National Capital Radio & Television Museum

# Artifact of the Week:

## Philco Model A-801 Chairside Radio



This handsome mid-century modern chairside or end-table radio owes its existence to the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor!

From the 1930s through the 1960s Philco manufactured millions of car radios. It usually announced its new models for the coming year in time for the Christmas selling season, but also to coincide with automakers' annual introductions of their latest models. So, during the summer and fall of 1941, Philco busily produced car radios for shipment to automobile plants for installation in their 1942 models, and some did get installed in 1942 cars.

When World War II was suddenly thrust upon the United States, American car companies, almost overnight retooled their factories to make tanks, military trucks, and airplanes. Philco, too, patriotically switched over to manufacturing electronic equipment needed for the war.

But what to do with all those car radios already in the pipeline, without new cars to use them? Philco cleverly converted them to practical and attractive home use as furniture. Although these radios were designed to be powered by a six-volt car battery, the company's engineers easily modified them to operate from the normal. 110-volt AC home electric supply. When visitors comment that this chairside radio looks like a car radio, they often don't realize how right they are!

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!