

Artifact Showcase

Emerson Model 559AA

This 1948 Emerson radio is of a type called a “three-way portable.” It was an AC/DC radio that could also operate with self-contained batteries (an A battery and a B battery). From the late 1940s through the early 1950s, most major manufacturers offered three-way plastic portables. Major patents on the circuit design had

expired, and so almost all three-way portables used the same four miniature tubes plus a selenium rectifier, and similar styling.



Marketing tended to be directed at young people, with ads showing a happy group at the beach or a picnic with one of these portable radios playing. I was given one very similar to this one as a birthday present around 1950. Batteries were expensive, so I rarely used it outside the home, but I had many happy memories listening to it sitting on my bedside table plugged into the wall socket, especially when I was home sick from school and heard all the soap operas from morning until evening.

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!