National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact Showcase:

Philco Model 50-1432



This 1950 black and white console TV set typifies cabinet styling of that era. While it would take a few more years for television broadcasting to reach homes in small towns and rural areas, in major urban centers that had TV stations, sales of sets like this model were booming.

Since competitor RCA was investing huge sums in television research during the 1930s, Philco recognized that it, too, needed to pay attention to this promising new technology. It convinced TV pioneer Philo Farnsworth to move to Philadelphia to head up its electronic TV research, although the relationship soured before long. Farnsworth did build Philco's experimental TV station W3XE in 1932, which later became commercial station WPTZ.

Philco, not the first company to offer TV sets to consumers at the end of WW II, introduced its first models in 1948. The company had been a leader in radio sales since the 1930s. While it never equaled that success in television sales, it was an important producer during the 1950s.

This set is currently exhibited at the Library of American Broadcasting at the University of Maryland's Hornbake Library. The museum and the university have had a long-standing cooperation. The museum exhibits there a substantial number of artifacts that would otherwise have to reside in storage, while the LAB enhances its collections in appropriate surroundings.

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!