National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact of the Week:

E. H. Scott All-Wave 23



This week we feature one of the finest radios ever made—the 1936 E. H. Scott All-Wave 23, highly valued by radio collectors.

The E. H. Scott Company of Chicago began offering radio kits in the mid-1920s, sold factory-built sets beginning around 1930, and continued to manufacture radios for a few years after WW II. The company emphasized expensive state-of-the-art high-end radios aimed at affluent buyers rather than mass production. The company's finest radios were made during the mid to late 1930s. This is the second version of the All-Wave 23 and was marketed as "The Scott Full-Range High-Fidelity Allwave," because it represented one of the first efforts to achieve true high-fidelity performance in a home radio. Buyers had a choice of beautiful cabinets; the one in the museum is the Warrington Model. Buyers generally purchased direct from the factory rather than from a dealer, and prices varied, depending on the cabinet chosen and choices such as having one speaker vs three speakers. The Scott in the photo would probably have cost more than $4,000 in today's dollars.

At a time when a low-end console radio might have had 5 to 6 vacuum tubes, and a high-end console, perhaps 10 or 12, this model had 23 tubes! It could fill a ballroom with good quality sound and enough volume to be heard next door. Its chassis was chrome plated.

It had superb shortwave performance and unusual features such as variable bandwidth. When tuning in a strong station the user could widen the bandwidth to enhance the fidelity. On shortwave, when trying to capture a weak foreign station sandwiched between two interfering stations, the user could narrow the bandwidth to pluck the station out of the noise.

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!