National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact of the Week:

Huckleberry Hound TV Tray

In the early days of television, families typically gathered around their one large bulky TV set in the living room. (Separate "family" rooms centered around television watching were soon to come.) Many people were so addicted to the new medium that if a popular show aired around dinner time, they wanted to eat dinner while watching the show.



Entrepreneurs went to work. Swanson came out with frozen TV dinners on aluminum trays that could be popped into the oven, with no kitchen effort, and were compactly portable. But knees offered poor balance and beverage spills proved unavoidable. Enter, TV trays! Some were like small folding "tables," often with lips to catch the spills, on legs resting on the floor. Others, like this example, were designed with short legs to hold the tray over the lap of the seated viewer.

Hanna-Barbera created a number of popular cartoon shows that aired in the late 1950s and early '60s, which included the characters shown on this TV tray: Huckleberry Hound (who spoke with a North Carolina drawl), Yogi Bear, and Quick Draw McGraw. *The Huckleberry Hound Show* won an Emmy Award in 1960 as an "Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Children's Programming." . While cartoons are often thought of as kids' fare, this program appealed to broad audiences.

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!