.S. (149,000 being total cumulative number sold per December 1947 *Time* magazine) vs. 20 million radios manufactured the same year. By 1948, TV production would climb rapidly to 978,000 but was still at about half of the number of radios produced each year, even as late as 1953. The production was to grow with viewer demand as linked also to the growing number of television broadcast outlets in operation.

In 1946, there were primarily only 8 regularly operating TV stations (3 in NY with NBC, CBS, and Dumont; the Philco station in Philadelphia and the GE station in Schenectady NY as both affiliated with NBC; the DuMont Washington DC station; the Balaban & Katz Chicago outlet; and Don Lee's pioneering Los Angeles station. This would change in 1946 – 47, as television became ready for take-off.

As of mid-1947, there were operating U.S. TV stations (not including ones that were in licensing process but not yet broadcasting) in New York NY; Schenectady NY; Newark NJ; Philadelphia PA; Baltimore, MD; Washington DC; Chicago, IL; St. Louis, MO; and Los Angeles, CA, with approximately 17 - 20 stations (including multiple channels in some markets like New York, and 11 of these already with defined network affiliations) which were providing regularly scheduled broadcasts. A map of 17 operating commercial TV stations (and areas not yet receiving television) portrays the limited coverage, restricted to major metropolitan areas, as published in the Dec 1, 1947 *Life* magazine as part of its expanded feature (with still photos of live broadcasts) showing status of TV as of that time.

By that time of year-end 1947, a few more operating stations (each with a normal 45 mile broadcast coverage radius) were also in production in Milwaukee WI; Cincinnati OH; and Detroit MI (the latter reaching neighboring Canada with its first view of live TV). In survey published in November 1, 1947 *Billboard* on network stations in actual operation, NBC had 6 network stations and affiliates on the air; ABC claimed 2 as disputed with other networks and had no owned stations; CBS has its one owned station in New York (WCBS); and DuMont had 2.

In 1948, *Time* Magazine was still stating that "Television will never replace radio as an entertainment medium."

Broadcast spectrum allocation was still in its infancy (to avoid interference between TV stations and other FM band type transmissions), which led to the suspension of the original TV Channel 1 frequencies in the U.S. during 1947 (officially prohibited for TV use by FCC on May 6, 1948), where this spectrum was assigned to other FM land and mobile radio transmissions. Despite all of these transmission limitations, coupled with the high cost of TV components as then still in low volume production, David Sarnoff of NBC was still optimistic in stating that "1947 holds promise of being America's first major television year" as quoted in the January 4 1947 issue of *Billboard*. Nonetheless, the same *Billboard* article states that television "must prove to the advertiser, as well as to the public, that (it) is at long last out of the diaper stage and is (now) a healthy infant".

The June 4, 1949 *Billboard* headlines that “*TV Needs 6,000,000 Sets To Hit Break-Even Point*”. This total number of U.S. TV households would not be reached until 1951, when TV growth exploded and when the “desired target number” was finally attained. TV households went from 3.8 Million in 1950 to 10.3 Million by 1951, per *TV Facts* (C. Steinberg, 1979) and *2001 World Almanac*. In parallel, TV revenues (measured in sales, not units) would not exceed radio sales until 1954, according to *TV Facts* (C. Steinberg, 1979). The same source cites total TV revenue at \$34M in 1949, compared to \$415M for radio. Growth was thus slow but steady in the late 1940’s, then explosive (once set prices came down, more stations went into operation, and more programming reaching a larger audience thus drew greater advertiser support, in a “perfect storm” of contributing factors to television becoming the dominant entertainment and information medium in America).

To further illustrate how small TV coverage was directly after World War II, and how rapidly it grew by 1950, one can note (as cited in *TV Facts* as published in 1985 and *Journal of Popular Film & Television* in 2001) that in 1946 only 0.02% of U.S. households had television, with this number doubling but still only at only at 0.04% by 1947. By 1948, however, 0.66% of households had TV, followed by explosive growth to 2.0% by 1949, then another quantum jump of 8.1% by 1950 and then all the way to 21% by 1951. Yet, the majority of American households still did not have TV until 1954 (59.4%).

By June 1948 (and before the FCC new station licensing freeze starting on September 23, 1948 due to problems in channel spectrum allocation and interference between stations, which lasted until early 1950’s), the number of U.S. TV stations in operation had grown to 27, with additional stations added in UT; CT; MA; VA; MI; MN; MO; OH and WI. Also, in select major markets, there were more multiple VHF stations in operation (in New York, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore).

***Early TV Program Transmission & Distribution:*** Before kinescopes, TV shows at all these pioneer stations as sent out to their limited viewing public were just broadcast live, with virtually no record of any kind preserved. Again, there are some films taken of early TV broadcasts, but mostly incomplete or partial images (often flawed or without audio) before viable kinescopes first appeared in 1947 for rebroadcast. Some programs were also re-enacted or staged for inclusion in early 35mm or 16mm newsreels (or filmed by conventional cinema cameras recording the television stage concurrent with the TV camera signal capture, as TV demonstration films), where these few archival films that survive do not represent records of true live television transmissions as would have been seen by viewers on the screen.

Also, generally only the kinescopes show the full TV program (or at least a substantial part) whereas the few film excerpts are generally very short silent segments of the broadcast. Kinescope recordings solved the scanning synchronization issues of capturing televised audio and video on film. Early kinescope recorders used 16mm film due to its lower price, while Los Angeles TV

station KLAC (with its proximity to Hollywood) had the first higher-resolution 35mm film kinescope recorder (built in-house) in regular production use, offering clearer pictures on playback.

***The Hubert V. Chain Collection in the Library of Congress (“LOC”)*** contains what may truly be the earliest surviving kinescopes of live TV broadcasts anywhere, as dating from 1947 – 1948.

The collection was donated by Hubert Victor Chain, a long-time former NBC employee in its script department (going back to earlier radio days) who also authored and directed broadcast programs. He was born in 1911, growing up in California and educated at Stanford and then in Paris. He then moved to New York and served as Continuity Chief for Radio Recording at NBC from 1937 – 1941, and won a 1946 industry award for education by radio. Among his radio producer credits was the popular *Xavier Cugat Show*. Chain then moved into TV as writer and producer in its early commercial days. He was also decorated by the Czech Government in Exile (based in UK) during World War II. He later served as President of Federated Television Productions, head of radio for a leading ad agency, and also set up his own firm (Hubert Chain Associates) in Manhattan doing program production and scripts as an independent. He died in 1997 in Washington State.

The Chain Collection consists of a series of clips of very early television kinescopes starting from 1947, including unique clips from early 1947 that appear to be experimental kines recorded from live TV as tests, before the formal commercial release of the kinescope recorder later that fall.

These rare direct TV broadcast recordings include Tex McCrary and Jinx Falkenburg on the *Swift Home Service Club Show* (10/31/47), *Campus Hoopla* (a 1947 broadcast excerpt), Maria Tallchief dancing Swan Lake, one of Truman's first appearances on television, along with Cyril Ritchard, Judith Anderson and many others, running through January 25, 1948 telecasts of “*Angel Street*” (*Theater Guild* tele-play with Walter Abel and Betty Field in TV rendition of the Broadway play); and the *Borden Theater* drama broadcast of February 1948.

This important series of kinescope moving image excerpts, many with audio included, runs 41 minutes as transcribed to videotape and given to the LOC by Hubert Chain starting in 1986. The Chain Collection is stored in original film stock form at the main LOC archives, and ¾ inch video has been created and is stored at the LOC branch in Culpeper VA as directed by Mike Mashon.

Kinescopes first start appearing in LOC archive records dating primarily from October 1947, with some claimed earlier 1947 recordings made by this Dumont/Kodak/NBC joint KinePhoto process cited in archives with dates alleged as early as February 1947. These are listed as variety shows in Library of Congress archives catalogued as from February 1947 forward; and kinescope of *Kraft Television Theater* from June 1947 (which would have been made one month

after the broadcast debut of this landmark series). Again, as noted, Kodak normally states that kinescope process was commercially available and in first general use by fall 1947, although it is possible that some earlier 1946 – early 1947 kinescopes do exist from experimental phase.

The Library of Congress (LOC) also houses the NBC collection, with programs commencing in 1948. Not until the passage of the American Radio & Television Act of 1976 was there even a mandate for the LOC to launch a formal archive to collect and preserve historical broadcast materials. A large part of this LOC archive is reported as still un-catalogued and much of the material is not always available in viewable formats, without conversion. Preservation funds and the management of this valuable archive are both deficient, from recent interviews with assigned Library of Congress staff conducted in 2004 and again in 2010.

There is little funding allocated or available for restoration of these shows, where many are still stored in original kinescope and film media which can be subject to deterioration. Some of the material has been copied to ¾ inch or 1 inch videotape, and most have yet to be digitized (preserved on DVD or computer media images) This is being better addressed by Mike Mashon of the LOC and other TV archivists for improved preservation as of 2010.

Extensive research, still ongoing, has thus identified the following programs as being among the earliest (if not the earliest) surviving recordings of live television. The originals are principally at the Library of Congress, UCLA Archives, Museum of Television and Radio (now the Paley Center for Media), as well as in other museum or university archives, or in private collections.

Searches of these sources to date, including Library Of Congress (LOC) and UCLA catalog search, among others, includes the following moving image material records from kinescope recordings of live TV broadcasts:

### **1946 and earlier**

There are claimed to be 1934 – 38 images said to be taken by an early slow frame experimental kinescope, as cited earlier, which appear along with purported screen images of the 1939 NYC World's Fair Opening as reprised on a 1949 NBC promotional film about the kinescope process. The slow frame kinescopes (at 8 – 16 frames per second) of two dramatic and dancing/orchestral sequences are without sound (as this early development did not provide for audio) but are easily viewable even if the images are flickering, jumpy, and brief. Iconoscope cameras with high heat generation are used in filming in the typical "high temperature" TV studios of the time.

As previously noted, the "*Streets of New York*" tele-play from 1939 (filmed from TV screen without sound) is known to exist and has been shown publicly as held by the Paley Media Archives.

The same 1949 NBC Kinescope promo film cited above also shows the purported pre-kinescope clip (may be 16 mm film) from the 1946 Joe Louis - Billy Conn fight from Yankee Stadium (telecast by NBC as co-sponsored by Gillette over a special 4 station hookup in NYC, Schenectady, Philadelphia, and one-time link to the DuMont experimental station in Washington DC). The Louis-Conn broadcast, primarily seen in bars at the time by a then record 100,000 – 300,000 viewers, was noted by Gillette to measurably boost their product sales from their staggering \$125,000 sponsorship experiment at the time (where Gillette had already made one of the earliest TV advertising commitments going back to the start of its *Gillette Cavalcade of Sports* debuting on TV in 1944). Congressmen viewing the fight as photographed from live screen are depicted in the July 1, 1946 *Life*.

Other such pre-1946 remnants, including BBC recordings, and audio of WNBT broadcasts without video as preserved at LOC from 1939 – 1946, are as also referenced below. In summary, the age of TV broadcasting through 1946 precedes the commercial availability of kinescopes, although some film of live TV broadcasts (most without sound) exist.

"*Hour Glass*", the first true television variety show, debuted via NBC on May 9, 1946 but no moving image recordings are known to survive (although audio recordings of the telecasts are in the LOC archives, including the first episode, as further noted herein). *Hour Glass* is featured in the feature *Life* magazine article on "Commercial Television" of May 27, 1946.

Also, *Faraway Hill*, the first network TV soap opera, ("*War Bride*" and "*Hawkins Falls*" on local Schenectady NY station WRGB preceded it in summer of 1946) also made its inaugural telecast on October 2, 1946 on DuMont and ran through December 18, 1946. However, again there are no recordings known to exist of this landmark program.

Other than test broadcasts, only NBC and DuMont were providing a regular schedule of evening telecasts prior to and during 1946. CBS had also begun pre-war telecasts, but became more active in 1947, as Bill Paley (President & Founder of CBS) originally took a conservative approach on expanding into TV. CBS also lagged behind NBC and Dumont in not committing to a permanent kinescope process and facility for its TV broadcasts until the week of November 18, 1948.

Before this date, CBS kinescoping of its broadcasts had been infrequent and intermittent at best. This helps explain why there are far fewer early CBS telecast recordings available vs. higher number available from NBC and Dumont which jump-started their program earlier (with the latter as also being co-developers of the first kinescope equipment). By May 1949 (per *History of Television, ibid.*), to further document the rapid growth in recording of live TV since its 1947 launch, RCA reported the production of over 250,000 feet of kinescoped film from live TV broadcasts being generated by the networks, the majority of which is sadly lost to posterity.

## 1947

As noted, the *Hubert Chain Collection* from NBC's flagship station (WNBT in New York) at the Library of Congress provides some of the very first kinescope recordings of live TV, including experimental tests of recording live television with both image and sound with kinescope technology from the summer of 1947 (prior to the formal release of the kinescope in September – October 1947). Different clips of live TV were filmed via kinescope, to see what they looked like. Many have rolling bars and are out-of-focus.

***Tex & Jinx - Swift Home Service Club*** (10/31/47) – 3 minute clip of Tex McCrary, his wife and co-host Jinx Falkenberg (married in 1945) on *Swift Home Service Club* live TV broadcast (Hubert Chain Collection at Library of Congress). They are joined in this episode by interior decorator and model Sandra Gable (later also appearing on the Lanny Ross "*Swift Show*" debuting in 1948 with same sponsor). This particular clip shows an animated opening for the show (broadcast from film), followed by a brief live segment with a lead into a Halloween-oriented fashion show.

The *Swift Home Service Club* series had previously debuted on WNBT-TV in NY (NBC flagship station) on Friday May 16, 1947 at 1pm, and ran for about one year. Its May 23, 1947 (second Friday) broadcast was favorably reviewed in detail in the May 31, 1947 *Billboard*. The series was produced with the McCann-Erickson ad agency and directed by Ed Sobel and Tom Hutchinson. *Billboard* gave the program and its hosts good reviews with only minor flaws noted in the production.

This very early show from the first week of the series (providing detailed description of what one of these episodes were like) featured Swift products displayed from the show's start as part of ongoing sponsor commercials as interweaved throughout the show; Sandra Gable giving lengthy home decorating tips for household dividing screens; and Swift spokeswoman Martha Logan who is visibly nervous as she makes bacon and "sunny-side up" eggs in a Swift test kitchen while accidentally piercing the egg yolk. This early telecast ends with a fashion contest among 3 glamorous models (including Candy Jones, later the wife of NBC radio host Long John Nebel, with Ms. Jones spotlighted for her appearance in the *Swift* show by *Billboard* reviewer Sam Chase) who are judged by editor from *Harper's Bazaar* (runners-up received Swift Brookfield hams, and the winner a make-up set). The May 1947 show reviewed ran over its 30 minute time allotment by 10 minutes.

The program launched at virtually same time as the Thursday evening *Wife Savers* program with Allen Prescott, a short-lived evening home economics and household tips program which debuted on WNBT (the evening before) on May 22, 1947. The show, adapted from a previous, long-running radio series (going back to 1932), was sponsored by General Foods. It was also reviewed but more negatively in same May 1947 issue of *Billboard*. *Wife Savers* only lasted 5 weeks

on TV (ending June 26, 1947). The collections of Allen Prescott at the LOC contain audio recordings, scripts, and photographs from the radio series and may contain some further information on this short-lived TV peer of the *Swift Home Service Club*.

*Swift Home Service Club* was the first commercial (sponsored) daytime network series, as further cited below. Tex & Jinx (booked through the William Morris management agency) also had a previous successful evening show (as part of the *Bristol-Myers Tele-Varieties*, which ran from December 1946 locally and from January 5, 1947 – April 13, 1947 on NBC Network) on Sunday nights. This TV launch of Tex and Jinx (adapted from their *Hi Jinx* radio show on WEAJ) was a multi-format broadcast from their luxury “apartment” and later nightclub settings, hosting celebrities in sophisticated talk. It proved their marketability, which then led immediately to their being cast in a variety of evening and daytime shows including this *Swift Home Service Club* daytime program and an overlapping *Tex & Jinx* (April 1947 – September 1949) evening series.

As in the launch episode described in the May 31, 1947 *Billboard* article above, the entire run of the daytime *Swift Home Service Club* program with Tex & Jinx mostly featured Jinx discussing interior decorating and modeling fashions with Sandra Gable, food preparation (featuring Swift meats, as often sampled by Tex), and audience participation segment, all interspersed with tips on home economics. Jinx was known for her many inadvertent, amusing, and sometimes risqué verbal gaffes on the live *Swift* telecast. The high heat of the TV studios of the day (due to large number of lamps used to augment low light insensitive of television cameras at time) was reported to have caused disasters with the food prepared for the program.

The September 20, 1947 issue of *Billboard* (preceding the surviving kinescope) reports that Tex McCrary was trying to market the “*Tex and Jinx*” TV programs to be shown on TV sets to be licensed to hotels, to increasing viewing audiences, as another indication that a broader market was being sought for TV programs such as this. In the November 29, 1947 *Billboard*, it is reported that the *Swift Home Service Club* was among the first to broadcast the kinescopes of Queen Elizabeth’s wedding to Prince Philip within 29 hours of the event, to reinforce the relative immediacy of TV.

Also by November 7, 1947, according to NBC, the *Swift Home Service Club* was the first TV daytime network program with a paying sponsor (Swift), where the advertising paid for their show to be seen concurrently on three interconnected NBC network stations serving different regional markets (New York, Philadelphia, and Washington DC). Obviously, the kinescopes were also being used by fall of 1947 to show the recorded programs on non-interconnected stations or as reruns.

As noted, the *Swift Home Service Club* show also would feature an actress or home economist playing the fictional Martha Logan as nutrition expert (often

using Beth Bailey McLean in U.S. markets), where this character was Swift's equivalent of Betty Crocker (Martha Logan as Swift spokeswoman dates back to early magazine ads and radio at least as far back as the early 1930's).

An NBC VP stated that in "two years" (by 1949) the show would probably be carried live as far as West Coast. Unfortunately, the series did not last that long. By 1949 Tex & Jinx were hosting "*Preview*" sponsored by Philip Morris and also featuring Johnny, the Philip Morris bellhop (later on *I Love Lucy*), with that show also cancelled in 1949. However, the couple would go on to many other TV programs during the 1950's.

***Party Line*** Bert Parks sponsored by Bristol-Myers (show only broadcast between June 8 – August 31 1947 on NBC, featuring host calling home viewer to answer question with \$5 prize and sponsor products – therefore, this clip is from 6/47 – 8/47 as among earliest live TV kines). The primitive quiz show was broadcast from 8:30 – 9:00 pm Sunday evenings, following Tex and Jinx's evening program (with the same sponsor) and usually preceding *The Borden Show*. It must have been either challenging or otherwise pre-arranged to reach the very few viewers in the summer of 1947. After a question was asked then augmented with accompanying film clip or live actor demonstration, Parks would select a home viewer card at random, to try to reach the very few set owners by phone (if they were viewing, as many of these early sets were housed in bars for group viewing).

This abbreviated experimental pre-kinescope test clip, evidently from July 1947, shows Bert Parks inviting viewers to send in their phone numbers in order to win the \$5 box of Bristol-Myers giveaways. A viewer of this kine reports in *TV.com* forum that "we blink in and out of various minutes of the show, as the offscreen voice of the man recording it is heard calling out what minute it is, like "Fifth" or "Ten". When Bert's comely assistant draws an old time black stereotype along with a stewpot on a large drawing pad, it's a clue, he tells us, toward guessing the name of the tune on a record he's playing, and who wrote it. The tune was "*Dinner Music for Hungry Cannibals*" by Raymond Scott, but our friend in the laboratory, getting caught up in the excitement, is heard wrongly guessing "Larry Clinton!".

The short-lived program was broadcast on two station hookup (WNBT of New York and WPTZ of Philadelphia). As reported in *Billboard* in its June 7, 1947 issue, the show had previously been shown on CBS starting on July 13, 1946 (as "*King's Party Line*" with John Reed King, directed by female TV pioneer Frances Buss) with format of having viewers call in. NBC decided to reverse this and call viewers due to limitations of its switchboard at the time. NBC also decided to have Bert Parks (from the popular "*Break The Bank*" quiz show) host its version of the program.

The demise of the *Party Line* program on August 31, 1947 is simple, as it lost its sponsor. *Billboard* featured an article in its August 30, 1947 issue that Bristol-Myers

was dropping all TV advertising until audiences expanded, including its experiments in sponsoring the *Party Line* program and *Tex & Jinx*, among others mentioned. TV was viewed as not viable yet for effectively advertising their products. Of course, Parks would go on to host many other TV game shows, but is best known for hosting the annual Miss America contest from Atlantic City, NJ from 1955 (1<sup>st</sup> year it was televised) to 1979.

***Campus Hoopla*** The 1947 kinescope clip in the Chain collection (along with audios of the show in the LOC SONIC archives, as noted below) of this program for teens (which ran from December 27, 1946 – December 19, 1947 on Friday nights on NBC) centered on sports and music with Bob Stanton (aka Bob Haymes, key host of many NBC sports and variety shows, brother of singer Dick Haymes), Carleton Carpenter (who would go on to have the #1 hit "*Aba Daba Honeymoon*" in 1950 with Debbie Reynolds from their movies together), and Eva Marie Saint (who had started as an NBC "page-ette", and went on to movie stardom) as featured personalities, as also further described below. Clair Bee, the Long Island University basketball coach who won 95% of his games, was also a featured host. The May 26, 1947 *Time* magazine noted Bob Stanton's ubiquity as announcer on wide range of NBC telecasts (calling him "Mr. Television"), including his role on what *Time* called "U.S. Rubber's corny *Campus Hoopla*" show.

The program featured cheerleader chants, interviews with college athletes, and short film clips of college games centered around a campus malt shop. It is reported that this 1947 kinescope of *Campus Hoopla* is evidently a pre-release kine test, as the live show was filmed completely out of focus.

A feature article on Eva Marie Saint's progress in TV (before her movie career fame including co-starring with Brando in "*On The Waterfront*"), where she also reacts to her own performance on kinescoped TV show, appears in the September 19, 1949 *Life*, entitled "*Breaking Into Television*" (she was also featured as early TV starlet in the December 1947 *Life* magazine special on TV as noted separately herein, shown entering a door in studio house recreation).

The article talks about her many early TV bit parts and acting stints (130 TV appearances by time of this publication) and her days doing the Keds sneaker commercials ("Keds are keen, Keds are neat, Keds are great for the family's fee....Wear 'Em" was one of her show tag lines) as regular playing a cheerleader on *Campus Hoopla*, already called an "early TV show" by time of this spring 1949 photo-essay. She was paid \$16.10 per week in net pay for her *Campus Hoopla* appearances according to this *Life* feature on her. The article also notes that she rocked the show's set one evening by appearing in a peach bathing suit where that color did not show up on TV (thus making her appear to be "nude").

This *Life* article also discusses her other TV roles to date, including as one of the singing "Bonny Maids" for 8 weeks (with Ann Francis) on the 1949 *Bonny Maid Versa-Tile Varieties* (at least one program of this series also survives on kinescope

as noted below). Of course, Eva Marie Saint would go on to greater things, including her noted Academy Award winning role in 1954 as the female lead with Marlon Brando in *On The Waterfront* in a long career of film accomplishments.

***Contemporary Accounts of TV in 1947*** To get an idea of the range, limited schedule, and novelty to viewers of any TV broadcast for the early set owners of this time, it is worthwhile to read an article which appeared in the *New Yorker* magazine of August 30, 1947. It chronicles a week in the life of a New York City family (who had a functioning 1941 set costing \$350 at time of purchase) where the reporter viewed TV each day along with them, and vividly describes these broadcasts (such as *Cash & Carry* quiz show with Dennis James, and the early cooking show *In The Kelvinator Kitchen* with Alma Kitchell, and even a Shakespearean play, along with boxing and wrestling matches, all primarily lost today) and viewer reactions to them at the time.

In this same article, the writer also reported on viewing the debut of *Kraft Television Theater* and its premiere telecast of "*The Double Door*", making special note of the lack of costume changes in this "gala" (as they called it) and remarking on its McClaren Imperial Cheese commercial. It was by serendipity that they just happened to catch the historic premiere of this long-running series during the evening of May 7, 1947 (having no idea of its significance at the time). Harry Dubin, the TV owner in the *New Yorker* 1947 article, was found again as still very much alive in 1993 and interviewed with his photo collection (as archived in the Kisseloff Collection on the Internet).

Likewise, *Life* Magazine's December 1, 1947 issue featured an expanded contemporary feature (with live TV screen shots) on the state of television as of the end of 1947, including studio and direct-from-screen photographs of Jon Gnagy "*Learn To Draw*" program, Eva Marie Saint, *Tex & Jinx* on the air, President Truman, DJ shows, and live TV tele-plays (including one called *Paper Moon*), Lew Lehr on DuMont's *Detect & Collect*, among others.

***Other 1947 Kinescope Clips in the Chain Collection*** also include – teen discussing soap box derby; wrestling including broadcasts from Don Lee's West Coast TV outlet; an excerpt from artist Jon Gnagy's "*You Are An Artist*" show as he sketches drawing as sponsored by Gulf Oil (with commercial) in 1 minute clip (Gnagy would typically draw the Gulf logo on these programs); women rodeo shots; woman describing factory injury of young girl; and the afore-mentioned *Party Line* and *Kraft Television Theater* from June 1947; among other broadcast excerpts including *Campus Hoopla* and the first Oval office broadcast as given by President Harry Truman, as noted above.

***Admiral Playhouse*** (referenced in LOC records with ambiguous information)

***1947 World Series*** – first network World Series as earlier noted (4 station Northeast new NBC "network" of time) with Bob Stanton, Bob Edge, and Bill Slater as

announcers with kinescoped coverage of Brooklyn Dodgers vs. New York Yankees from September 30 – October 6, 1947 telecasts, exist in NBC archives. First integrated World Series baseball with premiere of Jackie Robinson. The 7 games were segmented across NBC, CBS, and DuMont at time (NBC showed games 1 & 5, CBS 3 & 4, and DuMont games 2, 6 & 7). Yankees won the Series.

***WMAL-TV Inaugural Week*** - Washington DC: (10/5/47: 3 min. live TV commercial incl. Jello, baked goods; in Chain collection) – Station went on air two days earlier, on October 3, 1947 with Georgetown-Fordham football game (as reported in *Billboard* magazine on October 4, 1947) and had distinction of broadcasting at highest channel number assignment to date at that time (Channel 7). Station launched as WTVW for first couple of months, before being renamed WMAL (with former callsign later being assigned to Evansville IN station; WMAL became WJLA in 1977). Began as CBS affiliate until ABC officially launched its network in 1948 (when WMAL then became 3<sup>rd</sup> ABC affiliate).

***WMAL-TV – 1<sup>st</sup> Presidential Broadcast from White House:*** Kinescope of this Washington DC station on same date as above shows President Harry Truman in early or 1<sup>st</sup> live White House telecast (food savings program & world food crisis)-Oct. 5, 1947. This was same evening as 6<sup>th</sup> game live broadcast of World Series (also on DuMont that evening). This telecast was thought to have been lost, but is known to exist in 3 minute kinescope as preserved at LOC in the Hubert Chain Collection. This clip is from the very first presidential address broadcast direct from the White House, where President Truman speaks about food conservation for price reduction and for alleviating the world food shortages of the time. A 7 minute version of this live broadcast kinescope, attributed to Hubert Chain Associates, is also held at the Truman Library.

As part of the overall Marshall plan, the President proposes meatless Tuesdays and egg-less and poultry-less Thursdays, and his recommendation to require public eateries to only serve bread and butter upon request. In this White House broadcast, Charles Luckman of the Citizen's Food Committee (and also serving as President of Lever Brothers at the time) as appointed by Truman also appeared, as also cited in LOC records and in the October 11, 1947 *Billboard*. The President began his remarks at 10:50 pm, following the Committee report. Truman stated on the telecast that the "cost of living in this country must not be a football to be kicked about by the gamblers in grain". The program was simulcast on all three Washington DC TV stations at time (WNBW – NBC; WTTG – DuMont; and WMAL – ABC).

The syndicated columnist Ray Tucker reported that TV may change the stakes for politicians, in noting presciently that the video tube favors figures that are photogenic. He reported (in his November 26, 1947 "*National Whirligig*" column) that Truman looked tired and kept looking down at his manuscript during his October 5<sup>th</sup> speech, while Lever Brothers' Charles Luckman was a natural, facing the camera with a memorized rendition and looking comfortable before the

camera. Certainly one of the first critiques of a presidential television performance, of many more to continue to come since then.

The audio of the broadcast is also preserved in the Truman Library (available for listening also on their online Web site, with accompanying transcript. It displays an assertive, articulate, if slightly bland President Truman providing a 10 minute speech (following Charles Luckman, Averill Harriman, George C. Marshall, and others) about lowering food consumption (and thus demand), along with reducing commodities speculation with higher trading margin requirements, to help drive down food and grain prices for both the U.S. market and the recovering economies of post-war Western Europe.

Truman was the second TV president (following FDR's debut at the 1939 New York World's Fair broadcasts). This does not count Herbert Hoover (when serving as Secretary of Commerce, before his presidential term) on test mechanical transmissions of the late 1920's, and also as an ex-President addressing the Republican convention on TV in June 1940, with the latter as captured on audio noted below.

With TV coming to age under the Truman's administration (1945- 53), the President kept an RCA television receiver in the Oval Office as originally acquired in January 1947 (since the first telecast of the House of Representatives over WTTG – DuMont in Washington DC) for his personal viewing (a presidential perquisite of the time, and the first TV in the White House). The October 13, 1947 *Time* reported the new White House TV was already being put to rapid use, noting that "after lunch each day, the President watched a few innings of the World Series games on a White House television set, but never sat through to the last innings".

Relating to this, and highlighting the small number of TV receivers at this time vs. consumer interest in TV in DC at the time, it was reported (*Billboard* October 18, 1947) that the October 1947 World Series (NY Yankees vs. Brooklyn Dodgers, including Jackie Robinson's Series debut) was seen by over 3.9 million viewers, but mostly in bars – where in Washington DC, 525 bars had sets (compared to 5,400 in NYC), but yet over 38,000 watched the games at these DC area taverns. Unless you were a president or well-to-do, home TV sets were still an expensive and precious asset.

It should be noted that audio recordings of an earlier TV appearance of Truman (in his 1<sup>st</sup> year as President) commissioning the new ship the USS FDR (named after his predecessor) for Navy Day is also in the LOC (as further referenced below) from October 27, 1945 (sound only, with 1<sup>st</sup> kinescope of him on TV being one noted above from two years later). Two newsreels of this event (Paramount and Fox Movietone) with video and audio of his speech are preserved and accessible at the Truman Library.

It is also reported that Truman's address to the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly (on post-war recovery, war crimes and displaced persons) was broadcast on TV on October 23, 1946, although only audio recordings (in Truman Library, as recorded by CBS) and still photos of viewers watching this program on 1946 TV screen survive. It is documented that UN proceedings were being televised by 1946, as the April 1946 walk-out of sessions by Russians under Gromyko along with still photos of UN delegates on live TV screen are featured in April 8, 1946 *Life*. Truman also delivered his state of the union address to Congress via television (another first) in January 1947.

***Kraft Television Theater*** (06/25/47; 10/08/47) – this long-running show, as sponsored by Kraft Foods, debuted on 5/7/47 with the playlet "*Double Door*" (with this new series as successor to the original sustaining or non-sponsored *NBC Television Theater* which debuted in April 1945). As noted, its debut broadcast, as sponsored by Kraft's McLaren Imperial Cheese, just happened to be viewed and reported in the afore-mentioned *New Yorker* August 30, 1947 report on live television by John Rice as viewed during May 1947 with the Harry Dubin family in New York (early TV adopters).

It was reported by the J. Walter Thompson ad agency that sales of Kraft's McLaren cheese brand soared after the initial *Kraft Television Theater* broadcasts (only media outlet advertising this Kraft brand), despite the limited number of TV receivers at the time and only a single 60 second ad being used on these initial live commercials.

The June 25 1947 show (from 1<sup>st</sup> month of this long-running TV drama anthology), was captured in a 3 minute clip in the NBC Hubert Chain collection. The drama being performed that evening was "*I Like It Here*" with Alice Yourman along with Arthur Franz and Sterling Oliver as live tele-play with Ed Herlihy as regular announcer. Yourman had previously played the mother of comic character Archie on radio, and was subsequently a featured actress in the "*Guiding Light*" TV soap opera from 1953-62.

Again, this tele-recording (along with the previously mentioned "*Party Line*" quiz show telecast with Bert Parks) is certainly one of earliest live TV broadcast kinescopes. The tele-drama, adapted from a 1946 play, is about a refugee working as a houseman for a professor who happily gets involved in everyone's lives. "*I Like It Here*" was done on early TV several times, including on *Philco Television Playhouse* in November 1948 and again on *Kraft Television Theater* in October 1950.

Also, some segments from the October 8, 1947 program, called "*January Thaw*", are known to exist as shown as part of *Kraft Television Theater's* 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary show of May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1953, where this retrospective program featuring this 10/47 clip is stored at UCLA archives. This episode, featuring Vaughn Taylor (who appears regularly in the 1<sup>st</sup> season of the series) is noteworthy as it relates the story of two

families accidentally having to live under one roof in Connecticut, where one of the woman is pregnant, and how they work out their conflicts.

The 1947 *Kraft Television Theater* live broadcast clips include recording of the closing credits (from 12/47 telecast) featuring a stick figure man with a camera. It concludes with a station ID for "WNBT – THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY" shown against a photograph of the NBC Building at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in New York.

*Kraft Television Theater*, produced and controlled by the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, was a major early TV success. Return on initial investments of \$3,000 per episodes (\$1,200 for talent) were high, as strong incremental sales were rapidly recorded for Kraft products once advertised on the program. More of its kinescopes from 1948 – 49 are also found at the Paley Archives, UCLA, and LOC.

**Variety Shows** from 2/12/47; 5/47; 6/47 (see above); 10/47 also are shown with scanty descriptions in LOC archives (cited as part of the Chain Collection, where 3 of these would precede the commercial availability of the kinescope, if LOC dates are accurate).

**Borden Show:** An experimental kinescope clip of *The Borden Show* (varying formats during summer of 1947) from August 1947 shows an Elsie The Cow puppet with a man both represented as being in a theater audience, then abruptly ends before anything else happens. This show ran from July 26 - September 28, 1947 at 9:00 pm Sundays, and immediately followed *Party Line* on NBC, and may have been kinescoped same evening. This early trial of a regularly sponsored TV program experimented with a range of different formats to see what worked best (just as the *Bristol-Meyers Tele-Varieties* program was doing slightly earlier, between January – April 1947, with its sponsor), using Borden's Elsie in marionette form and Wally Boag (as announcer with trick rubber balloons) across episodes for continuity.

**Operas:** Gian-Carlo Menotti's "*The Telephone*" and "*The Medium*" – opera TV live broadcasts cited in LOC records as from 1947, which were concurrently recorded and possibly simulcast over radio (however, these may actually be from 1948)

**Other:** It should be noted once again that since the kinescope was commercially introduced for broadcast TV station general use by approximately September 1947, the pre-September 1947 telerecordings cited above may also be via pre-release tests, different recording methods, or may be films made directly from TV set, as also open to further confirmation.

A film made directly from live 1947 TV broadcast (not a kinescope) without audio exists of "*Hansel & Gretel*" featuring Eleanor Chapin from WPTZ-TV Channel 3 in

Philadelphia. Contemporary still photos of this telecast show a fairly elaborate series of scenery sets being used in the production.

It was reported in the December 18, 1947 Berkshire (MA) Evening-Eagle that Paramount had debuted a new process for recording from live TV to film (in 65 seconds, likely using a variant of the Intermediate Film Process previously developed) for theater-sized images. It demonstrated the results at the Television Producers Association meeting in New York, using films it had made from the WNBT broadcasts of the Louis-Walcott boxing match and the *Theater Guild* show's production of "*The Late George Apley*" as telecast the prior week.

The Library of Congress has audio recordings in its SONIC archives as made from live WNBT TV broadcasts in New York which include sound from many episodes of the afore-mentioned "*Hour Glass*" program, widely recognized as the first true variety show on TV. These sound recordings from the live telecasts include the first program of "*Hour Glass*" May 9, 1946 and run through the early 1947 final episodes. This show completed its historic run in February 1947 and featured key stars such as Imogene Coca, DeMarco Sisters, and Eddie Mayehoff, among many others (as further noted below). Although only the sound is preserved (with screen shots of the broadcast published in *Life* magazine that same month), this is key record of one of the earliest variety shows with live entertainment along with a 10 minute drama segment

There is also audio recording from WNBT-TV broadcast of January 3 1947 of "*Campus Hoopla*", a live broadcast based in a college sweet shop with Bob Stanton as host, and Eva Marie Saint also featured as well doing the commercials. As noted above, this early TV show, sponsored by Keds sneakers (U.S. Rubber), focused on teenagers discussing sports and music in soda fountain setting with jukebox. The program aired from December 27, 1946 to December 19, 1947. Kinescope clips of this series from later in 1947 also exist (as noted earlier) in the NBC Chain Collection at LOC.

BBC live electronic TV broadcasts of Adelaide Hall (singer) and "*Cenotaph Service*" (famous London monument) are believed to be earliest British surviving kinescopes, both also from the fall of 1947, as further referenced below.

## **1948**

### ***In National Archives***

*Telepix Newsreels* (kinescopes of TV news from WPIX NY Channel 11, starting from June 1948 WPIX station launch)

### *In Library of Congress and Other Archives*

*Angel Street* (01/25/48) – *Theater Guild* Play on WNBT (NBC) in LOC. The famous Broadway play, also known as *Gaslight*, had been previously televised by WNBT on January 1946 with one of its original stage leads (Judith Evelyn).

A 02/25/48 broadcast of *Kraft Television Theater* featuring teleplay of “*Alison’s House*” is found in the Library of Congress (including Chain) collections. Several other 1948 kinescopes of this series are also found in separate LOC records. The Paley Archives holds 03/03/48 episode of playlet “*She Stoops To Conquer*”.

*NBC Symphony Performance* (02/48 and 03/48) (LOC) with Arturo Toscanini. 03/20/48 and 12/48 broadcasts are also in the Paley Archives. These are among the first kinescopes of a complete program, as opposed to clips or program excerpts. The network gave Toscanini an early TV set as incentive to perform on the air, but the maestro said that he preferred to watch “low brow” entertainment on the “tube” such as live wrestling.

*Borden Theater* (08/29/48) “*Dangerous Men*” live teleplay (this drama series debuted July 6, 1947, and innovated with a show starring black singer/actress Ethel Waters (“*Ethel’s Cabin*”) in September 1947 (on prior *Borden Show*).

*Bigelow Sanford Show* (10/21/48 & at least 4 other 1948 fall shows) – CBS: Paul Winchell ventriloquist with Jerry Mahoney & Knucklehead Smith, Dunniger the mentalist) at LOC. The 11/13/48 TV concert (including commercials) is held at the Paley Archives. The December 13, 1948 *Billboard* indicates that this show was already being shown via kinescope in many remote markets (Buffalo, Cincinnati) by this time, thus helping to explain the surviving kines.

*Chevrolet on Broadway* – big budget, live teleplays (LOC) – also known as *Chevrolet Tele-Theater* (debuted September 27 1948, ran through June 26, 1950)

*Gems From The Ballet* – (NBC: 09/12/48) – as 30 minute special with dancers Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin.

*Swing Into Sports* (DuMont: August 29, 1948) – 15 minute sports instructional program episode from series hosted by Joan Arliss (Kerwin). This known single surviving episode is at Paley Center. The show (as originating from DuMont flagship station WABD in NYC, and sponsored by TransMirra Image Refiner) was reviewed in the November 22, 1947 *Billboard* which gave mixed to positive rating (this episode on photography tips), where the critic even evaluates the commercials. Local WABD Show had evidently already been running for quite some time before this article, as noted in the 11/47 review. It was shown by kinescope in DuMont affiliated station markets by summer of 1948 (as confirmed from remote city TV listings of time).

*Admiral Playhouse* (or *Admiral Television Theater*)

*Okay Mother* (since this series first aired in November 1948, it was originally dated in archival records as a 1948 kinescope, but has later been confirmed as recorded in 1950; it features audience participation and a very early Polaroid Land Camera Ad – with Dennis James as host). The show title was taken from Dennis James' catch phrase of the time, where he explained earlier TV wrestling and boxing broadcasts to female viewers by prefacing his explanations with "Okay Mother". There are also still photos from early episodes taken in the late 1940's.

*Candid Camera & Candid Microphone* (including kinescopes and unsold TV pilot). The show's TV debut was on August 10, 1948 (following its radio launch in June 1947), and May 1949 kinescope also exists. Allen Funt and his *Candid Microphone* were also featured at the launch for WJLA-TV (later WABC) in New York, as shown among other premiere live TV screen shots in the September 6, 1948 *Life*. It changed networks several times. The August 21, 1948 *Billboard* features a review of the August 10<sup>th</sup> premiere broadcast on WJZ-TV (ABC in NYC), still called *Candid Microphone* even though now in video. It mentions the show combines entertainment for the "sadistic at heart" in watching "unsuspecting subjects being edged to state of hypertension" along with mixture of with hilarity and "bad taste". The review did like the one segment that was not deemed "victim-baiting", where a hidden camera recorded different methods used by restaurant diners to twirl forkfuls of spaghetti. With less injury to its subjects (viewed as more intense on video than in the original radio show), a possible humorous program is projected at the closing of the review (never realizing that this program would continue on TV from 1948 through 2004).

*Big Story* (sponsored by Pall Mall cigarettes) – host: Ben Grauer. Features true stories of actual newspaper reporters, as derived from earlier radio show.

*Black Robe* (TV court drama – courtroom re-enactments) (NBC) – the November 26, 1949 *Billboard* features an article on how this night court live program used all amateurs (auditioned from "off the street") in lauding "getting their talent dirt cheap": for average of \$23 per performance (the only professional actor in the series was the judge). The show was previously reviewed in the June 25, 1949 *Billboard*, which liked its dark look at real people from the "night world", but critiqued the cases and confessions being "too phony", camera work being too static, and there being too many cases scheduled in a single episode.

*People's Platform*(CBS: 12/07/48) – 30 minute public affairs evening broadcast, moderated by Dwight Cooke (this episode debating pro's and con's of wage increases vs. controls). This and the 01/24/49 subsequent show on the military budget (with Norman Thomas and Quincy Howe) are found at the Paley Center. Dwight Cooke, who began on TV in 1944 with CBS as news analyst, authored a feature article on how TV can do public affairs programs, discussing this series, and the 12/07/48 episode cited above, as featured in the 12/18/48 *Billboard*. The September 4, 1948 *Billboard* also published a favorable review on this series and its 08/17/48 episode.

*Philco TV Playhouse* (NBC series first aired 09/48): Paley Archives has first half of show "*Angel In the Wings*" from debut broadcast of 09/12/48, as variety and comedy show including satirical revue and commercials, with announcer Bob Stanton. It switched to a distinguished drama anthology format by October 1948 and became an award-winning series through end of its run in 1955. The kinescope stored at LOC is from 12/19/48 – "*A Christmas Carol*" (which had been done earlier on TV on experimental basis on December 22, 1943 on Dumont's W2XWV - later WABD - as then longest teleplay up to that time).

*Howdy Doody (Puppet Playhouse)* – premiered on December 27, 1947, with the first kinescopes of the show known to exist from 1948. A July 2, 1948 complete broadcast is accessible on the Web at [www.solie.org](http://www.solie.org) as part of Uncle Earl's Classic TV Web Site, with visible puppet strings and all. In this show, Phineas T. Bluster blackmails Howdy Doody for 500 marbles a day or he threatens to take over the town of Doodyville. Buffalo Bob Smith, Clarabelle, and the entire Peanut Gallery join the fun including joining in a special Howdy Doody singalong tune. Howdy even says at the end of the episode that "portions of the *Howdy Doody Show* are electronically transcribed" indicating the kinescope recording of the live telecast which would be used to repeat the broadcast in other TV regional markets.

The September 13, 1948 *Howdy Doody* show is archived at the Paley Center and Museum of Broadcast Communications. *Howdy Doody* originated on radio show on WEAJ (NBC radio station in NYC, later WNBC and WFAN) called *The Triple B Ranch* (quiz show with "Big Brother Bob") in 1947. There was no puppet for first 3 weeks of TV show (as it had not been made yet, and the original marionette design was hideous) so, during that start-up period, Bob Smith would talk to Howdy Doody in a desk drawer. The show gained popularity rapidly in early 1948. A June 12, 1948 full page ad in *Billboard* from NBC is headlined "Howdy Doody Pulls The Strings" and touts to potential new advertisers that 31% of the 214,800 sets covered by NBC in the New York area by that time were tuned to this show.

*ABC's Breakfast Club* – Don McNeil May 12 1948 premiere (WABD – DuMont, simulcast on the ABC network). This 1 hour broadcast is staged as more of a radio broadcast being simulcast on TV, and features the cast including Aunt Fanny (Fran Allison, also of *Kukla Fran & Ollie*) nominating Don McNeil as their own candidate for the upcoming 1948 presidential elections.

*1948 Presidential Convention & Election Coverage* kinescopes (as further cited below). The summer conventions were reported in July 4, 1948 *Billboard* as widely viewed via use of NBC kinescopes as well as Time-Life documentary film on non-interconnected network stations from Chicago (WGN, WBKB) to L.A. (KTLA, and Don Lee's W6XAO), where kines were reported as being of poorer quality but usable. Don Lee reported in the same *Billboard* issue that his L.A. station was still having problems synchronizing images and sound in broadcasting from kinescopes - even 10 months after their commercial rollout.

NBC actually delayed its November 1948 election day coverage until the current episode of Milton Berle's wildly popular *Texaco Star Theater* was over that evening, showing where priorities were at the time.

***In UCLA Archives or Walter J. Brown Media Archives at UGA, etc:***

*Eye Witness* – inside television industry, showing every aspect of television production with host Ben Grauer. Only known extant episode features a history of TV with pioneer Vladimir Zworykin— "*The Story of Television*" (airdate: 2/26/48). Series debuted November 6, 1947 and completed its run on April 13 1948.

*Toast of the Town* (Ed Sullivan) – 12/12/48 (Ed Sullivan dances with Nanette Fabray, Nellie Lutcher – black R&B artist performing two songs, skit with Hope Emerson). 12/19/48 show is at Paley Center, featuring John Garfield (reading Christmas card) and Mae West (in audience), along with Frank Fontaine in comedy sketch and singer Dorothy Sarnoff, among others. Also 12/26/48 show exists. Show debuted with Martin & Lewis and Rodgers & Hammerstein on June 20, 1948, but no kinescope is known to survive from first broadcast, although still pictures of this tele-cast do exist, with photo of the entire cast including Sullivan and Martin & Lewis as taken on stage at time of this long-running program's debut. Sullivan was first identified as a potential TV emcee from his assignments hosting the *Harvest Moon Ball* in NYC.

In its July 10, 1948 issue, shortly after the launch of the *Toast of the Town* program, *Billboard* reported that Ed Sullivan was coercing appearances of famous artists on his show. He was accused of offering below par fees while using his influence as noted and powerful *New York Daily News* columnist to push the performers into appearing on his show. Sullivan disputed this claim as a "contemptible lie" in his response quoted in feature article in the following week's *Billboard* of July 17, 1948. Despite this assertion, according to the book "*Popular Culture*" (in citing July 4, 1948 Sullivan TV show review), Martin & Lewis were top paid act on Sullivan's opening show with total fee of only \$200.

As to earlier surviving recordings of *Toast of the Town*, it is also alleged that the 11/25/48 broadcast may also exist on kinescope, as perhaps earliest surviving kine in the Sullivan program archives. Andrew Solt, who bought the old Sullivan live TV recordings, has also stated that this November 1948 show was the earliest one recovered from the collection which he acquired via the Sullivan estate. Actually, Ed Sullivan debuted on TV shortly before the *Toast of the Town* launch, appearing in June 1948 on independent WPIX Channel 11 in New York (since he worked as columnist for *NY Daily News* which owned the station), including in the WPIX initial broadcast (also June 1948) and in his 1948 WPIX show "*Little Old New York*" (still photos exist).

*Swift Show* (5/13-27/48: WNBT) variety show with Lanny Ross, Martha Logan (Swift spokeswoman), Eileen Baron, Sandra Gable (who also appeared on the earlier *Swift Home Service Club* in 1947 with Tex & Jinx). Also featured quiz segments

during its first 5 months, with Swift ham giveaways (first 13 pound ham proudly given to *Billboard* music editor on debut show as noted in April 10, 1948 *Billboard*) then progressed to Lanny Ross apartment venue, finally became variety show. Debuted April 1, 1948, where kinescope cited was of program's earliest format. The March 31, 1949 episode with Lanny Ross and Milton Berle is also preserved at the Paley Center. The series run ended by August 4, 1949. Interestingly enough, Lanny Ross (along with Bob Hope and Bob "Bazooka" Burns) actually appeared in the 1941 "*Television Revue*" Paramount newsreel hosted by Ted Husing, as shown in theaters in previewing the coming phenomenon of TV and its commercial applications.

*Toscanini TV Concerts* – 1948 (as also simulcast on radio at the time of TV transmission)

The 1949 NBC Kinescope film (cited above) also shows some 1948 kines including NBC Symphony Orchestra as directed by Arturo Toscanini from March 20, 1948 (telecast via CBS two days after the musician's ban on live music for TV was lifted). Excerpts from the full show of March 20 1948 are also in the Paley Archives. This notable live telecast was featured with screen shots and commentary (including controversy over conductor Eugene Ormandy chewing something prominently during the performance) in the April 5, 1948 *Life*.

*WGN-TV News Broadcast Footage* (1948 - Chicago)

*Going Places With Uncle George* (1948) – travelogue show (multiple episodes) produced for syndication by Jerry Fairbanks.

*Champagne & Orchids* (1948 & 1949)- Yul Brynner & Adrienne (Meyerberg) with pianist and David Lippman at the therimin (DuMont); aired 8:45 pm or 7:45 pm on Mondays. Show was launched locally in December 1947 on WABD in NYC. 15 minute program series set in nightclub with glamorous costumes and settings with its network run going from Sep 6 1948 – Jan 10 1949. Brynner actually regularly sang on the show. At least 2 known episodes in 16mm film format survive at UCLA archives. Brynner started on TV in 1944 in the early comedy series "*Mr. Jones & His Neighbors*", and then also directed many early TV series and drama shows. The December 1948 feature article in *Life* on state of television features extensive screen shots taken from many DuMont and other live TV shows of the time, and includes the songstress Adrienne on screen.

*Armchair Detective* (1948-1949) – 1948 episodes from KTLA, where this show was then kinescoped and distributed to affiliates by the fledgling Paramount Television Network (which also distributed other KTLA shows via kinescope). H. Allen Smith & John Milton Kennedy as co-hosts introduce two mystery playets per show, then help determine "who done it?" in solving the case.

*Admiral Presents the 5 Star Revue* – "*Welcome Aboard*" Show: with Martin & Lewis (Oct. 10 & 17 1948 – NBC – with Admiral Russ Morgan). This is 2<sup>nd</sup> show of

series which launched October 3, 1948 as variety show with nautical theme, and both shows represent the first two Martin & Lewis appearances on the program. The 10/24/48 broadcast also is in LOC with Russ Morgan and Tommy Dorsey, as are the shows from 10/31/48 (with black gospel group Deep River Boys, Bob “Bazooka” Burns, Russ Morgan) and 12/20/48.

*Wrestling Live* (1948) (Dumont) – with Dennis James from Jamaica NY.

*Woman Speaks* (Series of shorts on females of renown) - at UCLA Archives

*Morey Amsterdam Show* (first version: DuMont): November 1948 – many episodes of the Morey Amsterdam series have been preserved on kinescope. A version on CBS called *Golden Goose Café* featuring Amsterdam with Art Carney (together also on later DuMont Morey Amsterdam shows) and Jacqueline Susann (co-written by Susann’s husband, Irving Mansfield) was reported to be debuting on December 16, 1948 (per December 11, 1948 *Billboard*).

*Peter Hunter Private Investigator* (1948) – one of 1<sup>st</sup> syndicated programs, directed by actor Joseph Cotton and starring Frank Albertson in the title role.

*Lucky Pup* (October 19, 1948, also December 1948, January 1949, December 1949 - CBS): popular kid’s puppet show which debuted August 1948, featuring Foodini the Great (magician) and his assistant Pinhead, with Jolo the clown and Phineas Pitch as among the puppet characters. Ran daily Monday – Friday 6:30 pm on live basis to at least 5 cities in CBS coaxial network of the time, with kinescope broadcasts on Saturdays (kines also bicycled to non-interconnected CBS affiliates). The show became so popular that its lead characters were licensed for kiddie records as early as 1949 (*Billboard* – August 6, 1949) even before *Howdy Doody*.

*NBC Election Coverage* (last 3 of 16 hours) - November 3 1948

Also, other 1948 kinescope excerpts of the Democratic and Republican conventions survive in partial form, and are now available for viewing on several Web sites. Kinescopes were made of the June 1948 political conventions by NBC for next day rebroadcast by affiliates. A kinescope of the July 1948 Truman speech at the Democratic convention on live TV has been widely viewed. The July 26, 1948 *Life* magazine features a photo-essay on how TV is impacting the conventions, where candidates and speakers are shown getting make-up for TV and comparing their photo to on-screen TV images, as the first presidential election year where TV awareness and perception first became a factor to consider. Full page ad in the July 5, 1948 *Life* shows the magazine’s joint sponsorship with NBC of the July 1948 Democratic convention TV coverage on the fledgling NBC TV network.

*John Hopkins Science Review* (1948) – all 186 episodes are allegedly also still archived at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore MD.

*Photographic Horizons* (August 25, 1948, November 10 1948) (DuMont – sustaining program without commercial sponsor) – viewers would photograph models displayed on the TV screen. Some still photos taken from the TV screen thus must also exist of this program, by definition given the theme of the show, in addition to the kinescopes of record. Joe Costa served as the photographer and Peggy Corday as the show's hostess. The August 25, 1948 kinescope is held at the Paley Center archives, and features aerial photography and shutterbug shooting at the zoo (Marlin Perkins, later of NBC's long-running *Wild Kingdom*, actually pioneered zoo broadcasts for TV in 1945 – 1947). Contemporary TV critic reviewing a kinescope broadcast of the latter episode of *Photographic Horizons* (11/10/48, as today stored at UCLA) was featured in November 13, 1948 *Billboard*.

*Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour* – November 1948; December 12, 1948. There are 8 pre-1951 kinescopes of the *Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour* telecasts, dating back to November 1948. Ted Mack is said to have donated most of the kinescopes he had of this series to the LOC. The October 18, 1949 kine features last public appearance of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson making a speech of encouragement to a young black amateur dancer and host Ted Mack (Robinson died 5 weeks later, on November 25, 1949).

*Arthur Godfrey* kinescopes dating back to 1948 on his various programs. Paley Center holds *Arthur Godfrey Time* rehearsal for show debut as filmed on 11/23/48 with commercials and musical acts. One of the late 1940's kines from *Godfrey's Talent Scouts* program features a very early appearance of Lenny Bruce and his "Bavarian Mimic" routine (April 1949). He had many derivative and concurrent shows on TV, with his launch of *Arthur Godfrey & Friends* featured in the January 29, 1949 *Billboard* (praising him as "cracker barrel" entertainer ideal for TV, but stating that his new show "does not have enough to stand up for an hour" of broadcast time). Lenny Bruce also appears on *Arthur Godfrey & Friends* broadcast of July 6, 1949 as preserved at Paley Center.

*Washington News/Views* (1948 -pilot) – August 10, 1948 launch show reviewed in August 21,1948 *Billboard* notes promise despite many technical errors (congressmen and senators stammering and breathless while commenting on a Truman clip speaking before Congress) in this 10 minute program.

*Jukebox Jury* (1948 – KTLA and KNXT-TV) – local show hosted by Peter Potter in LA, went national in 1953.

*Yer Old Buddy* (KTLA local only): 1948 with Joe Flynn (later of *McHale's Navy*) & local student Bud Stefan. Listed on KTLA 1948 fall listings as 10 minute show Thursdays at 7:30 pm. By summer of 1949, the show was being re-transmitted by KTLA to be shown on KFMB in San Diego.

*Louis Armstrong & All-Stars* on ABC TV November – December 1948 (possibly on *Eddie Condon Floor Show* broadcast)

*Ford Theater* (CBS: 1948 episode) – drama playhouse

*Starlight Time* (NBC: 1948) – song & dance variety show

*Pantomime Quiz* (KTLA: 1948 & 1949 programs – 1948 1<sup>st</sup> Emmy winner January 1949). 8pm Saturdays on KTLA starting in 1947. Went network in 1950.

*Ron Terry's Polka Party* (WGN-TV Chicago: 1948): at Museum of Broadcast Communications.

*Judy Splinters* (KTLA: 1948) – Shirley Dinsdale as ventriloquist with her dummy Judy Splinters (first 1948 Emmy co-recipient in January 1949 KTLA initial Emmy awards as also cited in the January 29, 1949 *Billboard*). In the same *Billboard* issue, Dinsdale is also mentioned prominently in several features as being among stars featured in debut broadcast of KNBH (NBC outlet in Los Angeles), where she had just been lured there from KTLA with major pay increase (\$500 per week, a record at the time for local TV compensation, where NBC retained the kinescoping rights for the show). Dinsdale had debuted on LA local TV in 1947 (on KTLA, and possibly earlier in 1946 on W6XYZ, the experimental KTLA predecessor station). She had become a local sensation, as seen every night at 6:30 pm Monday through Saturday on KTLA fall 1948 season. She later moved to Chicago (and later New York) as summer replacement for Kukla Fran & Ollie in 1949 for the inter-connected NBC network, as reviewed favorably in June 25, 1949 *Billboard*.

*Theater Guild* (May 2 1948) – "*The Great Catherine*": 1<sup>st</sup> George Bernard Shaw play telecast in U.S. with Gertrude Lawrence. An earlier broadcast of this drama series is featured in the December 1, 1947 *Life* magazine photographic essay on TV, and in the aforementioned *Angel Street* broadcast of January 1948 from this series.

*Spade Cooley* (1948: KTLA) – country/western band show (show debuted July 24, 1948)

WPIX Channel 11 (independent NYC Channel) Kinescopes from 1948 inaugural year include its station launch broadcast of June 1948; and its local New York City broadcasts of *Gay 90's Revue* (1890's) with Joe Howard and Lulu Bates (debuted 08/11/48 with episode kinescoped from ABC on 12/19/48); and its live WPIX Zero Mostel Show called *Channel Zero*.

*Channel Zero* episode from WPIX with the irreprehensible Zero Mostel (before his blacklisting from TV during the height of the Red Scare era) from December 27, 1948 is preserved in the Paley archives. Mostel begins the show as a WPIX janitor then goes on one of his crazed series of acts from there. Segments of *Channel Zero* kines from live telecasts have also been broadcast on WPIX anniversary retrospectives.

Zero Mostel's live show on WABD NYC Channel 5 (DuMont), called *Off The Record*, co-starring Joey Faye, was prominently featured in the November 22, 1948 *Life* (with follow-up comical Letter to the Editor from Zero thanking *Life* for the publicity in the subsequent December 27, 1948 issue, published the same day as *Channel Zero* broadcast above). *Billboard* also featured an article in its October 30, 1948 issue on the show producer's dispute with DuMont over its not providing a live studio audience station for *Off The Record*, with mutual threats to potentially discontinue the program (which may relate to Mostel and Faye being on competing WPIX Channel 11 in NYC with *Channel Zero* at almost same time).

*Stop Me If You Heard This One*: (March 10, 1948 Pilot: NBC) – single episode in Paley Archives. TV version of radio series, where panel had to stop a joke if they knew it and finish it on their own. The TV series ran from 03/48 – 04/49 with panelists including Lew Lehr, George Givot (later original host of Bonny Maid Versa-Tile Varieties in 1949) and Morey Amsterdam (comic and star of several of his own early TV series). The pilot is in color.

*Cartoon Tele-Tales* (ABC: debuted May 29, 1948) and *The Alan Dale Show* (DuMont: 1948) were among the first TV shows regularly kinescoped for distribution throughout the country, where there are reports that some of these kinescopes may still exist. A still photo from live TX screen of preview of the show's launch (at the WJLA-TV opening day broadcasts) appears in the September 6, 1948 *Life*. The program featured animation drawing on the air. It was also favorably reviewed in detail in the January 29, 1949 *Billboard*.

*The Alan Dale Show* had baritone Alan Dale and his singing partner Janie Ford, crooning songs together in a record shop, as originated from WABD (NYC) and then fed over the DuMont network via interconnect and kinescopes during 1948. Alan Dale later appeared as the star of the film "*Don't Knock the Rock*" with Alan Freed, Bill Haley and Little Richard in 1956, but had an early TV following in the late 1940's.

## **1949**

### ***Library of Congress, Paley Center & Various Archives***

*Captain Video* (DuMont)

*Broadway Spotlight* (NBC: March – September 1949, but listed in LOC as 1948)

*Eddie Condon Floor Show* - WNBT-TV broadcasts (LOC): From shows broadcast between January 1 – September 24, 1949 (numerous jazz performers)

*Quiz Kids* (From Chicago with Fran Allison)

*Author Meets The Critics* (ABC: March 27, 1949) – first half of show at Paley Center, from this series which started in April 4, 1948 on NBC network (previously

from July 10, 1947 on local only) and moved ultimately to ABC and DuMont (ending by October 1954). John K. M. McCaffery hosted. Author faced two critics (one pro, one con) in turn, where author could interrupt a critic alleged to making false statements and also respond to the critiques in second part of each show. The TV program, derived from the radio series, often got into heated and caustic arguments that “spiked” viewer interest. General Foods was initial sponsor for first month as local show in 1947 before WNBT continued the show on sustaining basis.

One of the first *Author Meets the Critics* telecasts (of July 31, 1947 on WNBT New York only) was reviewed in the August 9, 1947 *Billboard* discussing the book on the atom bomb, when one of the co-authors began to state that the bomb should have never been dropped in Japan, and the other declaring that their book should never have been written and was hashed out in just 10 days, where the author’s self-critique took the critic aback. Ben Grauer substituted for regular host McCaffery for this particular week, and showed newsreel footage of nuclear bomb explosions. The live show got so animated it ran over its time allotment by 7 minutes.

*Growing Paines* (October 1948 – August 1949: DuMont): sitcom with John Harvey & Judy Parish, sponsored by Wanamaker’s; 5 episodes (from 1949 version with Elaine Stritch) are known to survive at Paley Center and UCLA. The show is reviewed favorably in the November 6, 1948 *Billboard*, even describing its commercials.

*First Presidential Inauguration on Television* (Ben Grauer - NBC, Douglas Edwards - CBS as co-announcers): 1.25 hour kinescope of live TV outdoors coverage from Capitol Building area January 20, 1949. Lots of camera pans and animated live narration by NBC’s Grauer. Includes complete Truman inaugural speech. Joint event from multiple networks (pool coverage by NBC CBS, ABC/DuMont). More than 10 million viewers on many shared home and tavern/public sets, as a viewing record for its time.

*Window on the World* (03/25/49)- DuMont. Series ran from January – April 1949, as international variety show hosted by comic-contortionist Gil Lamb and glamorous actress Irene Manning. The original existence of earlier kines (at least at one time, perhaps from debut of show)) is indicated, as this program was already being shown on West Coast via kinescope as of February 5, 1949 *Billboard*.

*Magic Cottage* (DuMont: 1949 – 1951) – kids show with 2 known episodes preserved (UCLA, Paley Center). Show ran from July 18, 1949 – February 9, 1952. Featured host Pat Meikle and her “magic chalkboard” from which story characters would appear. The program at the Paley Archives is actually from 12/50.

*Mary Kay & Johnny* (June 13, 1949: DuMont) - Paley Center; show ran from 11/18/47 - 03/11/50 but only this kinescope is known to survive of many originally recorded. One of first TV sitcoms about real-life married couple (Mary Kay & Johnny Stearns) living in Greenwich Village apartment. First show to show couple sharing a bed and to discuss pregnancy and tell story of new baby birth on TV (12/18/48 show). The 15 minute program, sponsored by Jay Jay Junior (series originally sponsored by Anacin) is very favorably reviewed in the March 6, 1948 *Billboard* when broadcast on WABD (Dumont in NYC). The June 13 1949 surviving episode (featuring Mary Kay and Johnny with comic actor Howard Morris) has couple feuding about their respective lack of sales resistance, each buying brooms and vacuum cleaners that they don't need.

*Newsweek Views The News* (DuMont: 1948 – 1950) – 2 episodes from Feb – April 1950 ("*Casebook of Treason*" on modern spies; and "*The Far East*") are at UCLA Archives. Show debuted November 7, 1948. Public affairs show with news analysis from *Newsweek* magazine staff and hosted by Ernest Lindley, who was head of the magazine's Washington Bureau.

*Kukla Fran & Ollie* (KF&O 2/11/49: NBC 7pm) – earliest known date for surviving kinescope of this renowned children's show, with Fran Allison and Burr Tillstrom's puppets Kukla (the bald youth) and Ollie (the toothy dragon). This unique and highly popular program debuted on October 13 1947 in Chicago (originally on WBKB, the Balaban & Katz stores' station co-owned by Paramount) and moved to the NBC network by January 12, 1949. Thus, this February 1949 kine is from the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the show's NBC network launch (of what had previously been a long-running local Chicago TV program). Paley Archives also holds 04/11/49 episode.

The *KF&O* show is featured (in a "behind the scenes" look of how it is produced) in the May 23, 1949 issue of *Life*. Tillstrom is seen behind gauze curtain from rear of set watching TV monitor as he manipulates the puppets talking to Fran Allison, to see how they look to the TV camera, as all performed live with mostly ad-libbed dialogue between Allison and Tillstrom (the latter doing all the puppet voices). The article notes that the audience for *KF&O* is over 60% adult.

An interesting letter to the editor in the June 13, 1949 *Life* (in follow-up to the May article cited above) is about a Quincy IL viewer trying to watch a St. Louis MO channel and instead picking up *KF&O* from KPIX in San Francisco CA, broadcasting an earlier Chicago kinescope of the show (a 1,650 mile freak atmospheric skip). The *Life* editor replies that this is remarkable but not by any means the record, then mentioning the November 1938 BBC broadcasts from Britain picked up in NY and explaining the ionospheric phenomenon that can cause this (this November 1938 live BBC telecast as captured on film in New York is further cited below, as among the very earliest live TV recordings, although filmed without audio).

*Admiral Broadway Revue* (1949) – Sid Caesar & Imogene Coca with Marge & Gower Champion as stars of the landmark series simulcast on NBC and Dumont from January – June 1949, with show's launch prominently featured in the March 7, 1949 *Life* (and already documented as being kinescoped for West Coast since time of show's launch, as of February 5 1949 *Billboard*). The *Life* article states that the show reaches 31 of the 33 cities with TV at the time, with lavish budget of \$25,000 per week. According to Sid Caesar, the program went off the air as the sponsor, Admiral, withdrew support when it could not keep up with demand for its TV sets as increased by the show's popularity. Caesar and Coca then went on to greater fame together in *Your Show of Shows*, which debuted in February 1950 on NBC and ran until 1954. 16 kinescope prints of *Admiral Broadway Revue* are archived at the Paley Center.

*And Everything Nice* (Dumont: Network March 15, 1949 – January 2, 1950, since 1948 on local NY DuMont station WABD) – 15 minute fashion TV show with Maxine Barrat and Guy Lombardo; single 1949 episode survives at Paley Center. Maxine and her dummy model "Sugar" are featured in article on DuMont daytime TV schedule aimed at housewives in the November 13, 1948 *Billboard*.

*You Bet Your Life* TV Pilot Show – December 1949

"*Slums- Baltimore's Conscience*" – 1949 WMAR-TV Baltimore (local TV kinescope)

Tele-Ad for WBAL-TV featured local Baltimore MD shows of 1949

*CBS Television News*

*Operation Success* (September 1948 – June 1949 DuMont): 30 minute public affairs shown on same time against the wildly popular Milton Berle "*Texaco Star Theater*" program. *Operation Success* was hosted by Bob Pfeiffer. 2 complete but undated episodes (likely from 1949) exist at Paley Center. The show is listed as winning TV award from Ohio-based Institute for Education By Radio group in May 14, 1949 *Billboard*, confirming that the program was among many being kinescoped for distribution to Midwest and West Coast affiliates by mid-1948.

*Court of Current Issues* (March 3, 1949: DuMont) – 14 minute excerpt of this public affairs show stored at Paley Center. The show won praise from the Radio & Television Critics Circle for its "courageous dramatization of a public forum" as cited in the May 22, 1948 *Billboard*.

*Life of Riley* (first version with Jackie Gleason & Rosemary DeCamp) (1949) – audiodiscs of rehearsals also known to exist in addition to kinescoped film recordings of this initial 1949 version of the long-running series.

*Flight To Rhythm* (March 10 – September 22, 1949: DuMont) – starring Delora Bueno. Latin music show from the fictional Club Rio. 2 episodes at Paley Center from May 15, 1949.

*Make Mine Music* (1949: CBS) with Tony Mottola Trio & Carole Coleman. The show debuted December 6, 1948 on daily basis, starting with cast from *Make Mine Manhattan* theater musical joining noted guitarist Tony Mottola and replacing *Face The Music* with Johnny Desmond, as reported in the December 4, 1948 *Billboard*.

*Ford Theater* - telecast of *She Loves Me Not* – Judy Holliday (CBS: November 4, 1949). This episode was reviewed in November 12, 1949 *Billboard* with rave review claiming that the video version rivaled the original Bing Crosby movie.

*Volume One* (ABC: July 21 1949) – kinescope of sixth and last episode in this short-lived 30 minute live drama anthology series without sets (which ran from June 16<sup>th</sup> 1949) is at UCLA archives. This preserved show involves a plot to develop a time machine. *Billboard* of July 9, 1949 cites this series as originating from ABC's WJZ-TV (now WABC-TV) NYC flagship station. The first show featuring Jack Lescoulie on June 16, 1949 is reviewed in the June 25, 1949 *Billboard*. The show got a rave review, despite its entire set being 3 actors around one chair and a card table, with the TV screen itself being used as a "mirror" that the actors are seen from in the perspective used on the show. According to this article, ABC had planned *Volume One* from the start as a limited run of 6 shows, carrying the show as a sustainer (without sponsor).

*Jack Benny Program* (11/49) – early TV appearance preceding later series. His 1949 TV launch on new L.A. station is subject of full page photo-essay with positive review in April 4, 1949 *Life*.

*Toast of the Town* (Ed Sullivan)- e.g. Zero Mostel telecast of May 29, 1949 full show, with female golfer Babe Dedrickson, singer Kitty Kallen, dancer Johnny Mack, Lord Buckley with a group jive musical sketch, among others. Sponsored by Lincoln-Mercury (in author's collection)

*The Goldbergs* (1949: CBS) – Gertrude Berg, Philip Loeb, and original cast. Its successful TV debut in moving from radio is featured in April 25, 1949 *Life*.

*Jackson & Jill* (1949) – Todd Karns & Helen Chapman played Jackson Jones & Jill Jones on this show which debuted in 1949. Todd Karns also appeared with his father Roscoe Karns on the *Rocky King*, *Inside Detective* TV series which ran from 1950- 1955 on DuMont.

*Ted Steele Show* - (7/12/49), final show of this DuMont series, which then moved to CBS. Prior versions of show had begun on NBC-TV and DuMont in 1948 – 49. Ted Steele later hosted early R&B and rock shows in the 1950's on independent Channel 13 (WATV) originating from New Jersey.

*Lum and Abner* (1949)

*Walt's Workshop* (NBC – WNBO Chicago: 1949): may be one of the worst television shows ever done, with Walt Durban stumbling through a home wood shop demonstration as he builds a saw horse. Walt really screws up the ending for the live show as captured on the surviving kine of the complete program. The show's new sponsorship and early success after first few weeks were noted in the February 26, 1949 *Billboard*.

*Wayne King Show* (NBC: WMAQ-TV Chicago Summer 1949) – sponsored by Standard Oil. Featuring Wayne King directing his orchestra and chorus doing songs like " *Deep Purple*".

*NBC News Room In Chicago* (WNBO-TV: Chicago March 17, 1949) – 15 minute live newscast interspersed with graphics with Clifton Utley as anchor man (father of TV commentator Garrick Utley). Car production from 1929 to projected 1949 levels is shown among other stories including upcoming Truman press conference and Illinois college sports section. The telecast ends starting to discuss notable news story on stolen uranium in Mexico, then immediately runs out of time and moves rapidly to signoff farewell.

*Voice Of Firestone* (1949) – classical music and Broadway stars; series first appeared on TV on November 29, 1943 over WNBT (NBC)

*Vanity Fair* (6/49: CBS) – with Dorothy Doan (attractive news reporter) with show supervised by female pioneer TV producer Frances Buss. Originally aired 12:30 pm daytimes twice per week, debuting on October 12, 1948 as CBS' first daily interview series. This show is often recognized as the first regular daily TV talk show. The show was expanded to 5 episodes per week as part of CBS's push into increased daytime TV programming (as reported in November 20, 1948 *Billboard*). When this daytime programming gambit failed, CBS then took this and other shows off the schedule effective July 11, 1949, pending a planned revival of *Vanity Fair* by the fall of 1949 (as in 5pm afternoon slot). CBS cited cost cutbacks and low ratings for all of its daytime shows except baseball games (*Billboard* July 2, 1949). The revived show at new, later time then continued through 1951. Sponsors included Maiden Form Bras and Airwick, with the show geared toward a female viewer audience.

*Actor's Studio* (1949: CBS) - show debuted on CBS on November 1, 1948 and ran through January 31, 1950, after prior brief run on the infant ABC network from September 26 – October 26, 1948 (ABC could not retain a sponsor). The drama anthology series featured new actors such as Marlon Brando, Kim Hunter, and Julie Harris among others in adaptations for TV from leading writers, and won a Peabody Award.

*Lamp Unto My Feet* – religious program which ran on CBS Sunday mornings from 1948 – 1979.

*Inside USA With Chevrolet* (CBS: Peter Lind Hayes, with Oscar Levant & Mary Healy 10/24/49; with Lucille Ball – 11/24/49). Peter Lind Hayes travels around country in Chevrolet as theme of this entertainment program, based on Broadway review of 1948 - -49. The 12/23/49 show with Art Carney is also in Paley archives. TV show ran from 09/29/49 – 03/16/50.

*Ed Wynn Show* (1949) – with its debut also featured in 10/17/49 *Life magazine*, and widely distributed to nascent networks via kinescope.

***Others – at UCLA and other archives below***

*Garroway at Large* (1949) – debuted April 16, 1949 and ran to June 1951 in its original form. Telecast live from Chicago, before Dave Garroway moved to host the new *Today Show* on NBC in New York in January 1952.

*Texaco Star Theater* starring Milton Berle (January 1949, March 1949) – show premiered on June 8, 1948 (two weeks before debut of Ed Sullivan's "*Toast Of The Town*") and became the runaway hit of the new media. However, the earlier shows are not known to survive on kinescope. A September 27, 1948 show was kinescoped (allegedly marking Carmen Miranda's TV debut, and also featuring Tony Martin) and survives, as later telecast on January 18, 1949. There is also an October 5, 1948 audio recording of program in the LOC SONIC archives, as noted below, again featuring Berle with Carmen Miranda as well as Chico Marx. *Billboard* notes in its February 5, 1949 edition that this popular show was not yet cleared for kinescope distribution, which may explain scarcity or delay of 1948 recordings of the Berle program.

*Doorway To Fame* (1949: DuMont) – this talent show debuted on May 2, 1947, also running that year on WMCA radio, and was being shown as far west as CA and NM via kinescope by 1948 (per December 11, 1948 *Billboard*). The series continued until July 1949. Noted announcer Johnny Olson served as host; and Joe Bolton as announcer (through May 1948, before leaving to join new station WPIX for his long run there). The program featured new and less known performers seeking their big break with winners given bookings at Loew's theaters. To best of anyone's knowledge, none of the 20,000 people who auditioned to be on this TV show ever attained any fame. The program used innovative methods for early TV, such as interposing performers into miniature scenery sets or backdrops. Two kinescopes survive at UCLA archives.

*Front Row Center* (1949: DuMont) – variety show (ran from March 25, 1949 – April 9, 1950). 1 episode known to survive at UCLA. Marilyn Maxwell, Bibi Osterwald, Frank Fontaine (later of Jackie Gleason show) appeared on the show, among others. Bill Harmon with Ed Flaherty served as DuMont's producers for the show. Succeeded in 1950 by *Starlit Time* with similar cast.

*Club Seven* (ABC: March 3, 1949 10:30 – 11:00 pm) – variety and comedy show including episode with the unique Lord Buckley. Show ran from August 12 1948

to August 24 1951. Featured Johnny Thompson as singing emcee with guest performers. The trade press review of the March 3, 1949 show (*Billboard* March 19, 1949) called it "a half hour of vaudeville in a night club setting – (with) diners at tables", with overall positive evaluation. They stated that Buckley was on too long but was obviously talented. Commercial spots were noted to come on at wrong times when band was being introduced, as normal travails of live broadcasting. *Club Seven* was broadcast from ABC's Channel 7 (then WJZ-TV, today WABC-TV).

*Cavalcade of Stars* (1949) starting with 09/16/49 episode at UCLA - DuMont

*School House* (January 18 – April 19 1949: DuMont sustaining program) – with Wally Cox, Arnold Stang, host (teacher) Kenny Delmar, and others, in author's collection (only 1 episode known to survive, all live TV, includes live TV commercial on the new DuMont 1949 larger screen TV set now also with FM radio and UHF tuner included, with narrative as partially bungled by the young Wally Cox). Show aired on Tuesdays. The surviving show is believed to be the 10<sup>th</sup> episode from March 22, 1949.

*Bonny Maid Versa-Tile Varieties* (NBC: 1949) – with Harold Barry as host with guests such as Glenda Farrell and Mae Questal (voice of "Betty Boop"), also featuring a very young Ann Francis as one of the Bonny Maids doing the commercials, with comedian Dayton Allen (before he became known from the Steve Allen show) playing one of the "Wear & Tear" characters resisted by Bonny Maid floor tiles (show sponsor). Aired often at Fridays 9pm, opposite *Ford Theater* on CBS and *Fishing & Hunting Club* on DuMont. In author's collection.

*Adventures of Uncle Mistletoe* (9/23/49, 10/25/49 – WENR-TV Chicago - ABC): kids show with female host Aunt Judy and puppets Uncle Mistletoe and compadres, as sponsored by Marshall Field & Co.

*Chesterfield Supper Club* (with Perry Como – November 1949, show debuted 12/48)

*Paul Whiteman TV Teen Club* (ABC: 1949 Philadelphia) – Saturday evenings, and featured a 20 year old Dick Clark as announcer, with Diahann Carroll as regular contestant. The show, which aired until 1954, started the careers of Bobby Rydell, Charlie Gracie, Dion DiMucci, and Leslie Uggams, among others (prior to their subsequent rock and roll or pop music careers by the mid to late 1950's).

*Marshall of Gunsight Pass* (KECA: ABC) 1949 (local only)

*I Remember Mama* (1949)

Live TV Coverage: Kathy Fiscus (child trapped in pipe) – KTLA (April 8, 1949)

*Mr. I Magination* (06/05/49; 7/49) with Paul Tripp

*Jukebox Jury*

*Westinghouse Studio One* – May 11, 1949 (in author's collection) – this episode features the melodrama "The Glass Key". The series originated in 11/48 under various related names, but began Westinghouse commercials with this kinescoped broadcast. In this live broadcast, show concludes early and credit crawl and end segment has to be protracted to fill the 1 hour time slot.

*Meet The Press* (1949: NBC) – show debuted via NBC-TV on November 6, 1947 as local show before going out to the fledgling NBC network on November 20, 1947. It is still running on NBC today as of 2010. Its debut local broadcast and commercials as sponsored by Maxwell House were both reviewed in the November 15, 1947 *Billboard*, stating that the show would originate from WNBT in New York for its first 5 weeks before migrating its base to the NBC Washington DC station (where it still is based today).

*Fireball Fun-For-All* (1949: NBC – Olsen & Johnson sponsored by Buick) – in author's collection. Show's summer 1949 launch was intended originally as trial show and temporary replacement for Milton Berle's *Texaco Star Theater* (taking vacation hiatus). The show's debut is spotlighted in August 1, 1949 *Life*. It moved to Thursdays at 9pm for the 1949 NBC schedule in this show's only year on the air. The program tried to reproduce the hosting comedy team's act from their long-running Broadway hit *Hellzapoppin*, with wild TV camera moves following performers all over the audience and studio.

*Rehearsal Time* (1948-49 – KTLA, sponsored by Sealy Mattress) – August 1949 (estimated date); in author's collection

*Americana* (March 14, 1949 - NBC): Quiz Show – Ben Grauer (host), Oscar Brand, Michael Keane, John Mason Brown, Dan Roberts as actor panel with contestants. The contestants were called the "Board of Experts". The show debuted in December 8, 1947 and ran until July 4, 1949. Panel of actors performed skits that adult or student panelists used to guess answers to questions on American history. The person submitting the "most interesting question" each week won a full set of encyclopedias. Sponsored by Encyclopedia Americana.

*It Could Happen To You* (1949): Audience Participation Show with Rudy Valee

*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of TV*: Live Broadcast – Ben Grauer (WNBT/NBC): April 30 1949

*Fashions On Parade* (DuMont & ABC): June 8, 1949 and another 1949 episode held in MacDonald & Associates film archives in Chicago. These kinescopes appear to be from near end of original February 1948 – April 1949 original DuMont & subsequent ABC network run of this series from April – June 1949. Originally only aired in New York City in February 1948, then expanded to other DuMont network affiliates starting in November 1948. Another show by same name aired separately in Schenectady NY starting in 1950. Host of the DuMont show was Adelaide Hawley Cummings (who later became TV's Betty Crocker, as

living trademark for General Mills. The program offered a fashion show combined with musical revue held together with storyline, and featuring the Conover Cover Girl Agency models (featuring Harry Conover's wife Candy Jones, later the wife of NBC Radio's Long John Nebel). Sponsors included Lord & Taylor and Procter & Gamble (P&G). Claimed to be first P&G nationally sponsored TV show, starting in August 1948 with the local show first (launching with a unique snowstorm commercial in the studio made from Ivory Flakes, as reported in *Billboard* of August 7, 1948).

*Harry Ray Owens & His Royal Hawaiians* (KTLA: March 1949) with Hilo Hattie

Other 1949 kinescopes are referenced in the Paley Center archives.

The Peabody Collection in the University of Georgia Libraries contains several 1949 kinescopes of such shows as *Lucky Pup*, *I Remember Mama*, *The Goldbergs*, *Meet The Press*, *Uncle Mistletoe*, *Actor's Studio*, *Voice Of Firestone*, *Vanity Fair*, *Lum and Abner*, *Lamp Unto My Feet*, *Mr. I. Magination* with Paul Tripp (first episode also captured on kinescope); *CBS Television News*; and other local and national telecasts preserved on kinescope.

*Meet the Press* kinescope episode from 09/17/49 in Peabody Awards archives at U of GA features Lawrence Spivak on press panel and original host, moderator, and producer Martha Rountree all interviewing Michael Quill, labor leader. As noted above, the show debuted on 11/6/47 with its inaugural broadcast reviewed in detail in the 11/16/47 *Billboard* (Martha Rountree & Lawrence Spivak with press panelists grilling James Farley, former head of Democratic National Committee).

Select photographs of technology and TV programs cited in the article are below, followed by information on (1) surviving audio recordings of early live television and (2) oldest live television recordings from around the world.

# Mechanical vs. Electronic TV



The younger Mercier holds the scanning disk and his father the picture tube as they pose with their 1928 television set. It had a 1½-inch screen.

## TV, Vintage of 1928

By PAUL GAPP

**T**HINK you were one of the first to get in on television reception in Columbus? If you believe you were, you'll have to beat the record of a father and son who picked up video images on the Hilltop more than 22 years ago.

It happened on November 25, 1928, to be exact. The Rev. M. J. Mercier, Sr., and his son M. J., Jr., were watching the screen on a set which they designed and built themselves.

They suddenly saw a few strange designs and then

the letters "WGY." It was the General Electric station in Schenectady, New York. After that they picked up pictures whenever the weather conditions were right.

The Merciers devoted much of their spare time to experiments in an equipment-filled home laboratory.

The father-and-son team built everything from a crystal set to a short wave receiver. The latter created quite a bit of excitement in Columbus at the time. Received by the elder Mercier was one of the first short-wave SOS messages. The radio plea stirred him to inventing a sender-receiver which could be installed in individual life-belts.

But one of the biggest days in their memory will always be the one when they "picked up" Schenectady. How did they manage it?

"The airwaves weren't cluttered up in those days, and we had very critical tuning," says the Rev. Mr. Mercier. By careful manipulation they could pick up almost anything.

General Electric sent them a telegram verifying their reception. The message and video receiver are still preserved in the Mercier radio store, managed by the younger Mercier, at 647 North High Street.

The Rev. Mr. Mercier is pastor of the Home Road Christian Church.

Both father and son continue their avid interest in radio and television. And they probably chuckle a bit when they hear of "freak" long-range TV reception today.

After all, they had a 500-mile range 22 years ago.



The screen has grown considerably in 19 years. The Merciers displayed the set in the middle in 1932.

THE COLUMBUS SUNDAY DISPATCH MAGAZINE—FEBRUARY 16, 1951

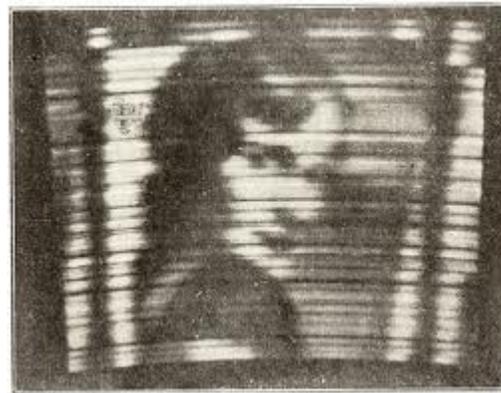
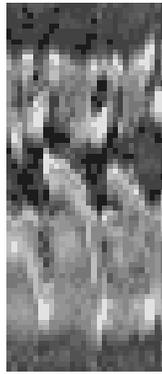
THE COLUMBUS SUNDAY DISPATCH MAGAZINE—FEBRUARY 16, 1951

Article compares the 1.5 inch 1928 mechanical TV screen with electronic models circa 1951 (*Columbus OH Dispatch*, February 16, 1951 article)

# PICTURE GALLERY



One of 1st Baird mechanical TV scans  
- from 1926 (UK)



Early Baird mechanical TV screen images: dancing girls and female announcer (preserved on Phonovision disks); & model (all from late 1920's - early 1930's)



30 line Baird TV image from 1926

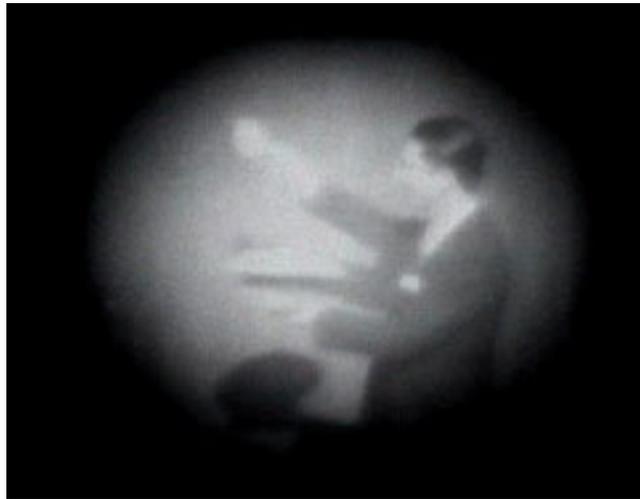


Early 1930's television hobbyist magazine: *Television News* from January 1932. Includes article by Bill Paley CEO of CBS on "Future Of Television". This particular magazine ran from March 1931 until December 1932. However, early TV press goes back to at least 1922.

Hugo Gernsback, the editor of this and other early radio and television digests going back to 1928 or earlier, was himself a mechanical TV operator and pioneer (on his station WRNY) and is said to have first used the word "television" in an article in *Modern Electrics* published in December 1909.



Nazi Germany electronic TV image from screen (circa 1936)



Television image from 1931 newsreel from Chicago experimental mechanical station W9XAP



Adele Dixon during launch of BBC electronic TV commercial service: November 2, 1936



BBC's Jasmine Bligh from live London telecast recorded in NY on November 1938



-- Inside --  
Rear View

**1938 DuMont Model 180**

**America's First Commercial Electronic TV Set**



1939 RCA Projection Set Demo-ed at World's Fair

The DuMont 180 from 1938 was 1<sup>st</sup> US TV set sold at retail, preceding RCA's 1939 TV launch for consumers. It featured 8X10" picture (large for the time) and was priced at \$395.



FDR – first Presidential telecast of April 1939



Religious services—(TOP) Easter Protestant service; (CENTER) Easter Catholic service; (BOTTOM) Celebration of the Jewish Passover.

Multi-denominational telecasts of Easter & Passover religious services over WNBT (started March 24, 1940 including a young Bishop Fulton J. Sheen)

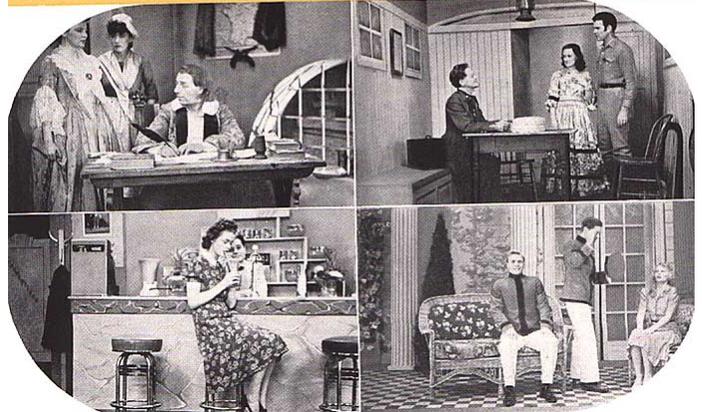


LOWELL THOMAS, famous newscaster, televised during regular daily program.

BILL SPARGROVE inaugurates new television series dramatizing news events.

(TOP) "Charlotte Corday".  
(BOTTOM) "The Fortune Hunter".

(TOP) "The Farmer Takes A Wife".  
(BOTTOM) "Brother Rat".



Launch of WNBT commercial programming July 1941 including *Lowell Thomas News* sponsored by Sonoco and first *Esso Television Reporter*, along with early tele-plays

### Television to Speed Civilian Defense Here; 100 Sets to Be Installed in Police Stations

Civilian defense training by television will be started here Monday evening, with more than 100 viewing posts to be set up ultimately for civilian volunteers. Police Commissioner Valentine announced yesterday. The Police Department already has staged a test "preview" of television defense instruction and, regarding it as satisfactory, it has decided to expand the experiment.

With cooperation of three manufacturers—General Electric Company, DuMont Laboratories and R. C. A. Manufacturing Company—television receivers will be placed in every precinct house defense training classroom in the city. It will require about four weeks to make these installations, but, in the meantime, the city's defense workers will begin getting televised training at viewing posts in private homes and radio dealers' shops through arrangements made by the National Broadcasting Company's television department.

For four successive Monday eve-

nings at 8 o'clock the NBC television station, WNBT, will telecast thirty-minute instruction periods on duties of air-raid wardens, fire watchers, light rescue squads, messengers and drivers, and actual demonstrations of approved methods and equipment will supplement oral instruction by experts on the staff of the coordinator for Police Department civilian defense. Official training films, prepared by the Office of Civilian Defense, also will be shown.

Following the four weekly programs, which will be under direction of Lieutenant William F. Maley, a television program of more specialized instruction for volunteer defense groups, to be given six times daily on three days of the week, will be started.

The Philco station, WPTZ, in Philadelphia, and the General Electric Company station near Schenectady also will hook up with the programs for benefit of defense workers in their locales. Although the courses are intended primarily for defense workers, the general public is invited to "look in."



*Campus Hoopla* including very young Eva Marie Saint 3<sup>rd</sup> girl from left (as one of Keds Cheerleaders) on NBC-TV 1946 - 47



*Tex & Jinx* pioneered the evening talk show & daytime TV in 1947 (with several NBC shows)



1<sup>st</sup> telecast from White House Oval Office October 5, 1947



From November 1947 1<sup>st</sup> BBC kinescope of live TV performance (Adelaide Hall – *Variety In Sepia*)



Chase & Sanborn coffee commercial May 1946  
*Hour Glass* debut (*Life*)



James Monks & Paul Douglas filmed from TV screen of 1<sup>st</sup> *Hour Glass* show May 1946 (*Life*)



Doodles Weaver sketch from screen shot of *Hour Glass* premiere (program ran May 1946 – March 1947)



James Beard captured during break from broadcast of his / *Love To Eat* program (1946 – 47)



*Kraft Television Theater* which debuted in May 1947 (with its stick figure cameraman icon there since its launch)



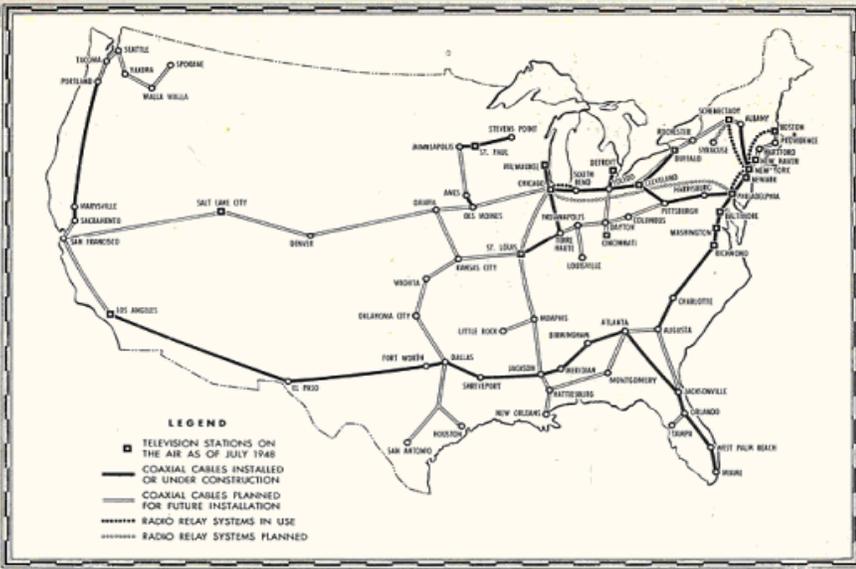
Jon Gnagy's "*You Are An Artist*" started 1946 and was one of the most popular shows in 1946 – 47, even on tavern TV's



Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town* was 1<sup>st</sup> network hit program for CBS, and ran from June 1948 to June 1971 for over 1,068 shows (*Life*)

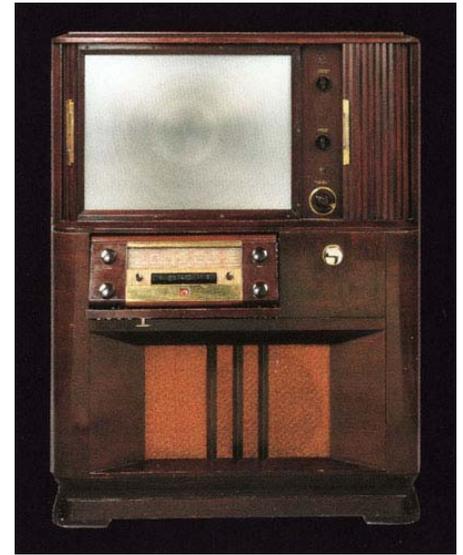


Dorothy Doan with pioneering TV director Frances Buss preparing for *Vanity Fair* series telecast over CBS (1948 – 49)

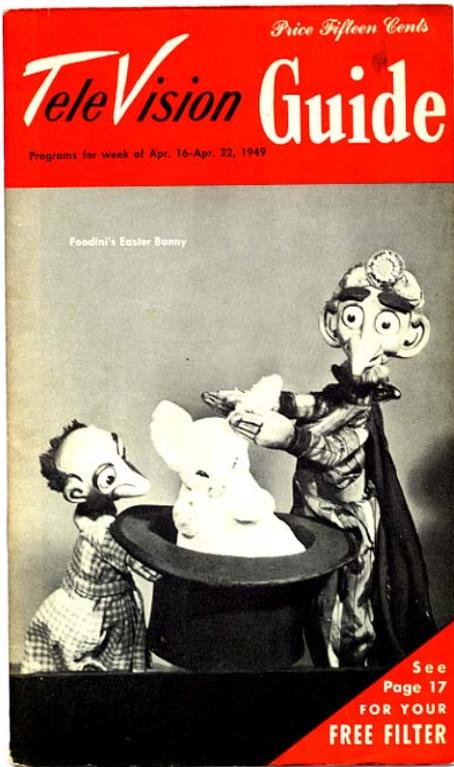


Television expanding across the nation.

1948 Television Coverage Map (existing & planned stations and projected network connections – up from 8 stations at start of 1947) – From *Understanding Television* (1948)



RCA 648PTK – 1st rear projection TV, offering 15 inch screen, but not successful due to dim image.



April 1949 *Television Guide* featuring Foodini & Pinhead from *Lucky Pup*



*Lucky Pup* rivaled *Howdy Doody* & *Kukla Fran & Ollie* in popularity: 1948 - 49



Judy Splinters with Shirley Dinsdale started on KTLA in 1947 and went network by 1948



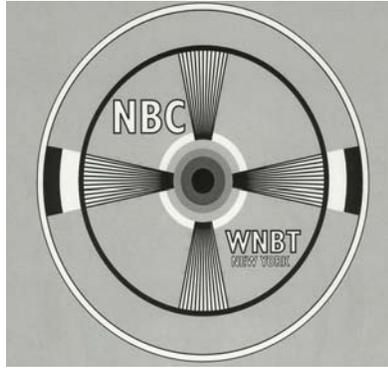
*Lucky Pup* was so popular it licensed games and kiddie records



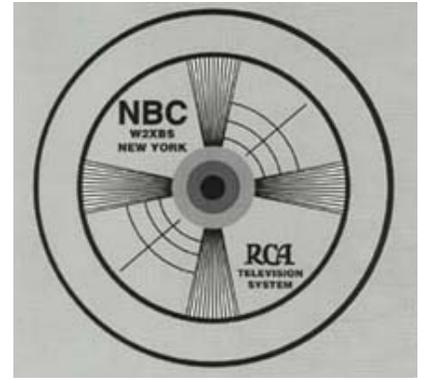
*Kukla Fran & Ollie* started in 1947 in Chicago



BBC Test Pattern 1940's



WNBT starting in 1941 (Ch 1!)



W2XBS precursor to WNBT

Delivery & Installation Same Day! Guaranteed Service within 24 Hours!

# DUMONT

ONE OF THE **LARGEST TV DEALERS ON LONG ISLAND**

SEE THEM ALL AT THE **NEW LOWER PRICES**

**10% DOWN**  
**2 Years To Pay** SMALL CARRYING CHARGE  
Installation extra

THE CHATHAM \$425  
THE SAVOY \$695  
THE COLONY \$945

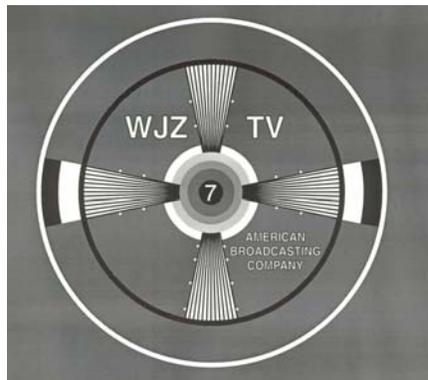
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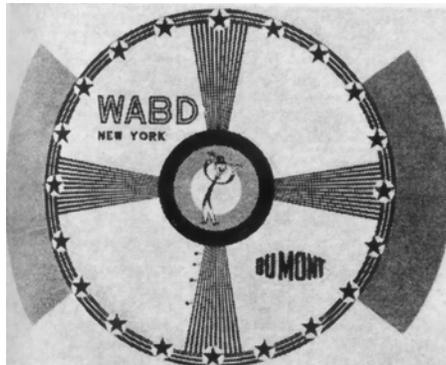
Ad for DuMont TV receivers (1948)



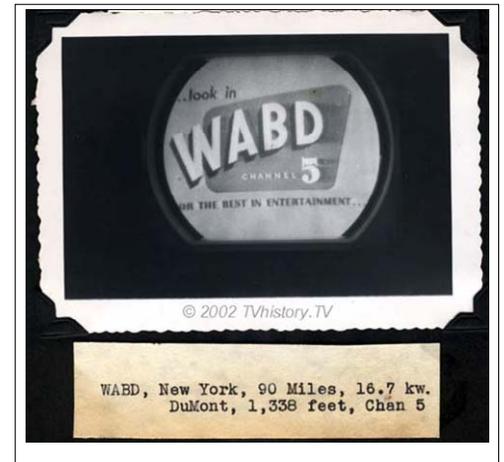
1st ABC station WJZ-TV (NYC – later WABC)



WCBW 1st CBS station (NYC – later became WCBS)



WABD pioneer DuMont station – test pattern



Station ID – WABD DuMont in 1940's





This picture, known as a television recording, was photographed directly from the face of a kinescope picture tube and reveals how Thomas E. Dewey, although using a prepared speech, gives little evidence to the audience that he is reading a manuscript. He looks straight at the television audience as if speaking face to face.

1948 Kinescope recording image of Dewey at the Republican convention



Janet Beecher and Leo Carroll as they appeared in the Theatre Guild's television adaptation of "The Late George Apley"; note the microphone overhead to pick up the sound.

December 1947 *Theater Guild* TV performance, known to have been one of those captured in early kinescope recordings, as among the many kines that may be permanently lost.

### **Audio Recordings of Live TV Broadcasts (starting in 1936)**

Audios of live TV broadcasts exist from the BBC, and in the Library of Congress SONIC archives for many programs of shows from WNBT-TV (NBC outlet in New York), such as the sound clips which follow.

The first BBC audio recordings of television date back to the launch of the BBC commercial service in 1936. The earliest such U.S. audio recordings from WNBT-TV live television broadcasts date from 1938 -39 and 1940. The next such sound clips are from the July 1, 1941 official “commercial television” debut of WNBT-TV which included the first confirmed television advertisement (from Bulova).

A few audio recordings of the very rare broadcasts during the suspension of normal TV operations during World War II also exist in the LOC archives as noted below, as the already limited TV pre-war schedule was sharply curtailed but not totally eliminated during WWII. NBC scaled back its broadcasts to mostly civil defense related shows (with some news and variety programs continuing) as transmitted at minimum hours per week to retain its license. DuMont had a greater but still sharply reduced schedule of wartime broadcasts, starting with its formal post-war ramp-up in 1944.

These earliest audio recordings made from live television (primarily from the BBC, and from WNBT and its predecessor station, W2XBS, in the Library of Congress) are as follows, with other selected early broadcasts from the later 1940's also included (among others listed in archives):

11/02/1936 *Opening of the BBC Commercial Service*: announcer Leslie Mitchell introduces two telecasts to be conducted, the first using the Baird electronic system (discontinued by February 1937) and the second the superior Marconi-EMI process (with the latter to become the selected standard used by the BBC). He introduces the postmaster general and other dignitaries, with a later performance by songstress Adele Dixon and the famous black comedic dancing team of “Buck & Bubbles” as also on the day's schedule, along with Chinese jugglers and the BBC Orchestra.

06/07/1938 – *Susan & God* – play with Gertrude Lawrence on W2XBS (NBC) as noted above. Audio recording (30 minutes) of the live TV broadcast exists in the LOC SONIC archives. Also, there are 10 very clear still photos of the broadcast taken from the live TV screen, as published contemporaneously in the June 20, 1938 *Life* magazine. A favorable review of the broadcast was also published in the June 8, 1938 *New York Times*.

12/01/38 *Elizabeth Cowell* brief announcements of evening BBC-TV schedule – including *Fun & Games*, *Picture Page*, and boxing from Alexandra Palace (audio of live BBC-TV broadcast)

06/17/39 *Television From The World's Fair* – simulcast on WNBT-TV and NBC Blue Radio Network from NY World's Fair with David Sarnoff and others. Mis-dated in LOC SONIC Archives as 06/17/37 (preceding dates of NY World's Fair). Burr Tillstrom and his puppets (later of *Kukla Fran & Ollie* fame) followed Sarnoff on the air in the original 1939 telecast.

12/14/1939 (listed as 12/15/39 in LOC Archives): *Television Ball* – televised ball from Waldorf Astoria (NBC's W2XBS 11:15 pm – 11:45 pm – excerpt, 30 minutes of original 1 hour broadcast). Singers Jane Froman and Vaughn DeLeath were among the participants, with TV monitors arranged around hotel ballroom so attendees could also see themselves appearing live on television. The audio of this telecast appears only to catch the live fashion show, mentioning Broadway songs (including by Jane Froman) as being featured later in the show but not captured on the extant audio at the LOC. It is estimated that there were approximately 200 TV sets in NYC at the time who could view this telecast. A planning committee for this ball (with Tex O'Rourke "Round-Ups") had also been previously telecast on 11/15/39 (prior show not in LOC archives). The official W2XBS published schedule for the week of this broadcast shows this telecast listed as "*Television Ball of the Goddard Neighborhood Center at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel*" shown at 11pm – 12 midnight on Friday, 12/14/39. An LOC SONIC audio recording from NBC Blue Network Radio also survives, with P.D. Wilson promoting the upcoming *Television Ball* earlier on same day (1:15 pm) to radio audiences.

01/14/40 *Buddy Swan Show* – reported by LOC as possibly being audio from live TV broadcast. 11 year old child actor Buddy Swan hosts program (W2XBS - NBC).

01/24/40, 03/24/40, 05/14/40 *Pages & Minstrels Show* – NBC pages & guides produce their own minstrel show as telecast on experimental station W2XBS. The 03/24/40 broadcast ran from 8:30 – 9:30 pm and featured the minstrel performances "on Broadway" plus a "televues picture contest". It followed the Easter parade and Fulton Sheen church services (cited directly below) as shown earlier that day, and a screening of Cecil B. DeMille's "*King of Kings*" silent film from 1927.

03/24/40 11:30 am *Televised Easter Service* with Dr. Henry McCrea Cavert; 12:30 pm sermon by Father Fulton J. Sheen (before he was Bishop Sheen, with his later popular TV show on DuMont starting in 1951). These services were shown before and after the broadcast of the NYC Easter Parade on Fifth Avenue shown at 12 noon.

05/01/40 *Television Birthday Party* – 8:30 – 11:30 pm. TV program celebrating the 1<sup>st</sup> full year of television programming in the United States on NBC (starting from April 30, 1939 launch by NBC at New York World's Fair opening). Includes scenes from Walt Disney's animated film "*The Ugly Duckling*." Gertrude Berg says a few words about television and presents a feature on the "House of Glass" which takes place in the Catskills. Casper Khun leads the NBC pages in a song and

dance number written for the occasion. Telecast over NBC experimental station W2XBS, and not aired over the radio networks. Hosted by Alfred H. Morton (NBC VP in charge of television), performers and guests include: Hildegard, Gertrude Berg, Ray Bergen, Alicia Markova, The Barry Brothers (dancers), The Peters Sisters (vocal group). Edward Johnson, director of the Metropolitan Opera introduces soprano Annamary Dickie and baritone Leonard Warren. Milton Cross introduces singer Earl Wrightson (who appeared on many NBC TV shows throughout the 1940's).

6/24/40 – 6/28/40 *Republican National Convention*: Philadelphia, PA (NBC: W2XBS) – Launch of Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen's originally promising national career potential delivering keynote at this convention; Thomas Dewey as contender as Presidential candidate that year; Wendell Wilkie (who would become the surprise Republican Presidential nominee of the 1940 convention); former President Herbert Hoover addressing convention; with NBC staff in studio recording voting results manually on easel or chalkboard. Produced by NBC with aid of RCA and Philco. Audio was also provided by the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS) for simulcast with the TV images. First real convention coverage at time when conventions were dramatic and candidates were not ordained in advance, and from a time when the Republicans were being overwhelmed by Franklin D. Roosevelt. This convention was covered by TV via its limited East Coast coaxial network (NYC and Phila for this coaxial link broadcast) of the time as it was held in Philadelphia, which had an operating NBC station as part of the nascent NBC network. The Democratic convention, held in Chicago that year, was too remote from any other station to make a coaxial relay feasible at the time.

The Kisseloff Collection on the Internet (author of "*The Box*", a prehistoric TV oral history) has silent film taken by Philco engineers of the 1940 convention broadcast being covered by TV (not from TV screen, but film of TV cameras covering the live event) along with film of a live TV drama (both on Philco's W3XE experimental TV station). The film is narrated by Bill Parker, the original Philco technician who also appears in the film (Parker also did on-air turns when required when "all hands" were needed on this early experimental station).

2/10/41 New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia speaks on NBC TV on price of milk (15 minutes).

7/1/41 *Lowell Thomas News* (From WNBT special debut broadcasts) – sponsored by Sunoco. Simulcast on radio. Still photos of this and other WNBT 1939 – 41 telecasts exist. Thomas read news from his desk, which had display of Sunoco oil cans placed on it to further plug the sponsor. WCBW, the CBS TV station in NYC, debuted 30 minutes after WNBT on the same day.

7/1/41 *Uncle Jim's Question Bee* (From WNBT special debut broadcasts – 9:15 pm - debut of TV version of radio quiz show) – first TV game show on non-experimental television from date of first commercial TV broadcast debut

(*Spelling Bee* on WRGB in Schenectady NY preceded this as first TV quiz show in 1940, during the experimental TV era). The inaugural commercial WNBT-TV broadcast of July 1, 1941 was launched with Bulova watch commercial, and originally transmitted over Channel 1 until June 1946, when it moved to what is now Channel 4 (where it still broadcasts today as WNBC-TV). *Uncle Jim's* preceded *Truth or Consequences* broadcast that same day by 1 hour & 15 minutes or longer (according to WNBT and LOC dates of record). This was its one and only broadcast, sponsored by Spry (Lever Brothers), hosted by Bill Slater (who hosted the program on radio at this time), with Dan Seymour as announcer. The show would end its radio run (1936 – 1941) on NBC Blue network just one week later (July 9, 1941).

7/1/41 *Truth or Consequences* TV debut at 10:30 pm on this same evening is also in LOC archives (often wrongly listed as very 1<sup>st</sup> TV quiz show shown – see above). Sponsored by Ivory Soap (Procter & Gamble) and simulcast on radio, hosted by Ralph Edwards. The show had debuted on NBC radio in March 1940 and ran through 1957. It would not re-appear on TV until 1950.

7/1/41 *Bottlenecks of 1941* – US Army Signal Corps entertainers on local TV from Fort Monmouth NJ, for inaugural NBC commercial broadcast day. Written by enlisted writers including Freddy Bornet (who went on to direct film shorts for Tex & Jinx in 1947 and subsequent full-time TV commercial production career). According to *The New York Times*, the show featured “privates and noncommissioned officers of the Signal Corps replacement training center at Fort Monmouth, NJ, who came to Radio City to stage a tabloid version of their own revue, ‘*Bottlenecks of 1941*.’” With Pearl Harbor and the American entry into WWII still 5 months ahead, the program was cited as presenting “the lighter side of Army camp life.” Tapes of the broadcast were found at Fort Monmouth as well as in the LOC. Features include “Care & Feeding of the \$87M Potato” and song “Do What The Good Book Says” in this theatrical satire of Army life.

7/1/41 *USO Salute Show* – featuring Thomas Dewey and others in tribute to USO, which immediately preceded the *Bottlenecks of 1941* show above.

7/31/41 *Radio City Matinee* 2:30 pm (20 minutes): WNBT (debut commercial month)

09/10/41 *Bundles for Britain* (WNBT: Knits for Britain - children's service program)

10/10/41 *20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of WJZ Radio* (TV Salute): 1921 – 1941 with NYC Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia (this early radio station as honored here later became WABC-AM in 1953)

12/41: *Hines & Clemens Program* (debut of series); date approximated by LOC (WNBT)

01/5/42; 06/1/42 *Air Raid Warden's Training Courses* (Lesson #1, Lesson #3); this program series is also as featured in the March 9, 1942 *Time* magazine. WNBT had installed TV sets in 80 NYC Police Department precincts, to provide these educational broadcasts for 148,000 air raid and fire wardens.

11/11/43; 12/1/43 TV Empire State broadcast test and call sign signoff

6/28 – 6/29/44 *Republican National Convention* - audio recordings. Still photos of this Convention, along with Air Raid Warden televised training starting in 1942 (as per above) and other early TV broadcasts, along with commentary on limited wartime television programming and coming advances in TV set picture size and quality are featured in special "*Television*" extended article in September 4, 1944 *Life* magazine. Studio broadcasts from WRGB in Schenectady NY are also shown.

7/20/44 *Democratic National Convention* (NBC used Pathe to film part of the convention to augment its live coverage and to ship footage to NY)

7/20/44 *Opera Excerpts from La Boheme and Barber of Seville* (WNBT 30 minutes) as also pre-announced to offer more realistic sets via video as reported in the July 22, 1944 *Billboard*.

8/28/44 *TV Travelogue on Italy & Egypt* (10 minutes)

09/30/44 "*Carmen*" – excerpts from opera performance. Full WNBT broadcast was 2 hours, as reviewed in *Billboard* (October 7, 1944) as "socko" performance despite "unimaginative camera handling" including botched fade-outs, character movements not followed leaving blank shots, Carmen and Don Jose embracing on bed together with no heads shown with camera angle from feet, etc. The nightly broadcast began with *That Was A Singing War* (songs of World War I) preceding the opera, and ended with the Bernard Brothers lip synching routines (a regular feature on early NBC TV).

10/12/44 *Meet The Artist* - Ernest Drunig sculptor in 15 minute TV broadcast audio (later exposed as also an infamous forger of Auguste Rodin and others).

02/11/45 *Children's Story Hour* – Opera rendition of "Hansel & Gretel" in English, taken from the work of the original Engelbert Humperdinck (the German composer who died in 1921).

02/18/45 *Adventures of the Black Angel* – crime mystery (drama) directed by Ernest Colling (who produced many early live tele-plays in 1945- 46) and adapted by him from the 1943 "*Black Angel*" novel by Cornell Woolrich., as also made into a film noir cinema classic in 1946. The mini-series was also titled "*Dr. Death*" as four part mystery shown over WNBT, with prior episode reviewed in February 17, 1945 *Billboard* (being critiqued for not using enough "close-ups").

April – May 1945 *Gimbels Tour* (featuring TV's in the NYC store), along with *American Museum Natural History Tour*. The Gimbels live TV demos were repeated in Philadelphia in October 1945, drawing over 25,000 to view NBC shows from NY and local Philco programs.

6/26/45 *Heartbreak* (TV Drama – soap opera excerpt, partial)

7/17/45 *Magic Ribbon* (early children's show TV broadcast)

1945 – 46 Many newscasts and special military events. On Victory In Europe (V-E) Day (May 8, 1945), WNBT featured a marathon 15 hour broadcast of live and filmed coverage to commemorate the event. A similar effort was conducted by NBC on August 14, 1945 for Victory In Japan (V-J) Day, over a 3 station hookup (New York City, Schenectady, Philadelphia).

10/27/45 Harry Truman (speaking on foreign policy and the atomic bomb) at Central Park for Navy Day event held for the commissioning of USS FDR ship. This represents launch broadcast of NBC's 3 station TV network (WNBT New York NY; WRBG Schenectady NY; and Philco's WPTZ Philadelphia PA). Ran 1:14 – 2:07 pm ET. The coverage on WPTZ of this event with Walter Kiernan as announcer is featured in favorable review in November 10, 1945 *Billboard*. A 33 minute CBS recording of this speech, and two newsreels, are also archived and accessible at the Truman Library.

By December 10, 1945, WNBT began operating six days per week (every day except Tuesday), still broadcasting over its originally assigned Channel 1. Time signals were broadcast at various times of the day by Bulova, Waltham and Elgin. At this time, the station also debuted the first hour-long children's show, hosted by puppeteer Frank Parris.

Television newsreel audio from January 1946 also exists from WNBT-TV featuring military interviews.

02/12/46 First coaxial telecast from NY to Washington linking NYC, Schenectady, Philadelphia, and Wash DC) as recorded from WNBT-TV on February 12 1946 (in audio recording from live broadcast) with Senators Kellar, Wheeler, Congressman Sam Rayburn, and US Marine Corps Band (co-sponsored by NBC; DuMont; AT&T; CBS in sharing the new experimental coaxial cable relay). It should be noted that previous coaxial TV relays between other cities had been done with the 1940 Republican convention broadcasts and the 1944 TV relay between NYC and Philadelphia with Eddie Cantor as featured performer.

5/9/46 8:00 pm: Inaugural episode of "*Hour Glass*", as first live TV drama (NBC), with Joe Besser as later of The Three Stooges doing military sketch; Doodles Weaver doing his "rabbit act"; hostess Evelyn Eaton; Miriam Levalle (followed by a film entitled "*Things To Come*") and melodrama segment titled "*Moonshine*" featuring Paul Douglas and James Monks. Also many other "*Hour Glass*"

episodes from 1946 and early 1947 (including with Eddie Mayehoff, Imogene Coca, Ed Sullivan, Peggy Lee, Jerry Colonna, Edward Everett Horton, Edgar Bergen, DeMarco Sisters, regular series contributor Helen Parrish, others) are in LOC audio archives. Helen Parrish at age 22, became one of the first “stars” created by TV alone from this series, and had been the star of the brief *Show Business, Inc.* program which ran just four times (NBC from March 20 - May 4, 1947) just before debut of *Hour Glass*.

The debut episode is one of the first broadcast from the brand new WNBT Empire State Building antenna installed to improve transmission range and picture quality. The show was broadcast in New York only from May – November 1946 and thereafter also fed to the 3 station NBC Network at the time (New York; Schenectady; Philadelphia) until its cancellation by March 1947.

The May 27, 1946 *Life* article on *Hour Glass* shows a number of photos taken from TV screens of inaugural live broadcast, including of Joe Besser in army skit and Doodles Weaver, others from acts cited above, and a couple seated at a table doing a Standard Brands coffee commercial. This *Life* review calls the show “funny but fuzzy” (referring to poor picture quality and camera work) and “well acted but poorly produced” (including cutting off dancers’ feet in camera shots) with overly long commercials from Standard Brands. A similar trellis type background is used repeatedly across different segments of the initial show, from the *Life* story’s TV screen shots. This same *Life* article estimates that the show was seen by 20,000 huddling around 3,500 TV sets in New York City for a program production cost of \$4,000, calling it a “piddling amount” compared to the 20,000,000 listening to Edgar Bergen radio broadcast with \$20,000 production budget.

The 1 hour show would open with a full hour glass pouring sand and close with a shot of the empty hour glass. Includes live gaffes and commercials that ramble for over 5 minutes, including woman forgetting her lines for a Tenderleaf tea commercial and instead promoting their competitor Lipton tea, with her being corrected and read the correct lines on the air.

Despite its challenges as the largest scale live TV show yet presented up to this time, the program earned rave reviews in the May and November 1946 *Billboard*. With the Petrillo ban in place (musician union’s strike led by militant labor leader James Petrillo), the show had to start out with recorded music and lip-synched songs due to lack of live orchestral accompaniment. The challenges and relatively primitive level of the *Hour Glass* television broadcast are related by one of its performers (Jay Marshall) in the June 14, 1947 *Billboard*. *Hour Glass* had already ended its run three months before this *Billboard* article appeared.

Martin & Lewis may have made one of their first appearances on the *Hour Glass* show, in summer or fall of 1946 or early 1947, which would have been shortly after their duo formed in July 1946. If so, this would precede their more widely known debut on the first *Toast of the Town* (Ed Sullivan) program in June 1948. After their

other noted TV appearances in 1948, the duo were given their own highly promoted television show on NBC. On April 3, 1949, their own show debuted as the "*Martin & Lewis Program*", being the TV version of their popular radio series, how, with guest Bob Hope (with this inaugural program drawing lackluster reviews in the April 30, 1949 *Billboard*).

The noted entertainment columnist Earl Wilson reported "*Hour Glass*" and the sultry "*Hour Glass*" girls being his favorite show, as one of only ones he saw in buying his first TV set, as raving about the show near its end days in his January 15, 1947 syndicated column.

5/31/46, 6/5/46 *Radio City Matinee* – instructional WNBT-TV 1 hour daytime show airing 3 times per week, in "magazine" format. The show featured cooking, with George Rector, James Beard, and announcer Warren Hull; the programs including segments on preparing Welsh rarebit (Rector) and striped bass (Beard). It also offered interludes on fashion (cufflink collection); grooming (eye makeup and hair design), culture, painting & art, including drawing demonstrations by Jon Gnagy in his May 1946 first TV appearances on this program. *Radio City Matinee* debuted on May 16, 1946, and received poor reviews in *Billboard* by time of its June edition, where it was succeeded by "*For You and Yours*" derivative replacement show (cited below) after less than 2 weeks on the air.

6/12/46 *For You and Yours* - instructional TV, also includes early cooking demos from chef James Beard. Successor (re-titling) of *Radio City Matinee* program cited above. *Billboard* reported on July 13, 1946 that *Radio City Matinee* "laid an egg" and what was left of the show is being combined into a new broadcast called "*For You and Yours*", mentioning that daytime TV is still seeking a proven formula for success. The announcer states at the end of this 06/12/46 broadcast that the show would be pre-empted the following week by the Louis-Conn fight (which would become the record-breaking telecast of 06/19/46, previously noted, as viewed by over 146,000 including in bars and home tele-parties).

6/16/46 *Face to Face*: Audience participation drawing game show "*Face to Face*" from June 16, 1946 (20 minutes), also episode from January 17 1947 in LOC SONIC archives (WNBT-TV). Features artist drawing face per descriptions provided at first by phone, and later by contestant on-screen hidden behind curtain from the artist. Bob Dunn was the host cartoonist with co-host Eddie Dunn as interviewer. The 1947 episode audio also features guest cartoonist C.D. Russell. The Dunn's would close each program with "*I'm Bob...and I'm Eddie...and we're Dunn <done>*". This actual June 16 program captured on audio is panned in the June 22, 1946 *Billboard*, where audience members in this earliest show format are sketched from their prior telephone descriptions then matched to these drawings in person.

The critic says that the *Face to Face* show still comes through "as phony as its debut night" the week before. Attendees get Tender Leaf tea (from sponsor Standard Brands) as gift served on tray, where one audience member tried to

take the tray home also. "Sugar", the young woman handling the commercials, is critiqued for needing rehearsal, stating "she's as self-conscious as a bride". The show ran from June 9, 1946 to January 26, 1947, thus dating these audio recordings to the beginning and ending periods of this series. The August 3, 1946 *Billboard* (reviewing the show for second time, on July 21<sup>st</sup> ) found the artist's creative Tender Leaf tea commercials using drawings and models better than the show itself, and mentioned the Dunns' performance as "ragged" and having to "reach way out in left field for many of the gags" as used on the program. The show was local only at the onset, but was believed to be carried in 3 – 4 cities by the nascent NBC network by November 1946.

6/19/46 *Gillette Cavalcade of Sports* (Joe Louis fight) – largest TV audience through that date, until record ratings of the 1947 World Series broadcast, where both of these sports landmark events increasing popularity of TV. Series announcer Bob Haymes (brother of singer Dick Haymes) was billed as Bob Stanton, and using that name he also appeared on many other NBC programs including as host of *Campus Hoopla* and *Television Screen Magazine*.

06/30/46; 7/5/46; 7/11/46 TV Special: 1<sup>st</sup> films of Bikini Island atomic bomb drops shown to NYC. 157 island residents were evacuated in 1946, for launch of atomic bomb live explosion tests on this Pacific atoll as part of Operations Crossroad. The military newsreels were broadcast on NY television.

10/5/46 *I Love To Eat* (James Beard – pioneer cooking show - dessert prep on this NBC TV broadcast audio, Borden commercials with Elsie the Cow). Produced via Young & Rubicam ad agency for Borden as sponsor. 8:30 – 8:50 pm (20 minute program). Audio confirmed to exist and also at least 4 still NBC archive photographs of broadcast of this 1946 live TV series. The program ran from August 30, 1946 through May 18, 1947 (when Bird's Eye Frozen Foods then briefly became the show's sponsor for its final month). Program received excellent review in the January 18, 1947 *Billboard*. One of up to 4 episodes of this 1946-47 TV show preserved on audio at LOC.

A more detailed account of the *I Love To Eat*, *Radio City Matinee*, and *For You and Yours* shows on WNBT (as taken from hearing the actual LOC audios) is now published in *Gastronomica* magazine (Summer 2010 issue, with NBC program file photos) as written by Professor Dana Polan of NYU, which references earlier version of this research article and this author. The professor had contacted this author 2 years ago in researching a Julia Child TV show book which he was developing, seeking information on whether it was first (it dates from 1960) and any precursors. In response to his query, this author informed him of the much earlier TV cooking shows including *I Love to Eat*, and of the LOC audio files discovered of this show and others by the author, which led to his accessing these tapes and researching the *Gastronomica* article on "*James Beard's Early TV Work.*"

10/13/46 *Magic In The Air* – magician performing tricks - 8:30 pm (30 minutes):

11/28/46 *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade* – TV Coverage of parade with Ray Forrest: parade broadcasts resumed in 1945 – 46, after first telecast in 1939. By November 1947, this hallmark NYC parade was being seen over the entire nascent NBC network from New York State through Philadelphia o Washington DC.

*Campus Hoopla* (January 3, 1947): WNBT-TV Claire Bee, Eva Marie Saint, Bob Stanton, others; early broadcast of this show (which debuted in December 1946, less a month earlier). A video clip of this series is also among the earliest surviving kinescopes (from fall 1947), as cited earlier.

Jon Gnagy's "*You Are An Artist*" audio of 15 minute telecasts starting with audio recording of show from January 9, 1947 (WNBT-TV). The show would have immediately followed *Hour Glass* and been on against *Cash and Carry* on the competing DuMont (WABD) NYC station. This program was launched under this show name on November 1, 1946, and was sponsored by Gulf Oil since December 12, 1946. Gnagy also draws the Gulf logo on the recorded show to help plug the sponsor. For a contemporary account of the program, the December 6, 1946 show is favorably reviewed in the December 14, 1946 *Billboard*. As a tele-history footnote, on May 16, 1946, Jon Gnagy was the first "act" on the first TV program broadcast from the antenna atop the Empire State Building (with this new skyscraper-mounted antenna coverage featured in the May 20, 1946 *Life*). He went on from there to become the well-known "follow from home" original TV artist with his art kits sold to consumers and his continuing syndicated TV shows throughout the 1950's and early 1960's.

The Jon Gnagy "*You Are An Artist*" program preceded "*I Love To Eat*" on the sparse Fall 1946 network TV schedule. It was noted in the November 30, 1946 *Billboard* that "local beer taverns in Gotham (NYC) tuned into Jon Gnagy's art instruction program on WNBT Friday nights are passing out papers and pencils so barflies can learn the 'fundamentals of art'". It was all new and even bar patrons would watch anything. Gnagy also had a regular feature on his early shows of having two security guards bring in a rare painting on loan from the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. Photographs taken of broadcast in studio and TV monitor showing Gnagy sketching a prone female model accompany a reference to the show being among the "mediocre" on TV (in opinion of the article's author), as featured in December 1 1947 "TV" issue of *Life* magazine.

Since Gnagy originally hailed from Hutchinson, KS, there is a two page feature article on him and his TV show (acknowledging that it is still mostly seen in bars, but wildly popular there) in the April 26, 1947 *Hutchinson (KS) News-Herald* (where, of course, the show and in fact no commercial television could be seen). W.G. Rogers of Associated Press wire as picked up nationally (August 3, 1947) that the one of most fashionable NYC French restaurants handed out pencil and paper when Gnagy's show came on at the cafe's television, where the patrons followed the TV instructions in drawing an ice cube, bowl, glass with lemon on tray, as the 'de rigueur' thing to do.

*KTLA Opening Commercial Broadcast- January 1947*: Paramount owned this station, as successor to experimental station W6XYZ. Paramount also made a newsreel of the opening night KTLA broadcast with Bob Hope, the DeMarco Sisters, Jerry Colonna (doing baseball skit), and others shown performing live before the TV cameras (with moving image and audio). The DeMarcos sing "*Baba-Lu*" and Hope introduces the first KTLA broadcast in a set featuring a vintage car with a few jokes while mis-pronouncing the station ID as "KTL". This first KTLA broadcast also featured William Bendix, William Demarest, and Dorothy Lamour, among others. The inaugural broadcast supposedly broadcast to approximately 300 TV sets then available in the L.A. area. This Los Angeles station was the 1<sup>st</sup> commercial television launch west of Chicago. This Paramount newsreel was not released for many years, then it was finally shown on the KTLA 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary broadcast, as can be seen on YouTube.com

*"Dancing On Air"* (February 2, 1947 debut tele-cast, with Ed Sims, as dance instruction show from Fred Astaire Studios). Ran Sundays 8:00 – 8:15 pm on NBC for just 5 weeks (through March 2, 1947). Sponsored by Standard Brands as handled by J. Walter Thompson ad agency, who was reported as pulling out of its support for both this show and "*Hour Glass*" in the March 8, 1947 *Billboard*. The same article reports that J. Walter Thompson rebounded in getting Kraft to sponsor a new 1 hour TV program starting in May 1947 (this was to become *Kraft Television Theater*).

*"World Security Workshop"* (February 20 & 27, 1947) – two television dramas. "*One Hungry Man*" and "*The Sergeant Pays A Debt*", from WJZ sustaining radio series and broadcasts of same dates and times.

*"Opening of TV Station WNBW"*: (June 27, 1947) Wash. DC – with NBC President; launched as 4<sup>th</sup> NBC connected network outlet (to NY, Schenectady, & Philadelphia) and as 2<sup>nd</sup> Wash DC station (first was WTTG DuMont a few months earlier). The 3 hour 10 minute original inaugural broadcast was reported in the July 5, 1947 *Billboard*. Featured government speakers, variety acts, skating, one act drama called "*Souvenirs of his Late Wife*", done with mixed live and film segments, and also including Harmonica Rascals, Beryl Davis, Eddie Mayehoff (formerly of *Hour Glass*), a folk singing group, and a segment from NBC's *Campus Hoopla* program (the latter as rated negatively in this *Billboard* article of the time). *Time* magazine of July 7, 1947 reported that this first regularly operating TV network (of 4 stations) also featured opening remarks by FCC Chairman Charles R. Denny, a variety show, some live boxing matches, and Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony (latter shown from film). Parts of the broadcast may also have been simulcast on NBC radio. This station started on experimental basis as W3XNB by RCA in 1939, and went commercial on 06/27 as WNBW as noted above. It later became WRC-TV in 1954.

*Truth or Consequences* audio from TV broadcast (WNBT June 28 1947), which actually made its TV debut as special on July 1 1941.

10/05/47 *First Presidential address from Oval Office*, by Harry Truman (full 7 minute audio with transcript at Truman Library, complementing the kinescope of part of this telecast as cited in the Chain Collection).

*Luncheon At The Waldorf* (December 16, 1947): 1:00 – 1:45 pm. Features include four female pilots discussing place of women in aviation and demoing trainer aircraft. Bill Garden and Jay Martin appeared as co-emcees. This live broadcast was reviewed in the December 27, 1947 *Billboard*, who rated it as a “hackneyed gimmick” for the “homemaker trade” with aviatrix “rambling on for 30 minutes...static, talky, and ..with basic camera and sound flaws”, and closing with co-host Jay Martin singing Irving Berlin’s “Remember”, all leaving the reviewer “unenthused”. Another early and failed attempt at daytime TV.

Later audio recordings of TV live broadcasts from 1940’s as also found in LOC archives include (among many others):

3/4/1948 *Ben Grauer Tour of WNBW (NBC) Washington DC Studios*, with FCC Commissioner also featured in talking about future of television

3/18/48 Harry Truman address on Bond Drive

3/18/1948 *New To You* (starring Peter Sellers): only audio preserved at Paley Center (from BBC)

09/14/48 *Television Screen Magazine* (NBC Tuesday nights; show features news recap; interviews with Irish beauty queen, horseback rider, etc, as still exciting fare on late 1940’s TV). Its debut show had equally gripping entertainment, such as an NBC employee showing off his stamp collection. This broadcast series ran from November 17, 1946 to July 1949. It was essentially an early and primitive attempt at a “60 Minutes” type of on-air news magazine format. Bob Stanton (aka Haymes) and John McCaffery were among regular hosts. It was replaced in its network time slot by the *Kyle MacDonnell Show* (a staple vocalist on late 1940’s NBC television).

11/10/48; 01/15/49 *Picture This* with Wendy Barrie and cartoonist guests. Audio of debut broadcast. Later that same inaugural month, her November 27 1948 show was noted in the trade press as Wendy Barrie coughed throughout the program, with the irony being that her sponsor was Vicks Cough Drops (*Billboard*, December 4, 1948). Also known as *Through Wendy’s Window*, this program (one of many that she had on TV) ran through 1950 in various formats.

2/17/49 *3 Flames Shows* (black R&B trio with early TV series)

*Texaco Star Theater* with Milton Berle (1948 – 49 recordings and 1949 kinescopes)

01/28/49 *Stop Me If You Heard This One* (kine of the series pilot with video from 03/48 at Paley Center) – on 9pm on NBC.

## **International: Earliest British & Euro Broadcast Recordings of Live Electronic TV**

### **U.K. Pre-Kinescope**

The widely seen Phonovision recordings of John Logie Baird's live mechanical TV, as restored but only seconds in duration, are certainly the earliest extant remnants of television, even in their primitive and silent existing form.

There is also a very brief British newsreel clip in the BBC Alexandra Palace Archives from the early 1930's showing a brief glimpse of live mechanical TV with very good and amazing clear moving image of woman placing hat on her head from the Baird labs operating at the Crystal Palace at the time.

The earliest TV moving image film from the dawn of commercial electronic television in Britain which remains in the BBC archives is a newsreel showing early broadcast (not a live television recording, although an image of a girl broadcast on the monitor is shown) from 1936. It is accessible on the BBC History Web Site.

***Desmond Campbell Films During BBC Telecasts:*** In 2000, the BBC released 20 minutes of 16mm film clips (some in color and with sound) taken during live BBC TV transmissions by Desmond "Cam" Campbell, the "father of television lighting". The films are not taken from the TV screen, but were filmed concurrently behind the TV camera concurrent with the live broadcast.

Highlights of these Cam Campbell films are as follows:

*Here's Looking At You* – August 26, 1936 with Helen McKay singing (video and audio, B&W) from Alexandra Palace, with closing silent clips of technicians in TV studio. This was the first BBC high definition TV broadcast. The song she sang "*Here's Looking At You*" with video and audio is also shown in the British Movietone newsreel with sound from the TV studio concurrent with the telecast. Adele Dixon opened the entertainment as singer on commencement date for regular BBC electronic TV broadcast schedule on November 2, 1936.

*Music Hall Cavalcade* – 05/12/37 Victorian music hall variety acts for celebration of the coronation of King George VI, filmed during studio performance behind TV camera, with part of the coronation parade also captured separately direct from TV screen by 16 mm camera (as cited below)

*Argentinita Performance* (noted Spanish dancer born in Argentina): televised 06/19/1937 (10 seconds), and appeared again on 06/24/1937. She died in 1945 at age 47.

*He Lied To Her Husband* 7/8/1937 - featuring 7 second clip of Greer Garson from a TV performance of the George Bernard Shaw play. She also appeared on one of the 1<sup>st</sup> Shakespearean plays televised on the BBC (*Twelfth Night* in 1937). Her film career began the following year.

*Dick Whittington & His Cat* -12/27/1937 with comedian Cyril Fletcher, including Grand Pantomime

*Alexandra Palace Holiday Fair Bank Holiday 03/23/1938*

A number of films of TV performances from a single day (September 3, 1938), with impressive sets and casts, indicating a rich BBC TV schedule of the time:

- *In the Garden* 09/03/1938 - Elizabeth Cowell interviews a Mr. Middleton about his plants. An opening sequence shows Radio Olympia exterior with ad for "cheap TV sets".
- *Queue For A Song* - 09/03/1938 variety performance including can-can dance number with announcer Elizabeth Cowell
- *Cabaret Cruise* 09/03/1938 - elaborate production with musical and dance acts aboard the SS Sunshine ship.
- *Jack Hylton Band* – 09/03/1938

*Jasmine Bligh live TV* (screen shot scenes, & in studio) from Radio Olympia, 1939

*Knife Throwing Denvers* – with sound, novelty act, late 1930's

*Veterans of Variety* – late 1930's – variety performance taken during TV performance where TV monitor can be seen concurrently in background.

The earliest surviving British live electronic TV recordings (excluding possibly other 1937-39 TV shows filmed from screen without sound, and the earlier mechanical TV disks from 1933) are as follows:

**1937 Ballet:** A March 20, 1937 film of Margot Fonteyn dancing "*First Arabesque*" ballet purports to be from BBC broadcast, although this may likely be concurrent film of the performance like contemporary stage film taken of her dancing "*Giselle*" during same year.

**1937 Coronation:** A short and out-of-focus 16 mm film (24 seconds in duration) as made on May 12, 1937 from TV screen of the Coronation of King George VI in UK is known to exist in BBC Archives (Alexandra Palace Society). It has been shown on BBC commemorative broadcasts since 1953, and can now be seen on *YouTube*. It was taken by J.E. Davies, a Marconi employee, from his home TV receiver. It is believed to be the oldest surviving tele-recording of true live TV in U.K. (405 line BBC "high definition" broadcasts). It shows the horse and carriage processions as part of the coronation events.

**1938 UK to US Live Transmission Recordings:** There is the remarkable November 1938 TV live recording of BBC programs as filmed from TV by a cinema camera due to fluke broadcast from UK, as picked up in the United States (due to a rare atmospheric "skip" attributed to unusual sun spot activity, which allowed the live UK TV transmission to be received in New York). Jasmine Bligh and Elizabeth Cowell are shown in moving headshots reading news and announcing

upcoming programs. These women were two of the three regular BBC-TV presenters in the 1930's, who both followed Leslie Mitchell on the air (he had the distinction of being the first BBC presenter, when the women did not show for their debut 1936 broadcasts). On the surviving November 1938 telecast recording, there are also clips of an unidentified costume drama from this same broadcast, followed by a Disney cartoon excerpt and closing with a BBC test pattern or station identification.

The original recording is preserved at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, U.K. A technician (Dewitt Goddard) at the RCA Research Center in Riverhead, New York (on Eastern Long Island) had successfully filmed the British live telecast as accidentally streaming (due to the rare atmospheric anomaly) over 3,000 miles to the RCA U.S. TV receiver/monitor (whereas normal broadcast range for the 45 Mhz 405 line UK transmission was 30 miles). Goddard used particularly sensitive receivers to bring in the transatlantic image, with the results being widely reported in the press in 1938 - 39 (see reference to it above as still noteworthy incident some 11 years later, as cited in 1949 *Life* magazine).

The RCA personnel captured the images using a 16mm camera to create a compilation of 4 minutes of broadcast excerpts that survive today. It has ghost-like video quality with flickering and distorted images and is without accompanying audio, but the live broadcast pictures can clearly be seen. The original RCA receptions of the BBC signals were of both audio voice and image, but only the pictures were preserved on film. Several Internet sites including [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) have the recording available for viewing online. It is believed to be the second earliest viable recording made and remaining of live UK pre-war electronic TV (and among the first of TV telecasts captured anywhere). It is certainly the first record of a transatlantic broadcast, albeit unplanned.

**Post-War:** The BBC resumed commercial service following WWII in 1946. The inaugural broadcast featured black female lead singers along with the return of the BBC's Jasmine Bligh when it re-launched commercial television in the UK on June 7, 1946 (following a war-time moratorium on public broadcasts starting on September 1, 1939, where Jasmine Bligh was featured announcer on the earlier telecasts of 1939 and earlier). The 1946 resumption of BBC-TV including blues numbers and Ms. Bligh's speech are available for viewing on newsreels filmed during TV rehearsals and broadcasts (but are not preserved in live broadcast kinescope form, as pre-dating telerecording by kinescope by one year).

When BBC TV left the air in 1939 as World War II started, the last program telecast was announced by Ms. Bligh of the BBC and concluded with part of a Mickey Mouse Cartoon. This same cartoon was resumed (from where it left off) when BBC announced its return to the airwaves in its inaugural post-war broadcast of 1946, as hosted again by the same Jasmine Bligh.

A "Cam" Campbell film taken in the studio (aside the TV camera) during the first week of Post-WWII service (on June 12 1946) exists at the BBC of *Felix*

*Mendelssohn's Hawaiian Serenaders* (not the 19<sup>th</sup> century German composer, but the popular British band leader who performed Hawaiian music with his band with 3 neck steel guitar and ensemble group including sexy hula girls). Due to this TV performance, the Stoll Moss theater chain banned the group for 3 months.

A June 24, 1946 BBC telecast (from 1<sup>st</sup> month of BBC post-war TV re-launch) of the ballet "*Façade*" with audio and video exists, but it is not known whether this was filmed from the broadcast or (more likely) done concurrently with cine camera. Another "Cam" Campbell film from the same date exists of "*Les Ballets Negres*", a wild dance ensemble number with large black cast and Josephine Baker type performer (this group had just made its debut in the spring of 1946, and went on to international fame from there).

The 1946 BBC newsreels "*Television Dress Rehearsal*" and "*Television Is Here Again*" also exist (filmed by cine camera during broadcast and not from TV screen, before regular commercial service resumed) showing a program featuring *The Windmill Girls* (dancing girls) being directed in the studio. There is also a film of an episode BBC's *For The Children* with a very early *Muffin the Mule* broadcast for children from 1946 in the National Museum in Bradford UK. (the year BBC resumed TV broadcasts). It features hostess Annette Mills at her piano with her dancing puppets (*Muffin* debuted on *For The Children* on October 20, 1946 show, with the *For The Children* BBC series going back to April 1937 and resuming in July 1946). A 13 year old Petula Clark performing a song appears in one of the newsreels (as she was seen on television at the time).

### **Nazi Germany Pre-Kinescope**

There are similar "image only" films without audio as taken directly by cine camera from TV monitor dating to circa mid 1930's from Nazi era German live broadcasts, as also available for viewing on several Internet sites including *YouTube*. Germany's Paul Nipkow first conceived of a whirling disk being used to transmit moving images in 1883, and was still alive when the Nazi government decided to name its television service in his honor (Nipkow died in 1940).

The early German video broadcast images were filmed from live TV receiver by an amateur, Horst Hewel, and begin with the opening Nipkow station ID card (drawing of broadcasting tower stating "*Fernsehsender Berlin*" (or "Berlin Station"). Excerpts of this film of live TV program content include newscasts, singer accompanying himself on the piano, acrobats, and costume drama that also includes dancing girls. There is considerable horizontal flicker but the images are quite clear.

Paul Nipkow television became the first regular German television network beginning on March 22, 1935, broadcasting to public viewing rooms. Some 285 rolls of 35mm film from the mid 1930's taken from the Paul Nipkow television station operating in Berlin were re-discovered and restored. Again, these primarily are staged films done concurrent with, or filmed by conventional cinema cameras in advance as intended for later broadcasts (and not taken from the live broadcasts themselves, for the most part).

Besides featuring light entertainment, these clips are laden with overt Nazi propaganda. A 1935 film for TV broadcast states that the primary mission of German TV is to “imprint the image of the Fuhrer on every German heart, never to be erased”, for example. Another preserved Nipkow TV clip of the pre-recorded film for television - “*Roof Garden*” - features German vaudeville as their first TV entertainment program, with the made-for-TV film first telecast in 1935.

There is more Nazi film produced for TV (including intermediate film transmitted directly after film was shot) which has been preserved of the 1936 Olympic games (which was more widely seen in television parlors created for the German public). The intermediate films, as broadcast rapidly after filming and thus approximating live television, show blurs of lost camera spans and narrative gaffes for the unprepared TV reporters and cameramen trying to cover the Olympic events with no rehearsal or retakes.

The German films of Nipkow TV are well documented in the documentary “*Television Under The Swastika*” produced by Michael Kloft, which again show that the majority of these recordings are films produced in advance for television (and thus lacking the spontaneity and hiding the real limitations of live television).

### **U.K. Kinescope Era - 1947**

**1946 Trials:** Trial recordings of the quiz show “*Have A Go*” were made live from the TV screen by the BBC on February 11, 1946. The initial attempts by the BBC to record TV programs from the face of the screen using a film camera for general use came in March 1947. Given significant technical difficulties, the early compromise approach was to record alternate fields (half the transmission), while using the other half of the time to pull down the film. Further improvements were done during the spring and summer of 1947.

**1947 Adelaide Hall Kinescope:** The earliest surviving Telerecording as kinescope with video and audio in the UK is from BBC (British TV) telecast from the fall of 1947. The kinescope film features part of a sequence (held at the NFTVA) taken from a RadiOlympia variety show which features Adelaide Hall singing several songs. This sequence was captured on 35mm Suppressed Field system (with no spot wobble). It is known to still exist, and been repeated on BBC at least twice in recent times. It is also now available for viewing on the BBC Alexandra Palace Web Site at [www.aps.org.uk](http://www.aps.org.uk) and on YouTube.

The telerecording is from live BBC broadcast of October 7, 1947, just two days after one of the earliest surviving US kinescopes from Washington DC television from October 5, 1947 as noted above (both recordings being among first following the kinescope commercial availability announcement of September – October 1947). The BBC used two different telerecording techniques as variants from the US kinescope process which appeared to the public at virtually the same time. The BBC initial approach only recorded about half of the TV scanning lines, to increase throughput time on capturing the high volume of images.

This earliest surviving BBC kinescope recording with black singer Adelaide Hall features her singing and dancing with a full orchestra ensemble. Ms Hall performs at several songs as part of medley as recorded from a variety program entitled "*Variety In Sepia*" as staged at the National Exhibition Hall at Olympia (RadiOlympia). "*Chi Baba Chi Baba*", "*One Of These Days*" (singing and accompanying herself on guitar), and "*I Can't Give You Anything But Love*" are the featured tunes (along with other songs in medley) in the 6.5 minute kinescope excerpt. She also performs "*Kiss Me Honey*" while dancing and accompanying herself on guitar.

The video and audio quality of the Adelaide Hall 1947 BBC kinescope is very good, and the set and orchestral arrangements are elaborate for their time,. This production reflects the greater investment in TV shows available from government-funded enterprises (as with BBC in UK) versus commercially-funded private firms (the early TV networks like NBC. CBS, and the cash-starved DuMont enterprise) in the U.S.

***Royal Wedding – 1947:*** The wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip as filmed from live TV on November 20, 1947 in UK is also believed to survive. It is known to have been kinescoped by the BBC with copies sent immediately to U.S. broadcast stations, as reported in detail in the November 29, 1947 issue of *Billboard* magazine.

***Cenotaph Service of 1947:*** The first complete outside electronic TV broadcast (a telecast originating from outside the BBC studios at remote field or outdoor site) that survives today is of '*The Cenotaph Service*' featuring Remembrance Service at this famous London monument, as recorded from live BBC television on November 9, 1947. This show was supposedly re-broadcast the same day as experiment in U.S. on NBC. Most U.K TV programs including those few saved on kinescope were not "outside broadcasts", and originated from the Alexandra Palace studio facilities of the BBC.

***Tele-Snaps***, or 35mm still photographs taken from BBC television and sold to actors and to the public, were marketed by John Cura (using a special high resolution camera he designed for this purpose) in the UK beginning in September 1947. Again, although only in still photo form, some of these *Tele-Snaps* represent the only images of otherwise lost live television program broadcasts.

### **Other European & Western Nations**

Outside of the U.S., U.K., and Germany, other early pre-World War II television was available on very limited basis in other European countries, including France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Italy. For example, there are some film clips of French television from the 1930's (female singer), WWII (during the Nazi occupation, who ran TV shows with the Vichy government from Paris), and late 1940's (musketeers dueling, from 1947) as taken from the screen. There are also photos

of TV demos in Belgium by Pye of UK, and *Life* magazine coverage of Pope Pius XII seeing live TV broadcasts in Italy, both during 1947.

In the Americas, DuMont was in discussions in Argentina already by 1945 (*Billboard*, July 7, 1945). Per *Billboard* reports of April through December, 1946, both NBC and DuMont were conducting extended video demonstrations with pre-commercial kinescopes and live transmissions in competing to develop a station in Cuba to be on the air by mid 1947 (it did not launch until 1950, and then had viewers in Florida, due to dearth of stations there). Canada's CBC intentionally lagged on commercial TV vs. FM radio, and did not launch regular television service until 1952.

In short, there is a very limited record of this vintage era for live TV that survives for these other Euro and Western Hemisphere nations.

### **In Closing: The Kinescope Saga & The Oldest Surviving Live Television Show**

In summary, kinescopes were used by television stations from 1947 forward, and continued in use even after the advent of videotape for television in 1956. In fact, kinescope recordings were commonly used to record television broadcasts throughout the 1960's and even into early 1970's.

My own interest in this subject arose when trying to research it myself, and finding so little available on this topic. I had been born into a family who had touched the dawn of television, and spoke about it. Long before I was born, my dad and his brothers were "televised" at the 1939 New York World Fair (as were many fair visitors) and spoke about seeing TV (and then themselves appearing on it) with lingering amazement years later. My mom had worked after World War II (before marrying my dad in 1948) at the DuMont television assembly plant, where cathode ray tubes were assembled into the chassis of early TV sets. When my parents married in 1948, the first thing my dad bought was an RCA TV (still a luxury item then, certainly one for a railroad trainman) which is the one in the fine wood cabinet (with doors that opened onto the screen) that we watched when I was born in 1952, and into the early 1960's.

Watching TV with wonder is among my earliest childhood memories, as "pictures out of nowhere", never knowing what was going to be "on" next (even if it was only the test pattern). It seemed miraculous at the time, and still does today – but even more so then when much of the television programming (particularly local shows) was live, low budget, and unrehearsed.

In closing, there will be more discoveries as to the origins and artifacts of early television as research progresses. The definitive quest for the earliest surviving kinescope or live TV broadcast recording continues. Hopefully, the best answer that we know of today (based upon available evidence) has been furnished above, in order to answer the key question on the earliest surviving and valid preserved record of the TV images broadcast in the past.

It is also hoped that the above information helps document and illuminate those records of “prehistoric” TV that are known to exist. These earliest live TV recordings serve as living and moving history which are still enjoyable to view today, are always full of the unexpected being “live”, and which are rare windows into the real, every day world of a treasured time, at the dawn of the television age.

**--Robert J. Shagawat**

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## FYI

Note: Early recordings of live television broadcasts taken from kinescopes, and in the author's private collection, include the following:

- ❑ **Westinghouse Studio One** (May 1 1949 CBS "The Glass Key") – first *Studio One* with Westinghouse commercials.
- ❑ **Bonny Maid Versa-Tiles** (1949 NBC)
- ❑ **Okay Mother** (11/48 – 7/51) (1950 Dumont)
- ❑ **School House** (1/49 – 4/49) (1949 Dumont)
- ❑ **Quiz Kids** (1949 NBC)
- ❑ **Toast Of The Town (Ed Sullivan Show)** – w/ Zero Mostel, Kitty Kallen, Lord Buckley, Babe Dedrickson, etc. (CBS - May 29, 1949)
- ❑ **Faye Emerson** (1950 CBS) (2 Shows)
- ❑ **Pantomime Quiz** (1947-49) (1949 KTLA-TV, LA)
- ❑ **Popsicle Parade of Stars** (1950 CBS)
- ❑ **Let's Join Joanie** (1950 CBS Pilot with Joan Davis)
- ❑ **WBAL Newsreel** (1948-49 Local TV Show Promotions – WBAL, Baltimore)
- ❑ **Fireball Fun-For-All** With Olsen & Johnson (6/49 – 10/ 49 NBC) (Summer 1949)
- ❑ **Ben Blue Show** (1950 CBS)
- ❑ **Morey Amsterdam Show** (4/48 – 3/49; 4/49 – 10/50) (Last Broadcast – 10/12/50 Dumont)
- ❑ **Rehearsal Time** (1948-1949) (August 1949 KNBH-TV, Los Angeles CA)
- ❑ **Chesterfield Dinner Theatre: Perry Como** (November 1949)
- ❑ **Broadway Open House** (December 1950 NBC)
- ❑ **You Bet Your Life Pilot TV Show** (Groucho Marx – December 1949)
- ❑ **Martin & Lewis – Colgate Comedy Hour** (5 Episodes – 1951 – 1954)
- ❑ **Don McNeil's TV Club** (ABC – 1948, 1951 broadcasts)
- ❑ **Stork Club** (Sherman Billingsley – 2 Episodes: 1950) – directed by Yul Brynner
- ❑ **Dagmar's Canteen** (March – June 1952 NBC)
- ❑ **Kate Smith Program** – two complete 1 hour episodes featuring stars of *Grand Ole Opry* including Roy Acuff & the Smoky Mountain Boys, the Carter Family, and the only known footage of Hank Williams performing (1952)

Note: Earlier versions of this article were furnished by the author to *Early Television Museum* and *TV Obscurities.com* which have published it on their Web Sites, and also to *Kinevideo* (early TV show merchant). Dana Polan of the Department of Cinema Studies at NYU also was sent a copy. Later versions of this research paper were provided by the author to Mike Mashon and team at the Library of Congress, and Ron Simon at the Paley Center.

For supplementary information, an excellent and pioneering book on pre-1948 TV entitled "*Please Stand By: A Prehistory of Television*" as authored in 1994 by Michael Ritchie (an accomplished director of major feature films since the 1970's) is highly recommended.