



Artifact Showcase

Zenith Model 8-H-034

When FM broadcasting first began just prior to World War II, stations were assigned to “the Old FM Band” (42 to 50 MHz). Before long it became clear that too little space was available in that band to accommodate enough FM stations. One option was to expand the original band. The alternative under consideration was to assign a new wider band at higher frequencies.



The Federal Communications Commission carried out studies and held numerous public hearings. FM’s inventor, Howard Armstrong, urged the expansion of the old band. His concern was that if FM switched to a new higher frequency band, the several hundred thousand FM radios in the hands of consumers would suddenly become obsolete, putting a real damper on the growth of FM.

In June 1945 the FCC announced that FM broadcasting would move to 88 to 106 MHz. (A few months later, the upper limit was increased to 108 MHz.) Armstrong’s lawsuits failed to stop the change.

Zenith was an early adopter of FM. In 1945 it was gearing up to produce its 1946 line of postwar radios and planned to include FM models. Recognizing that there would be a transition period as FM broadcasters began transitioning from the original band to the new band, it designed radios like this 1946 model that included *both* the old and new FM bands, plus the regular AM band. When you see a radio with both FM bands, you know it must have been produced in the 1946-47 era.

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!