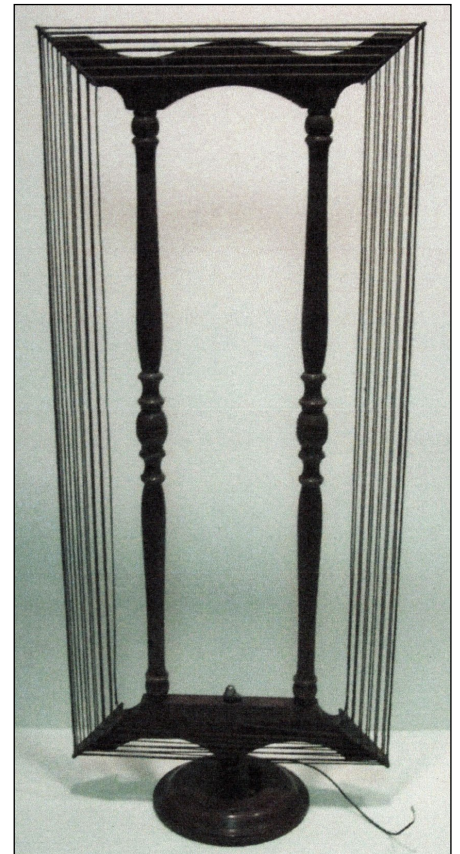




## Artifact of the Week: Bodine Loop Antenna (1920s)

Most 1920s and 1930s radios were designed to be used with a long-wire outdoor antenna. A typical recommendation was to string a 125-foot-long wire from the peak of the house to a tree or barn, with a lead-in wire down the side of the house and into a window near the radio. You also needed to drive a copper pipe into the ground and connect a ground wire to it. The antenna and ground wires were connected to terminals marked A and G on the back of the radio. A lightning arrestor was necessary to direct a lightning strike to the ground rather than into the home.

As an alternative, one could purchase a loop antenna like this approximately two-foot-tall Bodine model that would be placed next to, or on top of the radio, to take the place of the outside antenna and ground. Apartment dwellers whose landlords did not want them climbing on the roof to string wire antennas might choose an indoor loop antenna. While an outside wire antenna usually performed better, a loop antenna was certainly more convenient. By twisting it slightly clockwise or counterclockwise, you might be able to reduce interference from a powerful station on the dial near the one you wanted to listen to



An analogous situation applied to early television set antennas. For best reception, you installed a large rooftop antenna pointed towards the TV station. Alternatively, you could purchase a twin telescoping rod "rabbit ears" type antenna that sat on top of the TV set and worked OK if you were not too far from the TV transmitter. Like the loop antenna for radios, by adjusting the rabbit ears you might tweak up the quality of your TV reception.

By the late 1930s many console radios had a loop antenna in a cardboard cylinder mounted in the bottom of the cabinet, and by 1940, even table radios had a small loop antenna built right into the cabinet, so there was no need to climb on your roof to string an outside wire antenna.

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!