

FROM EPHEMERAL TO LEGITIMATE: AN INQUIRY INTO TELEVISION'S
MATERIAL TRACES IN ARCHIVAL SPACES, 1950s -1970s

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LAUREN MICHELLE BRATSLAVSKY

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Lauren Michelle Bratslavsky

Title: From Ephemeral to Legitimate: An Inquiry into Television's Material Traces in Archival Spaces, 1950s -1970s

This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the School of Journalism and Communication by:

Dr. Janet Wasko	Chairperson
Dr. Carol Stabile	Core Member
Dr. Julianne Newton	Core Member
Dr. Daniel Pope	Institutional Representative

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy	Vice President for Research and Innovation; Dean of the Graduate School
-----------------------	--

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded September 2013

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Lauren Michelle Bratslavsky

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The dissertation offers a historical inquiry about how television's material traces entered archival spaces. Material traces refer to both the moving image products and the assortment of documentation about the processes of television as industrial and creative endeavors. By identifying the development of television-specific archives and collecting areas in the 1950s to the 1970s, the dissertation contributes to television studies, specifically pointing out how television materials were conceived as cultural and historical materials "worthy" of preservation and academic study. Institutions, particularly academic and cultural institutions with archival spaces, conferred television with a status of legitimacy alongside the ascent of television studies in the 1960s and 1970s. Institutions were sites of legitimation, however, television's entrance into these archival spaces depended on the work of various individuals within academic, archival, and industrial structures who grappled with defining television's intangible archival values and dealt with material obstacles. In examining several major institutions and the factors at play in archiving television, we can trace how television was valued as worthy of academic study and conceptualized as historical evidence. The following research questions structured this historical inquiry: How did different institutions approach

television as archivable in the 1950s to the 1970s? Who were the determinators within these institutions, who could conceptualize television as archivable? What were the factors that enabled television's material traces to enter archival spaces? How did television directly or indirectly enter these archival spaces?

Drawing on historical methods, the research primarily examined the *archives of the archives*, meaning institutional documents that illuminated the archival process and perceptions about television and media. The dissertation focused on five case studies: the Museum of Modern Art, the Mass Communications History Center at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, the UCLA Film and Television Archives, and the Museum of Broadcasting. These case studies represent the various institutional contexts that applied an archival logic to television. Cultural institutions, academic archives, and industry-initiated archives worked as sites to legitimate television, transforming ephemeral broadcast moments into lasting historical and cultural material.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Lauren Michelle Bratslavsky

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Communication and Society, 2013, University of Oregon
Master of Science, Communication and Society, 2009, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Philosophy, Interdisciplinary Studies, 2005, Miami University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Television Studies
Media History
Political Economy of Communication
Cultural Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon, 2007-2013

Communications Graduate Intern, Climate Leadership Initiative, University of Oregon, 2008-2010

Americorp VISTA, Youth Media Coordinator, Media Bridges, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2006-2007

Communications Director, Community Development Corporation of Greater Cincinnati, 2005-2006

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Lorry I. Lokey Scholarship, School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon, 2012

Warren Price Memorial Scholarship, School of Journalism and Communication,
University of Oregon, 2011

Columbia Scholarship, School of Journalism and Communication, University of
Oregon 2009 - 2012

Kappa Tau Alpha Honor Society, School of Journalism and Communication,
University of Oregon, 2010

PUBLICATIONS:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1953, *Ethel and Albert* debuted on NBC as a half hour situation comedy. Though not at the top of the ratings charts, like *I Love Lucy*, or an obscure but award-winning program, such as *Mr. Peepers*, the show was a popular program in its time on television (1953-1956). Audiences knew Ethel and Albert from the radio, then followed them as a segment on an early 1950s variety show. They tuned in when Ethel and Albert had their own television program, and kept listening when the characters returned to radio in 1958. The titular characters were so familiar that when Bell Telephone wanted to stage a public information campaign about new area code numbers in 1962, the telephone company used the neighborly Ethel and Albert to introduce the new system to a nationwide audience.¹

With no syndication or commercially available material trace of the once popular program, *Ethel and Albert* drifted to television's forgotten history. The show is neither remembered in cultural memory nor in academic histories of television. A forgotten history suggests that there are programs and aspects of television that are absent from the established narrative of television history. In other words, there is a canon of programs that exemplify different points in television history, and by extension, postwar America. A "regime of repetition" supports the programs that we tend to remember or are part of our collective memory. These are programs selected as much for their content as for their capability to be replayed over and over again via network syndication, cable channels,

¹ See the video: "AT&T Archives: Mr. Digit and the Battle of Bubbling Brook," AT&T Tech Channel,

home videos, and DVDs.² Programs like *Ethel and Albert*, however, are not part of this regime of repetition, which maintains certain programs in cultural memory as well as academic histories. Such is the fate for countless programs without mechanisms like reruns or critical acclaim. These factors alone do not guarantee that a program remains enshrined in popular memories of television's past or studied by scholars; but they certainly help.

The cultural salience of some programs over others as well as the physical availability of those programs relates to television historiography. For the sake of argument, if we write television histories based on programs that we have access to via memories, reruns, and DVDs, then our histories are quite limited by what is commercially available. However, this argument deliberately obscures archives, which are complex sites where a great deal of television's past exists. My central concern is to examine the conditions that enabled the existence of television's material traces in archives, from which we write histories of television and American society.

This dissertation draws on historical methods as well as document and institutional analyses to interrogate moments when television entered archival spaces in the 1950s to the 1970s. It was in this period when television was not quite yet considered as worthy of critical academic study. Hence, tracing how television entered archival spaces, particularly those associated with academic contexts, illuminates how academics, archivists, and industry professionals perceived television as historical and cultural material. By beginning with *Ethel and Albert*, I introduce a few of the complexities associated with television's location in archives as well as historiography.

² Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation : How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

An Illustrative Case Study: *Ethel and Albert*

Popular audiences may have forgotten *Ethel and Albert*, but the show is not necessarily dead or lost in a history of television and postwar America. This program and many others lie dormant in archives, libraries, museums, offices, basements, attics, and corporate holdings. This dissertation does not intend to resurrect the dead or forgotten. Rather, it examines what exists in archives and why – my aim is to study the formation of the archival collections and institutions that house television history. A key concern, then, involves locating where the remnants and traces of television histories reside. *Ethel and Albert* is an example of one such remnant (which, conveniently for me, resides at the University of Oregon).

Ethel and Albert serves as an illustrative case in regards to factors leading to its archival presence as well as its absence from television histories. The show's creator, writer, and star, Peg Lynch, has never visited Oregon. Nonetheless, her scripts, scrapbooks, contracts, ephemera, and audio visual materials are located at the University of Oregon's Special Collections. The reasons why this particular collection exists at this university previews the sorts of issues tackled in this dissertation. There are two basic reasons why the remnants of *Ethel and Albert* exist as they do at the university: because someone asked for the papers and because someone else agreed to donate them. This formulation provides a simple framework for unpacking the complexities of technologies, ownership, academic interests, and archival processes that emerge as key factors in the history of archiving television.

The records of Lynch's creative and professional life travelled from her residence in western Massachusetts to the University of Oregon's Special Collections, an academic

archive that is not necessarily known for its television holdings. While this archive does have substantial holdings in various forms of popular entertainment, such as the Western genre or science fiction writers, the archive never had an articulated mission to collect television related materials. Peg Lynch's papers entered the academic archive when Ed Kemp, the manuscript librarian at the UO's Special Collections in the 1960s and 1970s, sent Peg a letter in 1969. He invited her to establish a collection in Eugene.³ His interest in Lynch's papers was part of a larger archival context. Across the country, there was an increased interest in collecting the papers of people involved in the entertainment industry, part of a growing trend to document popular and/or unconventional histories, such as the experiences of women. Furthermore, a federal tax code at the end of 1969 would eliminate a tax deduction for one's creative work, thus removing a vital financial incentive for constructing archives. Kemp's pursuit was not unique; as demonstrated by this dissertation, particularly in Chapter VI. The removal of the tax deduction was a major call to action on behalf of archivists to seek out donations from the famous and not-so-famous.

As a result of Kemp's efforts, Peg Lynch sent her "babies" (her scripts, as she likes to call them), along with some business-related documents, a couple of scrapbooks, and a stack of recorded programs to Eugene, Oregon. Thus, *Ethel and Albert* materially exists in the archive, mostly through paper documentation. There are a few audiovisual records: four 16 mm kinescope film recordings of the live television program and several audio reels of the radio programs. Up until recently, the current archivists at the UO

³ Ed Kemp prioritized the acquisition of women writers, as part of a political project to expand archival holdings in areas traditionally overlooked. For example, he reached out to women in science fiction (Ursula Le Guin), journalism (Jane Grant), and political movement (Lesbian Lands).

assumed that no recordings of the televised program existed, other than the four in Eugene and four in Los Angeles housed at the UCLA Film and Television Archive (one of the major archives containing television programs). However, a recent trip to 96-year-old Peg Lynch's home proved otherwise. During the trip, Lynch pointed out a cabinet containing 88 kinescope recordings (nearly a full run of the program that aired for three years on three networks) as well as numerous audio recordings of conversations between Lynch and Walter Hart (the director of the television show), boxes of financial data (such as a budgetary breakdown of costs to produce the show on NBC), correspondence, and more scrapbooks.⁴ Reunited with the materials in Eugene, the new additions now comprise a nearly comprehensive collection of Lynch's radio and television career.

Why is this program remarkable or worthy of recollection? In terms of 1950s sitcoms, the canon is narrow, made up of *I Love Lucy*, *Father Knows Best*, *Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, and occasionally critically acclaimed shows that have not been commercially available until recently, such as *The Goldbergs*, *Our Miss Brooks*, or *Mr. Peepers*. These shows represent a mere fraction of all the programs that aired in the first major decade of television. Certainly technological reasons, like the ability to record and replay a high quality recording, partially explain why these particular programs remain in circulation, and thus in memory and historiography. Likewise, there are industrial reasons as to why these programs persist in syndication and retrospectives, hence forming a

⁴ In April 2013, I accompanied two UO archivists on a trip to visit Peg Lynch. When Peg first donated her materials in 1969, she agreed to make future deposits. The current archivists followed up on Lynch and her donation, in part due to renewed interest in her collection. At the time of this dissertation, Peg is 96 year olds. The goal of this trip was to evaluate what other sorts of material she has and would like to donate. With the vital help of her daughter, we were able to inventory the existence of 88 kinescope films, numerous audio tapes and even glass audio discs, and boxes of papers and scrapbooks. These materials will soon be shipped to Eugene and integrated into her current collection. I am grateful to Linda Long, Marilyn Reeves, James Fox, and the library administration for affording me with this tremendous opportunity.

canon for television history. Academic study of television also might contribute to solidifying the significance of some programs over others. While it may not be possible – or even desirable – to recall every program from every year, the study of lesser known programs can tell us much about the development of television studies’ own canons. Viewing all television programs as evidence of a historical moment –a reflection (or distillation) of a cultural milieu – embraces the potential for long-forgotten television texts to further illuminate historical inquiry.

Consider the possibilities of recovering *Ethel and Albert* as part of broadcasting history. For example, did *Ethel and Albert* portray gender relations in the same manner as *I Love Lucy*? Was this program part of the whitewashing of the American sitcom, the transition from ethnic comedies like *The Goldbergs* or *Mama* to white middle class suburban life? Does this program further build on our understanding of industry practices, such as sponsorship, programming decisions, or live versus filmed productions? Who were the viewers and how did they relate to the characters? These questions represent common ways that television studies approaches history, such as studying a program as a text, the contexts of production, or modes of reception. *Ethel and Albert* represents just one program of thousands over the span of television’s existence (and broadcasting in general) that contributes to a richer understanding of television as it related to culture, social life, or the media industry in general. Analyzing the television texts and their material traces are one source for historical inquiry.

Another approach for historical inquiry, as demonstrated in this dissertation, is to probe how television entered archival spaces. We tend to study the program as a text, how programs were made, who were the creative laborers, or how the audiences made

meanings from their favorite shows. However, we may take for granted the existence (or lack) of television materials and perhaps even the notion that we can use television as historical evidence. Studying how television entered archival spaces (like traditional archives, libraries, museums, etc.) aids in furthering our understanding of how television came to be historical, cultural, and generally essential artifacts for studying a wide range of topics. Television's location in archives and the construction of the archives' specializations that relate to television (directly or indirectly) serves as indicators of television's worth as historical evidence, cultural legitimacy, and academic study.

Returning to the Peg Lynch collection as an example, we can consider how the contents of her collection might be relevant to television studies and the legitimization of television in the academy. Peg Lynch was not a celebrity and her program was not widely revered beyond its initial airing in the 1950s. Yet, an archivist in the late 1960s with a mission to collect documents of popular culture as well as women writers reached out to Lynch; hence, a university archive with little stake in television per se brought an aspect of television history under its purview. *Ethel and Albert* and Peg Lynch barely exist in histories about 1950s television, situation comedies, or women in the broadcasting. However, material traces of Lynch's creative and professional life (and by extension, an aspect of broadcasting history) do exist in an archive, awaiting integration into our histories. While it is not the goal of this dissertation to examine how an individual program contributes to our existing histories (or similar instances where historical absences are addressed by archival excavations), I use *Ethel and Albert* as an example of the capricious as well as deliberate factors involved in television's archival presence.

The Complexities of Archives and Historical Evidence

Research for this dissertation demonstrated that there was no single reason why television did or did not enter archives. From an institutional perspective, there was a mix of factors that facilitated television's inclusion in archives. Rather than speculate on why an individual might save his or her personal and business papers, this dissertation focuses on the institutional structures and the individuals within those structures who engaged with the possibilities of archiving television. For example, Peg Lynch likely saved her scripts, scrapbooks, contracts, recordings, and other materials because she had space in her home and was motivated by personal reasons to save her materials. She had little historical consciousness about her life's work. It was when an individual activated by an institutional structure (an archivist in an academic archive) that future scholars would one day utilize Lynch's materials as cultural and historical documents. Hence, this dissertation does not focus on personal reasons to save materials, but how archival institutions pulled those materials into the sphere of historical evidence.

This dissertation does address to some degree why an institution might save records. An institution, such as a broadcast network or studio, has an internal or in-house archive, which is a repository for internal record keeping. This notion of an archive devoted to the maintenance of records for "official" reasons, such as legal, fiscal, or administrative, is different than the types of archives that are the focus of this dissertation.⁵ The institutional (e.g. government, corporation, etc.) archive tends to serve internal needs whereas manuscript-based archives such as historical societies and

⁵ For more on this view of official archives, see Jenkinson, who was among the first to professionalize the archivist and apply the scientific management of archives. Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, (London: P. Lund, Humphries & Co., 1937).

university special collections typically serve broader publics, specifically academics. Archivists working in the *historical manuscripts tradition* acknowledge “materials must be preserved for reasons other than those for which they were created or accumulated. These reasons may be both official and cultural ones.”⁶ Documents can at once serve as evidence of institutional functions (“official” purposes) as well as evidence of cultural, social, and political aspects of a time and place. Mid-twentieth-century concepts of the archive and the records they “should” possess tended to be located at two poles: archives as repositories of records, kept as evidence of official transaction, and archives more in the vein of institutions dedicated to history, collecting records as cultural and historical evidence.⁷

For the purposes of this dissertation, these distinctions in the purpose of archives are important to keep in mind for two reasons: the nature of records produced by modern institutions and the notions of what constitutes as historical evidence. One, internal record keeping practices may vary, but modern institutions produce volumes upon volumes of records. In many cases, such records tend to be closed off from the public. Moreover, such records tend to be destroyed as part of the scientific management of those records. This meant that the preservation of only those records vital to the operation of the institution. While a corporate archive might acknowledge the historical value of their records, that is not their priority. However, when a historically oriented archive (such as an academic archive) approaches the corporate institution and solicits the donation of their institutional records, the archive confers such records with the status of historical

⁶ T. R Schellenberg, *The management of archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) 13-16.

⁷ Mark Greene, “The Power of Meaning: The Archival Mission in the Postmodern Age,” *American Archivist* 65, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 42–55.

evidence. For example, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin developed a relationship with NBC, where NBC would send their non-current and soon-to-be destroyed files to the archive. Documents that were once part of NBC's bureaucratic structure are now viewable as historical evidence, such as a programming executive's files about *Ethel and Albert*. Two, archives dedicated to the collection and preservation of historical material rely on frameworks regarding what constitutes as historical evidence; "If the archive cannot or does not accommodate a particular kind of information or mode of scholarship, then it is effectively excluded from the historical record."⁸ An archivist that does not consider the merits of popular culture materials, such as the development and popularity of a television program, means that such material may not readily be available in a publicly accessible archive.

The archival profession did not naturally accept materials associated with popular culture or commercial culture as historical evidence. Archives and libraries sporadically collected the documents of popular culture, especially given that the academic study of popular culture was barely valid around the 1970s.⁹ As such, this dissertation focuses on a period of time when the merits of television as historical evidence were not apparent. The archive's primary users – academics – can be a major factor for archivists when considering the selection of particular materials over others. If the academic context did not support the study of popular culture, then why should an archivist pursue the

⁸ Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 9–25.

⁹ Lucy Shelton Caswell, "Donors and the Acquisition of Popular Culture Materials," in *Popular Culture and Acquisitions*, ed. Allen W. Ellis (New York: Haworth Press, 1992), 13–22; Michael Schudson, "The new validation of popular culture: Sense and sentimentality in academia," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4, no. 1 (1987): 51–68.

collection of such materials? As demonstrated by the case studies in this dissertation, there were instances when an archivist stimulated research in a particular area, such as television. This was much like how Ed Kemp at the University of Oregon operated, in that he proactively collected materials in unconventional areas of study. Given that television in academia was not a serious subject of study until the 1970s, the central interest in this dissertation is an examination of factors that enabled television to enter archival spaces in the 1950s to the 1970s.

Towards an Archival Dimension in Television Studies

The archive evokes images of rows upon rows of boxes, organization of papers, and quiet rooms under the watchful eye of the archive's keepers. The default position as a researcher is to enter archives as a user, with blinders on, focused on the materials that we seek. As researchers, we may confer a sacred status on the archive, accepting what does and does not exist. We may recognize archives as spaces that invest ordinary, routine, personal materials with a sense of historical purpose. Yet, seldom have researchers turned their focus of study on the archive itself.¹⁰

Demystifying the archival process may help in understanding how the archive's contents relate to knowledge production and the histories we write. We can engage with the archive on various levels. Archives are physical places, with real material considerations such as the allocation of money, labor, and storage. There is room for

¹⁰ Seldom is a bit misleading – there have been a number of essays, edited collections, and articles about the power and meaning of archives. This area of scholarly interest is increasingly growing. See for example: Antoinette M Burton, *Archive Stories : Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005); Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever : a Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust : the Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1–2 (March 1, 2002): 87–109.

abstract understandings about the archive, specifically the spatial boundary of knowledge and who has the power to shape how users interact with the archive.¹¹ Engaging with the archive on a conceptual level invites a myriad of notions about history, power, and knowledge. Who has the power to define the contours of knowledge? How are materials selected and ordered? Which materials, or rather, which individuals, professions (such as politicians and businessmen), social realms, and aspects of culture, do archivists privilege for selection? The archive, then, is not just a physical place, but also a space that demonstrates a confluence of professionalized archival practice as well as the academic priorities that define the scope of materials counting as historical evidence.

When applied to television and its location within archival spaces, questions about the selection of materials points to academic and popular valuations about television. Television did not enter the archive or the academy with open arms and full appreciation. Rather, there were multiple factors that led to at least parts of television marked as worthy of archival attention and academic pursuit. Inventorying and interrogating how television-related materials came to be *archival* and *historical*, rather than disposable, ephemeral, and/or commercial (and thus, proprietary), can illuminate the historical, social, and cultural dimensions of television as an industry and as an overwhelming constituent of American life. An inquiry about television's archival inclusion or exclusion highlights perspectives about television's academic and cultural legitimation.

For television to enter archival spaces, archivists and the people who use archives (namely, academics) had to perceive of television as worth saving for posterity and worth studying. Specifically, television programs as well as supporting documents of

¹¹ Blouin and Rosenberg, *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory*.

production, dissemination, and reception, had to be understood as cultural, social, political, and economic artifacts. For example, such a view might depend on conceptualizing television programs as audio and visual records of history as it happened, or the recording of live events that would soon be historic. More than recording events, programs and broadcast flows were imprinted with the political overtones, economic structures, social tensions, and cultural milieu of a particular moment. We can look to programs and the contexts of production and reception “as historical documents and cultural indicators of our time.”¹² More specifically, television is capable of reflecting society at a moment in time and “used to explore historical issues in relation to gender, class, race, or politics and many other things that can be, and are, explored in ways that have nothing to do with media.”¹³ As such, television – the content aired, the industry that facilitated and shaped the content, and the overall way in which television functioned within the larger social system – is historical evidence. In this sense, television is an archive of broadcasted historical moments as well as reflections (albeit, distorted and limited) of American society.

Yet, what seems like a logical perspective regarding television as historical evidence did not occur naturally. Thus, the approach in this dissertation is to examine how television’s material traces entered archival spaces – and whether television was deliberately sought or subsumed in other archival priorities such as journalism, films, media industries, etc. The approach aids in unpacking how a medium identified by its

¹² Fay Schreibman, “A Succinct History of American Television Archives,” *Film & History* 21, no. 2 & 3 (1991): 89.

¹³ Paddy Scannell, “Television and History: Questioning the Archive,” *Communication Review* 13, no. 1 (2010): 40.

liveness and ephemerality (and lowly status as popular culture) could be reframed as historical and cultural evidence: a medium that will be of interest to future historians and scholars.

Television as Historical Evidence

A critical dimension to consider in this dissertation is that television as historical evidence is in a precarious position. On one level, we can look to television as “both our window onto the past and as an artifact of past events...a kind of social history.”¹⁴ Television mediates a record of past events just as much as the production, content, and reception of television serves as cultural and historical evidence of a time and place. On a deeper level, particularly as television relates to the archive, television’s capability as cultural and historical evidence is tempered by what Faye Schreibman calls “another reality.” Specifically, television programs and documentation “are corporate property which the owners deem company assets.”¹⁵ As rich primary source material, we want and often need access to television programs and associated documentation. As commodities and corporate assets, our relationship to television programming is constrained by what is made available to us – often via the commercial form. The availability of such evidence certainly shapes the contours of historiography. Some television programming and associated materials (such as scripts, production notes, network data, ratings, sponsorship, etc.) are more easily accessible than others, and thus we tend to use these more for our historical studies. However, the tendency to use what is easy to locate, such as

¹⁴ Michele Hilmes, “Preface,” in *The Television History Book* (London: British Film Institute, 2003), vii.

¹⁵ Schreibman, “A Succinct History of American Television Archives,” 89.

commercially circulating programs and newspaper articles, consequently means potentially narrow histories.

If television history, or any history, is not a static and closed text, assessing the conditions that enabled the existence and absence of materials in the archives contributes to constructing richer histories about television. By turning to the archives, we gain new perspectives on a historiography that at times comes off as canonical and still limited. Rather than emphasize topics such as 1950s television production or particular programs as exemplifying the social character of an era, this dissertation uses the archive as an optic for understanding television history and the legitimation of television in the academy.

While academics (and television scholars in particular) may utilize archives for historical research, only a few have formally written articles about the television archives, and typically in terms of their experiences in the archive. The gap in literature suggests a great need for critiquing archival spaces and the ways in which television was included or excluded. As Scannell argues, availability of original materials has an impact on television historiography, as well as an impact on postwar American historiography –“It is a truism that histories are as good as the archives on which they depend.”¹⁶ We have great histories about television and postwar American society in general. But these histories are dependent on the material that is available. Thus, I aim to contribute to television studies a contextual history about the archives where television’s material traces reside.

¹⁶ Paddy Scannell, “History, Media and Communication,” in *The Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies*, ed. Klaus Bruhn Jensen (New York: Routledge, 2002), 201.

Framework for the Study

For the purposes of this dissertation, a contextual history means outlining the practices and perspectives of a few key institutions that considered television as archivable in the 1950s to the 1970s. Institutions conferred television's status as legitimate cultural and historical artifacts, but television's entrance into archival spaces depended on the work of various individuals within academic, archival, and industrial structures. Determinators, such as archivists, curators, academics, and industry professionals, dealt with material obstacles and grappled with how to define television's intangible values. The framework, then, begins with examining the historical moments and institutional structures where television currently resides as cultural and historical artifacts. The examination involves outlining the structures and priorities of the following particular types of institutions: cultural, archival, academic, and industrial.

Each institutional context had various rationales to pursue television. Rationales refer to the justifications why an institution might conceptualize television as more than commercial products and temporally constrained broadcast moments, but as something belonging in archival spaces. Alternatively, rationales did not necessarily need to directly address television, given that rationales to archive mass media or the entertainment industry subsumed television. As demonstrated by the case studies, conceptualizing television as archivable was a difficult task, but even more pressing was how to archive television's material traces. Hence, the framework of analysis focuses on three main aspects: the institutional structures, the articulation of why television (or more broadly, mass media, popular culture, or entertainment) belonged in archival spaces, and how determinators enabled by institutional structures archived television's material traces. In

examining a few of these institutions and the factors at play in archiving televisions, we can trace how television was valued as worthy of academic study and conferred with cultural and historical values.

Television as Product and as Process

The distinction between the television product and the television process was an essential analytic for this framework. Television as a whole is an unwieldy term; it can refer to the industry, programming flow, particular programs, physical technologies, etc. What do we mean by television and what does it mean to archive television? As such, it was vital for me to one, distinguish between television as it aired and television as it was made, and two, to maintain an expansive view of television. Anecdotally, when people asked me about my dissertation, they tended to ask about the preservation of particular programs, rather than the preservation of the contexts of production and reception. In other words, when thinking about a history of archiving television, the preservation of the television program – the product – resonated. In terms of capturing people’s imaginations about what it means to archive television, the product was perhaps the most salient of television’s material traces. However, our histories depend on television’s other material traces – documentation about the process, such as how a television program was made, how people reacted to a program, how television networks made programming decisions or interacted with advertisers, how a writer or a producer created a show, and so on. It was important for this project to examine all of television’s material traces – the recorded programs and documentation – in order to reflect the many conceptions and experiences of television. Television is more than a sum of programs; there are distinct industry practices, commercial imperatives, systems of regulation, organization of labor, creative

endeavors, and cultural expressions. To help delineate how television was archived, the framework loosely divides television as products (the programs) and television as process.

Some archives focused only on television's output: the broadcast program. Ideally, archives sought out the physical recording. If not, the script could serve as a less technologically dependent corollary to the audiovisual record. Some archives focused on the paper-based material, acquiring documents associated with television. In other words, some archives collected television's tangible documentation about its development, production, and reception. If the program is the product, then these 'behind-the-scenes' facets of television are the process. The decision to pursue one or the other or both was symbolic of how an institution approached the collection of television's material traces and the collection of historical material in general. Such decisions were also indicative of structural and material constraints, such as traditional archival spaces with a predisposition towards manuscript collections and instability of television's technological formats. Television was a new medium and a new form of cultural and historical evidence for archival spaces; some chose to favor television's products and some chose to favor television's processes as cultural and historical artifacts.

Television as Commercial and Creative Entities

For the purposes of this dissertation, another approach to delineating aspects of television was to highlight an ongoing tension when studying television: corporate/commercial aspects and creative/cultural aspects. Television was, and continues to be, a remarkable industrial force and integrated into American social and political structures (e.g. regulating television to promote the public interest or television's role in informing a democratic citizenry). It also was, and continues to be, a remarkable

cultural force and medium for creative expression. The fact that television can at once be cultural artifacts and corporate assets presented one of the greatest obstacles for both the archiving institutions highlighted in this dissertation and my examinations of these institution as case studies. To account for different institutional contexts and their approaches to archiving television, it was crucial to loosely identify rationales to pursue television as commercial and industrial enterprises or television as creative and culturally minded endeavors.

Each case study demonstrated the discursive construction of television as historical and cultural evidence *in general*. However, there were far more nuances in which aspects of television constituted as historical and cultural evidence and how that played out in the archiving process. Determinators and their institutional contexts did not readily see *all* of television as historically and culturally valuable, but rather they privileged particular aspects of television based on institutional priorities and conceptions of television's worth. For example, to conceive of television programs as modern visual art opened a possibility for some programs to enter the museum space that might have an archival potential. To conceive of television as part of the modern business ecosystem allowed for the collecting of television business records, much like the records of other industries like timber, railroads, steel, publishing, and so on. To conceive of television as creative endeavors allowed television to be collected as exemplars of artistic achievements or illustrations of the creative process. To conceive of television as audio-visual records of American social, political, and cultural life allowed for a broad range of collecting efforts, whether as museum exhibits, traditional manuscript collections, or libraries of recorded programs.

Still, in privileging one aspect of television (or more broadly, one aspect of media or popular culture), other aspects of television also entered archival spaces. For instance, an institution devoted to the collection of performing arts materials might approach television as a creative medium while an institution devoted to the collection of business histories might approach television as an industry. However, in the records of television as creative medium lie the records of television's industrial processes and commercial structures, and vice versa. As defined in the framework on television as product and as process, archives pursued the acquisition of television's material traces as products (and predominantly as audiovisual records) or as documentation of processes. Documentation was largely from an industrial or commercial point of view or from a creative labor point of view, but did not need to be mutually exclusive.

In sum, each case study draws on history methods and document analysis that examined institutional contexts, rationales to pursue television, and how television entered these archival spaces. Central to this framework was the delineation of television: as product and process and as commercial/industrial and cultural/creative. Whereas the first pair referred to the physical types of materials collected, the second pair helped to conceptually identify which aspects of television entered archival spaces. Embedded in the distinctions between television's commerciality and creativity were hierarchies of which content and media (as in paper versus moving image) constituted as historical evidence. Using this framework, the dissertation examines five case studies and the different institutional approaches to legitimating television as historical and cultural material.

Dissertation Overview

The next chapter (Chapter II) summarizes an overview of literature pertaining to television studies, the television industry in the 1950s to the 1970s, archival practice and the integration of media, and more in depth discussion on television as historical evidence and scholarly incursions into television archives. In the absence of thorough studies of the archival landscape where television resides, this dissertation mostly focuses on several notable archives that are publicly accessible, which makes up the case studies in Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII. The archives selected were the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research and the related State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the UCLA Film and Television Archive, and the Museum of Broadcasting (now known as the Paley Center for Media). Also included in this study is the Museum of Modern Art, which does not have a television archive per se, but at one time did consider the merits of a television archive. I selected these archives for three main reasons: popularity, formation in the pre-television studies era (1950s-1970s), and accessibility to documents pertaining to formation. These archives also represent two main types of institutions: cultural institutions with an archival function and academic archives.

As evidenced by the *Ethel and Albert* example, American television is widely scattered across a spectrum of obvious archival locations and many not-so-obvious or accessible locations. However, I chose to begin with the more obvious archival locations. The archives featured in Chapters V, VI, and VII are common locations for television historians and scholars in general to access primary source material, whether documentation about television industry and particular programs or the actual

programs.¹⁷ Each of these archives formed either prior or contemporary to the critical study of television in the academy. The MoMA case study demonstrated an early interest to consider television as a unique medium that merited an archival presence. The others illustrated different ways television entered archival spaces, either through an existing institution (e.g. the State Historical Society of Wisconsin or UCLA) or through the creation of a new institution (e.g. the Museum of Broadcasting). Access to primary source material was crucial and thus helped to narrow the case studies. As outlined in the methods chapter (Chapter III), much of the research relied on what I call the *archives of the archives*, examining internal documents such as accession records, administrative records, key faculty and department papers, donor files, and other original material that offers insights into the process of archiving television. These little-used primary sources are supplemented by newspaper and trade press articles.

The first case study (Chapter IV) examined how an established cultural institution, the Museum of Modern Art, experimented with television as a new visual art and as potentially parallel to the Film Library's appreciation of film as sociological and historical (and certainly artistic) artifacts. This case study marks a moment when people within an authoritative cultural institution considered television's worth beyond the initial broadcast context. The highlight of the MoMA case was a 1955 proposal for an imagined television archive. Hence, the first case study focused on conceptions of a television

¹⁷ Other common locations for archival research include the Library of Congress, Syracuse University, the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, the University of Southern California, and the Peabody Archives at the University of Georgia. These locations are certainly worth pursuing for future study. However, the Library of Congress was excluded because of the difficulty in viewing primary sources pertaining to their archival decisions. The others are excluded because they either do not have accessible primary sources (or didn't need extensive justification to pursue television, such as USC given their proximity to the television industry) or was not an articulated television or popular culture archive until the 1970s.

archive that never happened, but foreshadowed the many reasons as well as obstacles in preserving television. This case serves as an illustration of an early attempt to merge television into the existing constructs of a cultural institution with archival spaces, namely the MoMA's Film Library, which was the first film archive in the country.

The next two case studies focused on the academic archive, which supports academic endeavors including scholarship and education. Stemming from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in the late 1950s, two research centers pursued television. The Mass Communications History Center (Chapter V) and the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research (Chapter VI) revealed the ways television (and mass media in general) challenged conventional archival and academic practices. Although television entered these archival spaces in many different ways, it did so mainly under the disciplinary umbrellas of mass communications and the performing arts. That entrance was predicated on a conception of television as worthy of preservation for historical and cultural reasons; reasons that could be justified within archival and scholarly rationales. Such reasons included the need to preserve documents chronicling television as a modern business, as disseminator of news, as public forum for fulfilling democratic functions, and as artistic and creative achievements. Furthermore, the academic archive demonstrated the scholarly and instructional value in preserving documentation of the process and the final product (the program). It was not so much the project of either of these research centers to elevate the cultural status of television, but rather to broaden the scope of materials deemed worthy of academic and historical study.

Both of the last two case studies (Chapter VII) pivoted on the notion that television's main output, the product, ought to be preserved. These case studies reflect

how two industry-initiated projects to archive television diverged into two different kinds of archiving efforts. The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and William Paley (who can be metonymic for the whole television industry) pursued television archive projects as a means to convey television's lasting cultural and historical value. Their interest in archiving television catalyzed the eventual formations of the UCLA Film and Television Archive and the Museum of Broadcasting. Both relied on academic input to strengthen a claim about television's cultural value and both pursued an institutional setting outside of the commercially driven industry to convey legitimacy. The Television Academy developed relationships with academic institutions to make the vision of a television archive happen. Paley commissioned an academic study to probe the degree of interest and how to proceed in establishing an institution devoted to broadcasting's history via the collection of television and radio programs. The study was significant in surveying the existence of recorded programs and more importantly, defining classificatory systems that reflected which television programs were most valuable as historical and cultural artifacts and thus belonged in an institution. Both cases demonstrated the industry's pursuit to elevate television's status and in the process, define television's worth for academic study and for cultural heritage.

My intention was not to privilege the academic archives over the industry-initiated archives; in the end, a mix of television's processes and products entered archival spaces. Rather, my goal was to highlight the varying pretexts and motivations to transform television from a ubiquitous and largely ephemeral mass medium into something more lasting. This meant exploring how existing institutions dealt with television as archivable and the formation of new institutions or spaces to archive

television's processes and products. Questions such as who was involved (academics, archivists, and/or industry representatives), what structures were in place to support television's entrance, what were the barriers of entry, and who were the intended users or publics, help guide the historical inquiry.

In sum, the case studies highlight key moments and variations in a history of legitimating television via archival spaces. The MoMA did not have the structure or intent to pursue a television archive, but there was evidence that individuals within the institution at least formulated reasons why television ought to exist in archival spaces. The academic research centers benefited from strong archival and institutional structures, but grappled with why television (or more generally, why mass media and performing arts) belonged in archival spaces. This was particularly difficult to rationalize when so few academics saw value in studying television as a specific medium. Furthermore, some aspects of television confounded the archival process, such as how to archive television's recorded output or what to select from volumes of scripts and executive files. With the industry-initiated archives, the Television Academy's efforts began with more populist as well as industry-servicing intentions, although eventually morphed into an academic archiving institution. Conversely, the Museum of Broadcasting was an illustration of the cultural-based archiving institution (likely patterned off of the MoMA) that merged the archival impulse with the industry's aggrandizing goals to frame television as constitutive of an American heritage. Collectively, these case studies represent several strands in a history of archiving television, mostly from the institutional perspective.

The archive is a rich site for historical inquiry and institutional analysis. This study began from a point of curiosity about what exists in the archive and why those

television materials entered the archival setting while others did not. Looking to the archive affords opportunities to trace how television has been valued and who takes part in shaping value. A location in an archival context connotes a sense of history and cultural significance, but what does the process entail? Examining the complexities of archives, and their relation to academic institutions and the television industry, illuminates how the archive serves as a site of cultural and academic legitimation.

CHAPTER II

CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation draws from industrial, archival, and academic realms in order to develop a foundation to pursue the historical inquiry into how television entered archives in the 1950s to the 1970s. The context and literature review outlines television studies as well as focuses on key aspects of the television industry in the first three decades of the network era, discussions about archives, and television scholarship about history and television in the archives.

A central facet of this chapter is attention to institutional structures, namely the television industry and archives. Highlighting the television industry, specifically business practices and recording technologies from the 1950s to the 1970s, is essential to examining how television's material traces entered archival spaces given that these were factors in television's archivability. Likewise, the complexities of archival institutions and professionalized archival practices are also essential to frame this dissertation. Understanding archives as more than physical locations offers a lens to pursue this study. This includes theoretical dimensions of archives and the power to determine what constitutes as historical evidence, specifically the supposition that television materials are historical evidence. Surveying how archivists and scholars have thought about the contents and construction of archives helps build an argument about the consequences on what can be known about the past. Additionally, several television scholars have dealt with television's location in archives and its relationship with historiography. This dissertation builds on the work of television scholars, specifically the archival arguments

made by Lynn Spigel and Derek Kompare, who discuss archival spaces as part of the project to legitimate television and define a television heritage. While several scholars have written about dimensions of the archive, this dissertation delves deeper into archival formations, the legitimation of television via archival mechanisms, and understandings of television's significance.

The first part of this chapter provides an overview of television studies in order to ground the dissertation. The second part focuses on the institutional structures and practices of the television industry in the 1950s and into the 1970s, including programming, technology, and general sentiments about the television medium. The third part shifts attention to archives. This section discusses definitions of the archive and an overview of media in archives. The fourth part pulls together critical interrogations about television's status as historical and archivable.

Television Studies

This dissertation focused on archival efforts in the 1950s to the 1970s. It was at the tail end of this time that an academic appreciation for television began to crystallize. A number of television scholars have outlined the formation and the significance of television studies. While the specialization did not emerge until the 1970s, that did not mean that scholars had no interest in the medium. Horace Newcomb and others note that the study of television in the 1950s and 1960s was largely through a social science lens and effects-driven mass communication research. Television was typically viewed as a

social ill or a vehicle to sway public opinion.¹ Often times, academics studied television for administrative purpose, meaning research that benefited the industry.² Even some early critical approaches to television were still couched in viewing television as a social problem. An early article about television by Adorno, the notable critic associated with the Frankfurt School, describes television in the context of standardization, mass production, and the culture industry.³ While his critique is apt, it nevertheless collapses the complexities of television into an overarching controlling mechanism with little to no room for resistance from the audience. Conversely, early television critics, writing in outlets such as *New York Times*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and syndicated columns, helped to establish television's significance, albeit limited to particular taste hierarchies and qualifications.⁴

It was not until the 1960s and 1970s when studying television shifted away from a largely problem-based viewpoint into a diverse range of perspectives. McLuhan helped usher in an emergent period of evaluating the impact of the television *medium* more so than the content.⁵ McLuhan represents a moment in transition, when scholars started to

¹ Horace Newcomb, "Studying Television: Same Questions, Different Contexts," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 1 (2005): 107–111; Michael Z Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012).

² William Boddy, "Loving a Nineteen-inch Motorola: American Writing on Television," in *Regarding Television: Critical Approaches--an Anthology*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan ([Frederick, MD.]: University Publications of America, 1983), 1–11.

³ T. W Adorno, "How to Look at Television," *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television* 8, no. 3 (1954): 213–235.

⁴ Lynn Spigel, "The Making of a TV Literate Elite," in *The Television Studies Book*, ed. Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (London; New York; New York: Arnold ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1998), 63–94. For an example, see Gilbert Seldes, *The Public Arts*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media; the Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

take note of television's complexities and social impact. In the 1970s, two scholars published the notable texts, which undoubtedly helped spur the academic specialization. Horace Newcomb's *TV: The Most Popular Art* published in 1974 was the first academic treatment of television content that did not approach television in a negative light like the social scientists.⁶ He wrote about television's uniqueness in genres, its forms of entertainment and information, and the significance of studying popular culture. We can place Newcomb's approach in a textual or literary tradition; Kompare argues that Newcomb's text was foundational for a humanities approach to television that analyzed television's formulas and aesthetics in the context of social and cultural issues.⁷ The other influential text was by Raymond Williams, who contributed to the academic inquiry of television with *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* in 1975. He expanded the study of television beyond just content or technology. His concept of flow, such as the flow of programming or the disruptive flow of commercials, is a foundational tool for scholars to examine television production and reception. Furthermore, he offered a conceptualization of television that was not just content (which he meticulously categorizes and defines), not just form (either as technological form or the forms found in content), and not just institutions (such as the comparison between commercial and public systems).⁸ Television was all of these things, a dynamic between institutions, policies, regulations, practices, content, audience, and technology. He sets up a framework for considering a *social history* of television that is not tethered to content nor

⁶ Horace Newcomb, *TV: The Most Popular Art* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1974).

⁷ Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation : How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 121.

⁸ Raymond Williams, *Television : Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975).

technology, but to production and structures, as well as the ruling class and commercial interests involved in television. These two early texts demonstrated the complexities of television and the various entry points into its study. As Brundson argues, this was an emergent phase of television studies as scholars questioned the ontological and epistemological grounds for studying television and how to approach its study.⁹

Developments in areas such as cultural studies, sociology, and political economy have contributed to television studies to better equip the field to examine the complex social and cultural contexts associated with and around television. Thus, rather than a study of television in terms of only quantitative effects or functionalist theories that dominated the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, Kellner argues that television studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field and largely in opposition to the methods of the past. In particular, the newly formed television studies approach “produced methods to analyze the complex relations between texts, audiences, and content, as well as the relationships between media industries, state, and capitalist economies.”¹⁰ Spigel and Olsson explain television studies’ roots as a confluence of different traditions and theoretical orientations, such as the biting social critiques of the Frankfurt School, humanities-based approaches to literary texts, journalistic criticism, and especially developed in opposition to functionalist mass communications theories.¹¹ The class critiques from the Marxist-influenced British cultural studies helped to advance critical

⁹ Charlotte Brundson, “Is Television Studies History?,” *Cinema Journal* 47, no. 3 (2008): 127–137.

¹⁰ Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 31.

¹¹ Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson, *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

theorizing about social class, identity, and power as viewed on television and in behind the scenes.¹² Additionally, feminist frameworks were a major intellectual and critical influence on the development of television studies, which included perspectives about production, distribution of labor, contexts of reception, representations, and meaning-making.¹³

Newcomb explains that to study television is to address “the larger social and cultural constructs that surround us.”¹⁴ To do so requires asking how television tells stories and how television stories relate to the societies and cultures where the programs appear. Studying television means appreciating the medium as a specific and autonomous entity, while operating within broader contexts.¹⁵ Approaching television as an integral part of society and culture and analyzing *how* that happens has led to a variety of studies. There is an especially rich tradition of historical inquiries, including studies about experimentations in 1950s programming, gender constructions in postwar America, television comedy’s role in culture, and television stardom as indicative of industry and fan practices, to name a few.¹⁶ D’Acci identifies the disparate ways to approach television including the working of industries, the production of programs, ideological

¹² Kompare, *Rerun Nation*.

¹³ Charlotte Brundson, “What Is the ‘Television’ of Television Studies,” in *The Television Studies Book*, ed. Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (London; New York; New York: Arnold ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Newcomb, “Studying Television,” 111.

¹⁵ Brundson, “What Is the ‘Television’ of Television Studies”; Boddy, “Loving a Nineteen-inch Motorola: American Writing on Television.”

¹⁶ McCarthy, *The Citizen Machine*; Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); David Marc, *Comic Visions: Television Comedy and American Culture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Susan Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars: Early Television and Broadcast Stardom* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

readings of television programs, critiques of American hegemony, even ethnographic approaches that celebrate television viewing as pleasure and resistance.¹⁷ Overall, television studies tends to focus on three major areas: the contexts of production (e.g. ownership, regulation, industry, technological development, etc.), textuality and content, and audiences.¹⁸

Despite the growth of television-related research and scholarly analysis (as evidenced by books, articles, journals, and conferences), some scholars note the persistent difficulty of justifying television's "place" in academia. Television has been a "bad object," with its dimensions of commerciality and domesticity relegating television to a low status within an academic hierarchy.¹⁹ Corner observes that "defending popular programming against 'elite' disapproval appears to have become a routine task."²⁰ As Newman and Levine point out, television scholarship generally builds television's status as a legitimate object of study, but still demarcates certain subjects (such as particular genres, authorship, and industrial practices) as more worthy or respectable than others.²¹

¹⁷ Julie D'Acci, "Cultural Studies, Television Studies, and the Crisis in the Humanities," in *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 418–444.

¹⁸ Toby Miller, *Television Studies: The Basics* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁹ Michele Hilmes, "The Bad Object: Television in the American Academy," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 1 (2005): 111–117.

²⁰ John Corner, "Television Studies and the Idea of Criticism," *Screen : the journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television*. 48, no. 3 (2007): 363.

²¹ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*.

These are relevant points in light of the observation that the ascent of television studies connected with increased efforts to bring television into archives.²² In this respect, the dissertation aims to trace the entrance of television in archival spaces before television studies solidified in the academic context. Without the scholarly support structures that we have today to legitimate television's study, how might have television entered archival spaces? As such, the dissertation depends on a foundational understanding of the television industry in the first few decades in tandem to archival practices as they relate to media and the definition of historical evidence. The next two parts of this chapter provide the context and literature review pertaining to the television industry and archival institutions.

The Television Industry, 1950s-1970s

The following part focuses on overlapping chronologies of industry practices, recording technologies, and television's reputation. One of the best overviews of the television industry is by William Boddy, who thoroughly examines the first decade of commercial television – the 1950s. He delves into the complexities of the television industry in the 1950s, with attention to industrial, technological, regulatory, and social forces that shaped how television was produced, funded, and consumed.²³ Prior to Boddy, there were several notable television (or rather, broadcast) historians who outlined the formation of television. Erik Barnouw was the first to thoroughly take on the task of a

²² For example, see the introduction to Library of Congress. Motion Picture, Sarah Rouse, and Katharine Loughney, *3 Decades of Television : a Catalog of Television Programs Acquired by the Library of Congress, 1949-1979* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1989).

²³ Boddy, *Fifties Television*.

broadcast history, writing a three-volume set about radio and television history. While he did extensive research and interviews, much of his history aligned with conventional histories about broadcasting – memoirs and reminiscences from people within the industry. Still, his history provided a foundational text for television studies, especially formulating television’s historicity. Another key history comes from Sterling and Kittross. *Stay Tuned* outlines the technological and industrial history of broadcasting, featuring essential chronologies of who-what-where-when.²⁴ Edgerton, who also provides another foundational overview, positions *Stay Tuned* as a “classic example of empiricist history of broadcasting” and the “standard version of American broadcasting history.”²⁵ This meant a rather objective and fact based history. Edgerton approached his history text as a more topic based history, but comes off as a bit empiricist history in that he relies greatly on other people’s research and newspapers as his primary sources. Still, Edgerton’s text proves useful in its comprehensiveness and is certainly more critical than Sterling and Kittross. Similarly, Gomery provides another comprehensive overview of broadcast history that highlights the key moments, which is useful to sketch out a critical summary of television’s past. A more nuanced and in-depth history comes from Michele Hilmes, who works to weave together social, cultural, political, and economic elements of a complex broadcast history.²⁶ The following section draws on these historians and

²⁴ Christopher H Sterling and John M Kittross, *Stay Tuned : a Concise History of American Broadcasting* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1978).

²⁵ Gary R Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), xiv.

²⁶ Douglas Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008); Michele Hilmes, *Only Connect: a Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002).

others to provide a foundational understanding about the television industry as it solidified in the 1950s and consolidated control into the 1970s.

The television industry, especially as it crystallized in the 1950s, was entwined with other media. Television emerged from the radio industry, with the major radio networks investing in television. Advertising agencies that made sponsored radio programs likewise continued to play a major role in television. The film industry closely followed television and certainly took part. The forms of theater also played an influential role in early television, especially when television production centered in New York City, before shifting to Hollywood as filmed programming overtook live stage productions. Many of the standards developed in the 1950s carried on for decades to follow, which television historians have labeled as the network era.

I begin with a brief overview of technologies that enabled television to be recorded and reasons to do so. Next, I transition to an overview of content and business practices in the 1950s and into the 1960s and 1970s. Lastly, I highlight a few key moments that reflect public perceptions about television and the industry's reactions. These overviews of the recording technologies, television industry structure, and popular perceptions of television will help build the argument about television's entrance into archival spaces. On one level, this literature review works as a historical overview of television industry as-it-happened. On another level, this overview serves as a backdrop for the cultural, academic, and archival institutions that dealt with television after-the-fact, as in, television's utility past the business of producing and broadcasting television.

Technologies to Broadcast and Record Programs

The technology to transmit images and sound (and earlier, the radio technology to transmit sound) preceded the technology to record.²⁷ Although there were a few experimental broadcasts in the U.S. during the 1930s, they were not preserved mostly because the technology did not exist.²⁸ Early attempts to record live television used a process called kinescope recording. A 16mm film camera was placed near the viewing tube, called the kinescope. Quality was not as great as 35mm film, the Hollywood standard, but kinescope recordings (or kinescopes) got the job done if the goal was to record the content.²⁹ Another recording technology was magnetic tape. Ampex first introduced in 1956, which was an open reel system until 1970 when electronics companies started to manufacture cassette cartridges that held the tape and could be inserted into a tape deck.³⁰

In an era of live television, recordings were used largely for *retransmission* purposes, such as the transmission of a live east coast broadcast to the west coast, usually

²⁷ Chuck Howell, "Dealing with Archive Records," in *Methods of Historical Analysis in Electronic Media*, ed. Donald G Godfrey (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 305–348.

²⁸ Albert Abramson, *The History of Television, 1942 to 2000* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Publishers, 2003), 18.

²⁹ Richard J. Goggin, "Television and Motion Picture Production -- and Kinescope Recordings," *Hollywood Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1949): 152–159.

³⁰ The first tape system was the 2 inch quad, and then subsequent tape brands and sizes, were an open reel system similar to the audio tape reels of the 1960s and 1970s. The first cassette was the Phillips 1/2 inch, but the most popular was the Sony 3/4 inch U-Matic tape. For a quick chronology of video tape formats, see Appendix J in William Thomas Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997: a Report on the Current State of American Television and Video Preservation: Report of the Librarian of Congress*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1997), 214.

days and sometimes weeks later.³¹ The kinescope recording also served as a relay function between stations lacking a cable connection as early as 1949.³² Occasionally, networks used kinescope recordings to screen programs for sponsors or for internal reference purposes.³³ Television scholars note that even with the technology to pre-record programs, network executives and critics favored live television in the early 1950s.³⁴ When tapes appeared in 1956, they were also used for time shifting broadcasts rather than as a mechanism to pre-tape a show, or more appropriately, store a television program for posterity.

In thinking about why so much of television's past recorded programs no longer exist, Martin argues that no one really considered kinescopes or tapes to be a preservation medium; it was a transmission medium. He argues that "the technology was seen as providing a clear and tangible benefit *right now*, not for the future."³⁵ In many cases, when the initial retransmission use was fulfilled, the recording medium was salvaged or reused. Filmstock was resold to Kodak Eastman. One of the major selling points for the expensive new tape technology was its reusability. Thus, broadcasters were not concerned about long shelf life, but the durability to re-record and the maintenance of visual quality for the viewer. As an archivist, Martin aptly points out the "despair" over the tape's durability and expensiveness, which was a "practical incentive to the

³¹ Jeff Martin, "The Dawn of Tape: Transmission Device as Preservation Medium," *Moving Image* 5, no. 1 (2005): 45–66. Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States*.

³² Goggin, "Television and Motion Picture Production -- and Kinescope Recordings," 155.

³³ Kompare, *Rerun Nation*, 43.

³⁴ Boddy, *Fifties Television*.

³⁵ Martin, "The Dawn of Tape," 56. Emphasis in original.

destruction of recorded material.”³⁶ In addition to the utilitarian dimension of recording over tapes, Schreibman explains the industry viewed entertainment programming as ephemeral.³⁷ Despite the existence of the technology to record television programs, Martin notes that people in the television industry were constrained by the *right now* mindset, seeing little value in keeping and archiving television material. The mindset changed when tape technology was more affordable and thus provided a cost effective reason to keep a copy of a television program as broadcast. For example, the broadcast networks regularly started to save videotaped news broadcasts when it became cost-effective with the ¾ inch U-matic tape cassette in the 1970s.³⁸ It was not until the technology was cheap that there was an incentive to save television’s output.

Aside from retransmission, there were other advantages to recording programs. One advantage was the ability to control live production, much like a film set. Take the example of *I Love Lucy*. Television historians credit it as the first program to record on high quality film while doing a live broadcast.³⁹ So rather than a television program of live transmissions with no moving image record, the show was filmed at the same quality as a Hollywood production, allowing for more creative control over production (and far away from the network control still based in New York).⁴⁰ This example also highlights another advantage: the ability to replay the television program. Schatz argues that Desilu

³⁶ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

³⁷ Schreibman, “A Succinct History of American Television Archives.”

³⁸ Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, 111.

³⁹ Christopher Anderson, *HollywoodTV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*; Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*.

⁴⁰ Thomas Schatz, “Desilu, I Love Lucy, and the Rise of Network TV,” in *Making Television: Authorship and the Production Process*, ed. Robert J Thompson and Gary Burns (New York: Praeger, 1990), 117–136.

filmed *I Love Lucy* with a commercial intent in mind, specifically syndication.⁴¹ There was also evidence that networks used kinescope recordings for rerun purposes in the 1950s, selecting episodes that had the best visual quality and replaying episodes over the summer when the networks had few new programs. Thus, the commercial incentive was perhaps the strongest reason to either record a live program or broadcast a previously recorded (or more likely, filmed on 35mm) program. Recorded programs could control costs, alleviate the problems of live production, improve quality, and ultimately, boost profits.⁴² This technological aspect aids in understanding the television industry's economic incentive to utilize recording technologies. The following section focuses on more specifically on the contexts of production and distribution by outlining the television industry in the 1950s and its development into the ensuing decades.

A “New” Medium with “Old” Content and Practices

By the 1940s, television was more than a fad. Television coincided with the post war economic growth, an integral part in the consumer boom in urban areas and newly forming suburbs.⁴³ It was shaping up to be an exciting new mass medium with great educational, informational, and entertainment potential. The television industry, though, was far from a new structure. In this section, I discuss the formation, or rather the solidification of the television industry. This includes highlights about the television industry structure, sponsorship, programming decisions, and the consolidation of control towards the end of the 1950s and onward.

⁴¹ Syndication of *I Love Lucy* began in 1955. Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*, 139.

⁴² Kompare, *Rerun Nation*.

⁴³ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 2003).

The powerhouses of radio – NBC, CBS, and newcomer ABC – invested in networked television stations.⁴⁴ David Sarnoff’s NBC and William Paley’s CBS radio networks became broadcast networks as they connected new television stations, whether owned and operated by one of the major networks or an affiliated, locally owned station.⁴⁵ The so called new television industry was based on a couple of major networks (NBC and CBS) who dominated thanks to factors including vertical integration, strategic lobbying of regulators, tight control over patents, contractual agreements with creative talent, economies of scale to widely distribute the same product, and high investment in market research to sell audiences to advertisers.⁴⁶ As television historian, William Boddy, writes “network power affected not only the terms of industry negotiations but also the forms of television programming and sponsorship in the 1950s.”⁴⁷ Thus, the structure of the television industry resembled the structure of the radio industry.

The models of sponsorship developed on radio structured how to fund television, at least in the first decade of commercial television. Television had even more potential as an advertising medium than radio, given its visual component. As such, advertising agencies and sponsors eagerly worked with the networks to develop radio favorites for television or create new shows but still guided by tested formulas.⁴⁸ Pat Weaver, NBC’s

⁴⁴ Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

⁴⁵ The two major radio networks – NBC and CBS – had the funds to experiment and to dominate. The FCC freeze on new television station licenses from 1948 to 1952 also helped secure the networks’ domination in television. See William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990) and Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*.

⁴⁶ Hilmes, *Only Connect*.

⁴⁷ Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 132.

⁴⁸ Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*.

star executive in the early 1950s, nicely stated the key to television's quick success and rapid adoption: "Whereas in radio we had to find our way through hit or miss methods, we now have a pattern we believe will enable us, with great economy, to do a tremendous job in television without too much experimentation."⁴⁹ As such, much of television's industrial practices solidified decades earlier.

The networks largely learned what worked from their earlier trials in radio, such as carrying over the scheduling grid with daytime programs like soap operas for women and then dramas, comedies, and variety programs for primetime family viewing hours. The prime time hours consisted of many of the same genres that dominated radio: drama, situation comedy, and quiz shows.⁵⁰ Knowing that celebrities were central to direct audiences from radio to television, NBC and CBS used their radio personalities and enlisted other celebrities to fill the primetime schedules. Broadcast historians refer to CBS's main strategy as a talent raid, taking away NBC's highly paid talent.⁵¹ Meehan points out that CBS was successful because the network agreed to *distribute* programs that the stars *owned*, which financially benefited the stars (via the capital gains taxes) while the network reaped profits.⁵² Stars such as Milton Berle, Jack Benny, Lucille Ball, Kate Smith, Bob Hope, Groucho Marx, Ed Wynn, and others received top billing in lineups and shows developed around their talents – many of whom came from variety

⁴⁹ Quoted in Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 16.

⁵⁰ Leo Bogart, *The Age of Television; a Study of Viewing Habits and the Impact of Television on American Life*. (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1956), 50-51.

⁵¹ Boddy, *Fifties Television*; Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States*; *Ibid*.

⁵² Eileen R Meehan, "Critical Theorizing on Broadcast History," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 30, no. 4 (1986): 393–411. This point about the stars' ownership of program, rather than the network's ownership, has archival implications, as highlighted in the Wisconsin case studies, Chapters V and VI.

show and vaudeville tradition. As Murray argues, the networks and sponsors relied very much on a star system to cultivate loyal audiences and stable program schedules.⁵³

News was another a stable feature of television programming. However, broadcast historian Douglas Gomery notes news “remained a second-class citizen” until the 1960s.⁵⁴ Like radio, it was a common practice to mostly avoid controversial content. Murrow was somewhat of an exception in a decade marked by blacklisting, red scare censorship, and avoidance of civil rights issues. News was sponsored, like many other television programs, which further compromised the content. It took broadcasters awhile to ascertain how to use the visual medium effectively to report the day’s news, especially given cumbersome and expensive film equipment.⁵⁵

As a visual medium, television also borrowed from theatrical and cinematic forms. Producing plays for the television screen was a major facet of network television production in the early and mid 1950s. Directors, writers, and actors adapted to television . They faced constraints such as bulky camera equipment, lighting for a black and white medium, and of course, the small television screen compared to expansive stages or cinematic screens. As such, creative laborers worked around these constraints and established the televisual aesthetic. For example, the close-up shot became central to the visual and narrative language of the live drama.

Story wise, many programs were episodic like the dramas and situation comedies on radio; a formula with consistent main characters but self contained episodes that

⁵³ Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars*.

⁵⁴ Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States*, 124.

⁵⁵ Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*.

allowed many different authors to write single episodes. In contrast to the serialized dramas, Barnouw explains the anthology drama as “largely the creation of theater people.... The play was the thing. Actors were chosen to fit the play.... The anthology series said to the writer: ‘Write us a play.’”⁵⁶ Sponsored by major industries seeking to demonstrate cultural clout, the drama anthologies included *Philco Television Playhouse*, *Goodyear Television Playhouse*, *Kraft Television Theater*, and *US. Steel Hour, Playhouse 90*, and *Studio One*. Generally, sponsors had some say in the drama’s production, namely featuring a product or urging writers to stay away from a taboo topic. However, the main attraction was the creative talent: writers (who could subvert the sponsor’s and network’s wishes), actors, and directors. Among the most notable names and productions were Paddy Chayefsky’s *Marty* (1953), Reginald Rose’s *Twelve Angry Men* (1954), and Rod Serling’s *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (1956). Typically referred to as the Golden Age, the medium’s first decade (1948-58), the live anthology brought a sense of high art, talent, and cultural enlightenment to the small screen.⁵⁷ Boddy argues that myth of the golden age began almost as quickly as it ended, with writers, directors, and critics pining over the “quality” days of certain live programs. Edgerton notes that the Golden Age designation reflected an intentional network strategy to elevate television’s status and sell the program to sponsors and to viewers.⁵⁸ Much of the so-called Golden Age of

⁵⁶ Erik Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty: the Evolution of American Television* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 154. For all Barnouw’s contribution to broadcasting history, some television scholars like Boddy, Spigel, and Gomery critique Barnouw’s biases towards live dramas and unabashed praise for a so called “Golden Age.”

⁵⁷ Kompare, *Rerun Nation*, 107.

⁵⁸ Boddy, *Fifties Television*; Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*.

television does not physically exist in recorded form, which further mythologizes the era.⁵⁹

While Hollywood was somewhat threatened by television's in-home entertainment, the film industry was an eager partner in television production. Anderson provides a comprehensive history of the film industry's reluctance and then active participation in filling out the television program schedule. He argues that dominant narrative about the antagonism between Hollywood and television is largely false. When it was evident that radio networks would dominate television, Hollywood studios eventually capitalized their stake in television via an alliance with networks.⁶⁰ At first, local affiliates, independent stations, and occasionally the networks used film studio's back catalogs to fill out the broadcast schedule. Among the first examples was when William Boyd purchased the rights to Hopalong Cassidy at a very low cost, since the film industry saw little value in their old film proprieties.⁶¹ Even if the major studios were not keen on television yet, independent film producers took an interest in developing television programs. In the early 1950s, telefilm producers, such as Frederick Ziv or Hal Roach Jr., specialized in producing or packaging television shows and then sold them to independent stations and network affiliates. Towards the mid to late 1950s, Anderson argues that telefilms or filmed television programs shifted from independent producers (who took risks when there were few markets and little revenue) to major film studios

⁵⁹ Edgerton notes "an estimated two thousand live dramas were produced [from 1947 to 1961], but fewer than one hundred or 5 percent, are currently available for critical review." *Ibid.*, 194.

⁶⁰ Anderson, *HollywoodTV*.

⁶¹ Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*.

producing shows for television (who dominated the market with great revenue).⁶² What was at first a practice to fill in scheduling grids with low cost programs became a wider industry programming strategy as executives viewed reruns, non-primetime viewing hours, and international markets as profitable.⁶³ For example, ABC gained national prominence when the network struck a deal with Walt Disney to supply filmed television programs. Trying to broadcast live teleplays in a New York theater or stage was no match for the flexibility of Hollywood's sound stages on studio lots and post-production film editing. For example, a filmed drama could feature scenes in many places and could take advantage of more nuanced film edits. Indeed, the New York based television industry was undergoing a "Hollywoodization." Television production increasingly shifted to film-based productions in Hollywood. In the mid 1950s, much of network programming was still live. By the 1957 season, the majority of prime time television originated in the West Coast.⁶⁴ This was also the time when the Western began to dominate prime time, a genre that heavily maximized on film production techniques and film studio financing. Politicians especially benefited from filmed television's technical abilities; Barnouw explains how Eisenhower's television campaign was managed by an advertising agency and even staged like a three act teleplay.⁶⁵

There was some experimentation with programming. For example, McCarthy expands our understanding of the struggle for programming in the 1950s. She explains

⁶² Anderson, *HollywoodTV*.

⁶³ Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 69–71; 139–144.; Anderson, *HollywoodTV*.

⁶⁴ Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*; Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States*.

⁶⁵ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 136–137.

how networks provided space for cultural institutions, unions, local public forums, and non-profit foundations (e.g. Ford Foundation and Fund for the Republic) to develop programs with largely educational missions bent towards cultural or citizenship based messages.⁶⁶ There was an attempt at noncommercial television, with National Educational Television, but as Erik Barnouw explains, the “system was invisible to most Americans” and struggled to secure audiences and consistent funding.⁶⁷ Commercial sponsorship of various entertainment and quasi-educational programs largely prevailed, with the networks providing what they labeled as *sustaining* programs to designate network-funded cultural and educational programs. Moreover, sustaining programs were increasingly a mechanism to wrest control from sponsors-dominated television production. As Boddy argues, the networks used these programs to invoke rhetoric about the public good. This meant programs not necessarily designed for mass appeal and high ratings but rather to promote cultural, literary, artistic, and educational virtues.⁶⁸ Relatedly, one area of experimentation was the network-produced spectacular, which showcased talent and high production values. Innovated by Weaver, the spectacular was another move away from the sponsor-controlled productions as well as another strategy to present television as a source for cultural enlightenment.⁶⁹ Weaver departed NBC in 1956 around the time when NBC re-evaluated their programming strategies to align more

⁶⁶ McCarthy, *The Citizen Machine*.

⁶⁷ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 202.

⁶⁸ Boddy, *Fifties Television*.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 6 in *Ibid*.

closely with the commercial and formulaic successes enjoyed by CBS and ABC.⁷⁰ At the end of the 1950s, there was little need to experiment, but rather to maximize on the network's economies of scale and push standardized successes.

The main changes from the 1950s and into the 1960s and 1970s were mostly structural in that the funding model shifted and the industry further consolidated. The role of sponsors in driving television production decisions burst as the quiz show scandals culminated in 1958. In the quest to dominate the ratings, sponsors and show producers fixed the shows (and presumably the networks, whose executives pleaded innocence). There had been a move away from single sponsored shows before the quiz show scandals, in part due to network concern about completely relying on "recession-sensitive durable goods manufacturers" as sponsors such as appliance manufacturers.⁷¹ However, the scandal helped to sever the single sponsor model, allowing the networks to assert control over program production, scheduling decisions, and advertiser relations.

Network control meant newly consolidated power to negotiate with independent producers and increased station reliance on network programming supplies. As NBC, ABC, and CBS withdrew from many in-house productions in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, they strengthened their power to dictate the terms of license and distribute productions. This effectively placed the risks and costs on independent producers while the networks reaped profits from multiple advertisers and syndication agreements. Boddy recounts a testimony from David Susskind, a major independent producer in the 1950s, who told the FCC about the networks' "death grip" on the sale of a television show.

⁷⁰ Edgerton, though, notes that Weaver's departure was more likely tied to NBC president David Sarnoff's ego than specifically this programming shift. Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*, 168.

⁷¹ Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 158.

According to Susskind, the success of a television producer in 1960 was bleak compared to a decade earlier. Susskind testified “that in the first half of the 1950s the independent producer had a market composed of fifty advertising agencies, and a hundred to a thousand sponsors in addition to network,” but now the market was limited to basically the three major networks.⁷² Television had always been a business, but going into the 1960s and well into the 1970s, the networks were overtly in the business of buying and selling audiences.⁷³

The 1950s can be marked as crystallizing viewing habits (and thus television’s stronghold), establishing the genres and formulas for commercial successes, and solidifying the impact of regulatory forces such as FCC directives on network practices. Moving into the next decade, Boddy argues the networks had “unprecedented power in relation to affiliates, advertisers, and program suppliers.”⁷⁴ Market concentration set the three-network power structure and industrialized television production. The 1960s and 1970s featured a steady swath of formulaic hits and regime of repetition with reruns of old standards, first run syndicated programs, and feature films.⁷⁵ To help further tease out the structural changes and power of the television industry, the next section discusses discourses about television.

⁷² Ibid., 171. For the purposes of this dissertation, Susskind’s testimony serves as a reminder about where television history might reside – advertising agencies, corporations who were prominent sponsors, independent producers, *and* the networks. Suffice to say, as the industry consolidated and centralized production under the networks, so too did television’s material traces (particularly documentation) consolidate under the networks’ power.

⁷³ This perspective was best articulated by Dallas Smythe, See Dallas Smythe, “On the Audience Commodity and Its Work,” in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 185–203.

⁷⁴ Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 181.

⁷⁵ See Chapter 4 in Kompare, *Rerun Nation*.

Television's Reputation; or Motivations to Argue for Television's Cultural Value

"Television – a medium. So called because it is neither rare nor well-done." Ernie Kovacs

There was little doubt that television was entrenched in American society. However, what was in question was the degree of television's cultural value and perceptions of its antisocial effects to American society. The above quote by television entertainer and program experimenter, Ernie Kovacs, captures television's "cultural status quite aptly, at least during the network era."⁷⁶ Television was ubiquitous and a staple of popular culture. However, its popularity was not necessarily a marker of quality or general appreciation.

There were moments in the network era when television seemed to reach great heights in artistic achievement, social utility, public service, and 'quality' entertainment. At least in the mid 1950s, the critic could speak of television's potential as a cultural medium, as opposed to the social scientist who would study television as a social ill.⁷⁷ Early television critics, such as Gilbert Seldes and Jack Gould, could applaud the efforts of a burgeoning television industry as a public art. As one *Variety* columnist noted, some television programs proved that "it is possible to mass produce quality."⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the crass commercialism, controlling sponsors, and placating executives became fodder for critical and popular perceptions about television. Reviewing some of these criticisms and perceptions offers a backdrop for television's entrance to archives. Perceptions about television's value, or lack thereof, circulated in popular discourses. It

⁷⁶ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 17.

⁷⁷ Seldes, *The Public Arts.*; Newcomb, "Studying Television."

⁷⁸ George Rosen, "Ten Frantic Years of Television," *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, January 4, 1956.

was likely that discourses about television circulated among academics and archivists who made decisions about drawing television into archival spaces. Likewise, Spigel argues that the television industry responded to popular grumblings about television's lowly status and the heavy hand of government regulations with public relations efforts to change the conversation towards more favorable views about television's contributions to culture.⁷⁹

Three commonly discussed topics in television history encapsulate television's reputation in the 1950s and 1960s: taste hierarchies, the quiz show scandals, and the famed Vast Wasteland speech. Television in the 1950s represented a clash of perceptions about what constituted as high and low culture – or popular or mass culture – and what ought to be shown on such a popular and widely seen medium. When production centered in New York (and indeed, in the earliest years when television viewers were largely concentrated in the urban center), Boddy explains that moral critics derided the level of violence, amorality, and off-color humor in the live dramas and comedies. As television gained national prominence, these complaints “were couched in issues of program taste, often opposing the ‘big city’ sensibility of the networks’ New York programming to the standards of the rest of the country.”⁸⁰ The New York based television critics and writers would then defend the networks and the live dramas, citing television's ability to bring social relevancy and artistic achievement to a medium increasingly marked by formulaic and lowest-common-denominator programming.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Spigel, “The Making of a TV Literate Elite.”

⁸⁰ Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 101.

⁸¹ For a discussion about the networks, specifically CBS, and the effort to subtly contribute to cultural criticism, particularly the critics rooted in New York, see Spigel, “The Making of a TV Literate Elite.”

These critiques pointed to the ascription of taste hierarchies that correlated with live and with filmed television productions in the 1950. The live productions of the East Coast represented elitist and intellectual discourses about television's potential as a culturally astute medium while the filmed productions of the West Coast represented populist discourses about the virtues of television entertainment for the "rest" of America. More appropriately, Victoria Johnson argues the rest of America meant the Heartland. Critiques about appealing to the Heartland, then, fluctuated between television as democratizing culture or devaluing culture. Johnson explains

network programs that were identifiably 'mid-western' in their content, aesthetics, and appeal to a Heartland audience (wherever that audience may physically live), were hailed by producers and fans as emblematic of TV's democratic cultural promise, while bemoaned by critics, politicians, and regulators as a sign of TV's 'low' cultural pull upon the broader polity.⁸²

As such, a feature of television criticism was the implicit critique of mass culture, a presumption that aesthetically plain or broadly appealing narratives that dominated the television schedule were inferior to the high production values and artistic aspirations of a few select few programs. The democratic cultural promise was reflection of television's ubiquity in vast domestic spaces – not just those limited to the major metropolitan New York City. Indeed, early audience research studies about the "general public" and their tastes concluded that people tended to feel good about the television product.⁸³ However, for some critics, television's location in the domestic and consumerist spheres meant that the popular medium tended to be viewed as "a waste of time at best," a criticism that

⁸² Victoria E Johnson, *Heartland TV: Prime Time Television and the Struggle for U.S. Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 59.

⁸³ Gary A Steiner, Columbia University, and Bureau of Applied Social Research, *The People Look at Television; a Study of Audience Attitudes*. (New York: Knopf, 1963).

barely masked class and gendered distinctions.⁸⁴ The networks, then, walked a cautious line between knowing their audiences and knowing their critics. Still, increasing rates of overt violence (e.g. *The Untouchables* or the Western genre) and formulaic television contributed to a climate of criticism that saw little redeeming qualities in the medium.⁸⁵

As previously noted, the quiz show scandal marked a key moment in television history, ushering in shifts in the television industry's structure. Another major outcome was the industry's concerted effort to reframe television to a skeptical and betrayed public. Whereas critiques of television were rooted in distinct taste hierarchies or moral outrage, the quiz show scandals piqued viewers based on the networks' and sponsors' dishonesty and ruthless quest for ratings domination. The revelations that several quiz shows were fixed dovetailed with broader regulatory and critical concerns about television's "unethical commercial practices" such as the influence of the sponsor.⁸⁶ The critical outcry against the television landscape going into 1960 was still rooted in lamenting the loss of quality dramas and departure of quality writers in light of commercial censorship and network control. Still, critics had a point about the television *industry* and its race to the bottom for maximum profits.

Another event that jolted the television industry to react was the Vast Wasteland speech. The speech came in the same milieu as criticism about standardized television products and networks' unabashed strategies to secure audiences and profits. Newton Minow, the newly appointed FCC chairman, spoke to broadcasters in 1961 at the

⁸⁴ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 3.

⁸⁵ Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*.

⁸⁶ Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 219.

National Association of Broadcasters convention. He essentially scolded broadcasters that they were in danger of losing their privilege to license public airwaves. The broadcast schedule had few programs that met the public interest obligation. Minow spoke from an authoritative position, but also as a viewer. As he saw it, television lacked programming that “enriched his own life and that of his family”; instead, the majority of network programming was

a procession of game shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And endlessly, commercials -- many screaming, cajoling, and offending. And most of all, boredom.⁸⁷

Television, according to Minow as a television viewer and as chief regulator of American airwaves, was bad. Or more appropriately, television was a vast wasteland. Ratings, costs, and the needs of advertisers, mass audiences, and endless streams of programming were not excuses. He called on broadcasters to do better, taking into account a respect for “free enterprise” and populist tastes. Broadcasting had great reach and impact, therefore, it was the broadcaster’s duty to take that responsibility seriously more so than the search for profits and lowest common denominator hits. Indeed, television historians note that Minow’s critique reflected “highbrow criticisms,” but “few could argue with the larger point Minow was making.”⁸⁸ The networks’ response included actions like increased news and documentary production, but overall, Hilmes argues that “network

⁸⁷ Newton Minow, “Television and the Public Interest (1961),” in *Mass Communication and American Social Thought: Key Texts, 1919-1968*, ed. John Durham Peters and Peter Simonson (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 465–471.

⁸⁸ Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*, 202.

programming, economics, and regulation remained undistributed in their established routines.”⁸⁹

However, the sting of general critiques and Minow’s speech spurred the industry to take some measures to influence the critical climate. One mechanism, for example, was the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences’ decision to publish a scholarly journal, *Television Quarterly*.⁹⁰ Kompare and Spigel both argue that CBS president, William Paley, pursued a broadcasting museum as a public relations effort to elevate television’s cultural status.⁹¹ It was in the wake of the scandals and the speech when the industry was increasingly motivated to define a television heritage. A television heritage signaled television’s social and cultural salience, its role in shaping collective memory and experiences.

The above discussion represents a fraction of the various discourses about television as a technology, institution, commercial entity, and cultural medium. This overview offered foundational understandings about the television industry and perceptions of television in the 1950s and onward. Such a discussion was necessary for outlining the basics of what the television industry looked like at the time when archivists, academics, and other determinators of historical evidence considered the merits of television. Television was no doubt a significant economic, political, social, and cultural force. Television’s entrance into archival spaces – those spaces that *prima foci* confer

⁸⁹ Michele Hilmes, *Only Connect: a Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002); Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 227.

⁹⁰ Susan Ginsberg and David Manning White, “A Brief History of the Television Quarterly,” *Television Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1970): 60 -70.

⁹¹ Kompare, *Rerun Nation*; Lynn Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation,” in *A Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 67–102.

historical status – was not necessarily a natural process. Still, archival pursuits of television for its cultural and historical dimensions were not a guarantee that the archival task was possible. In other words, television’s archivability depended on technological and structural factors on the part of the industry as well as discursive constructions of television’s value. The next two parts of this chapter highlights two areas of literature that offer further discussion about television and archives. The following part briefly discusses archives in general and then focuses on the benefits and challenges in archiving media. The last part of the chapter focuses specifically on television and archives, with attention to scholarship by television historians and their experiences with archives and television as historical documents.

An Overview of Archives and Its Relation to Media

For television to enter the archive, it needed to be framed as historical evidence. Archival paradigms did not necessarily have the capacity to address television. Or rather, archival paradigms required some flexibility in conceptualizing television’s potential as historical and cultural material. Television and other media posed a technological or medium-based challenge. If for centuries, paper was the main medium and the archival profession centered around the valuation of paper or print based records, then how might the archivist handle the acquisition and the valuation of non-print records such as photographs, moving images, and audio? To help lay the foundation about archival practice and “new” media, the following section outlines three areas that are essential to understanding how archivists value historical material and how non-print entered archival spaces. This overview begins with a brief discussion about the archive’s complexities and

theoretical dimensions. This is followed by a discussion about media in archives, with highlights about film archives and commercial considerations about archived media.

Defining Archives and Archival

In the “strictest sense of the word, archives are records created – by an individual, institution, or organization – in the course of operations and preserved because of their continuing value.”⁹² Here archives are records, the physical documents and the information they contain. But the term archive also can be a physical place, the location where records are kept. Archives can be internal, with the purpose of maintaining record of a single parent organization, specifically fulfilling administrative, legal, and fiscal functions.⁹³ Archives can be externally oriented, ones that focus on the accumulation of records from various organizations and individuals for the purposes of History.⁹⁴ Or they can be both (such as the archives in universities that maintain the records of the university and seek out other collections). The archive no longer even needs to be physical; it is colloquially and formally used on websites to organize content that is no longer current. Manoff explains the term archival can be a qualifier to mark the passage of a document from its initial use to its literal move to the archive or a signifier to connote the historic nature of the record.⁹⁵ The archive can be figurative, a philosophical construct to employ as a lens or deploy as a critique. Frick summarizes literature that

⁹² Chuck Howell, “Dealing with Archive Records,” in *Methods of historical analysis in electronic media*, ed. Donald G Godfrey (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 305–348; 306.

⁹³ Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, (London: P. Lund, Humphries & Co., 1937); Margaret Cross Norton, *Norton on Archives : the Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival & Records Management* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975).

⁹⁴ T. R Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

⁹⁵ Marlene Manoff, “Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 9–25.

critiques the archive and explains that the archive can connote “notions of sanctioned cultural value, protection, ownership, and power.”⁹⁶ The term, archive, and its various grammatical forms (archiving, archival, etc.) slips in meaning and usage depending on who is using it, for what purpose, and in which context.⁹⁷

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to critique the archive for its structure and for its more figurative dimensions, especially given the archive’s relationship with knowledge production. Typically, we tend to envision the archive as a place you go to, not something you question and interpret like the documents housed within the archive.⁹⁸ Turning our attention to the archive invites new perspectives. In the introduction to an archival science journal’s special issue on the “interdisciplinary wave” of critical interest about archives and archival practice, Head notes that archives are increasingly studied as phenomena, not just places that historians go to. With influences from self-reflexive archivists, postmodern theory, cultural studies, and histories of the construction of knowledge, Head explains that archives are now “fascinating objects of study themselves, whose history and development speak to themes including memory, the exercise of power through knowledge, and the emergence of a distinctive, archivally based historiography.”⁹⁹ Thus, a historical inquiry into archives as institutions, structures,

⁹⁶ Caroline Frick, *Saving Cinema the Politics of Preservation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12.

⁹⁷ There is a great wealth of literature about archives. Not surprisingly, the largest body is for and by the archival profession. The three major journals are the *American Archivist*, *Archavaria*, and *Archival Science*. In the past three decades or so, historians and critical scholars have increasingly focused attention on the meaning and purpose of archives as well.

⁹⁸ Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (2009): 497–534.

⁹⁹ Head R.C, “Preface: Historical research on archives and knowledge cultures: An interdisciplinary wave,” *Archival Science* 10, no. 3 (2010): 191–194.

and phenomena traverses inquiries into knowledge production (such as academic disciplines), social institutions, power structures, and circulating discourses.

For example, one perspective it to view the archive as a mechanism to define boundaries of can be known and should be known.¹⁰⁰ Those that decide the archive's contents and its ordering (as in, how records are categorized, privileged, and presented) hold the power of interpretation and can draw the boundaries on knowledge production.¹⁰¹ The documents selected, and the formation and management of the archives that contain such documents, inscribe "traces of a lived past." In other words, archives and its contents contain not just literal evidence of past lives, events, and structures, but also the perceptions, values, and practices of a time and place.¹⁰²

In sum, Burton argues that we can view archives as "figured" by interrogating how archives "come in to being in and as history as a result of specific political, cultural, and socioeconomic pressures – pressures which leave traces and which render archives themselves artifacts of history."¹⁰³ Hence, we can consider two sorts of "traces": traces of the past collected as historical "evidence" within the archive and traces upon the archive. The next section focuses on the dimensions of media in the archive. Media carry a unique mix of traces. Furthermore, institutional decisions to archive media (both the media

¹⁰⁰ Michel Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 128-129.

¹⁰¹ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever : a Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁰² Francis X Blouin and William G Rosenberg, *Archives, documentation, and institutions of social memory : essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁰³ Antoinette M Burton, *Archive stories : facts, fictions, and the writing of history* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 6.

product, such as photographs or film, and the related documentation) reflects traces of perceptions about media's historical value.

Archival Practice and the Integration of Media

How might an archive handle acquiring, appraising, and organizing non-print media? A discussion about media and archives can roughly fall into two usages. In one usage, the term media refers to the literal medium that carries content. For centuries, the dominant medium to record and convey information was paper-based. Thus, archives dealt mostly with paper: handwritten letters, typed documents, newspapers, etc. As new media developed, archivists adapted to new media formats and learned to deal its materiality. In another usage, the term media more broadly refers to content – the informational and evidential value of a photograph, film, audio recording, or television program. In this respect, the stakes in conceptualizing why media belongs in archival spaces relate to what can be known and how. By addressing media's archivability, we can consider how media content are valued as evidence, including records of events and daily life, cultural roles and significance, sociological reflections, politics, so on.

Archivist (and historian) interest in such material started to gain traction in the mid twentieth century, as trends in academic disciplines increasingly sought out histories from the bottom up – histories greatly enriched by media and popular culture.¹⁰⁴ However, archival practice was not quite in a position to fully appreciate the value of media as historical materials or handle such records. This section focuses on several of the challenges that archivists had to deal with when approaching media's archivability.

¹⁰⁴ Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

Following a brief overview of the challenges is a discussion on film in archives and the professionalization of the moving image archivist.

Challenges

The records of media and media as records can pose some challenges. As implied earlier in this section, “archives and archival theory are the product of literacy and texts.”¹⁰⁵ Archival institutions are set up to provide evidence of past events, laws, institutional structures, social lives, culture, and so on. Conventionally, paper (and mostly text based documents) was the predominant medium that conveyed evidence of the past to future generations. The archival profession developed on the premise that volumes of paper records needed to be saved for various reasons, which were relatively easy to store and manage as organized sets of documents in boxes. Additionally, the archival practice of acquiring, selecting, and ordering such material developed in tandem to the preferred knowledge structures, which thankfully, also can shift and evolve.¹⁰⁶ For example, print mass media, namely newspapers, were an easy fit with archives, historical societies, and libraries. The more ephemeral and consumerist magazines were less vital since these were largely disposable and marginal to the prevailing knowledge structures. Knowledge

¹⁰⁵ Hugh Taylor, “Opening Address,” in *Documents that move and speak: Audiovisual archives in the new information age; Proceedings of a symposium*, ed. Harold Naugler, National Archives of Canada, and International Council on Archives (K.G. Saur, 1992), 18–29.

¹⁰⁶ For critical reflections about the development of archives and shift in archival practice, see: Terry Cook and Joan M Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2, no. 3–4 (2002): 3–4.; Luke J Gilliland-Swetland, “The Provenance of a Profession: The Permanence of the Public Archives and Historical Manuscripts Traditions in American Archival History,” *The American Archivist* 54, no. 2 (1991): 160–175.; Hugh A Taylor, Terry Cook, and Gordon Dodds, *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor* ([Chicago]; [Ottawa]; Lanham, Md.: Society of American Archivists ; Association of Canadian Archivists ; Scarecrow Press, 2003).

structures and archival practice with a broad view of archivable material may be open to pursuing non-paper material.

Gitelman argues that media are complex historical subjects. We can look to media as representations of the past, but most also consider how media are the result of social, economic, and technological forces. Media, such as photographs, films, software, webpages, radio, and television, represent a time and place *and* provide historical evidence *and* are products of past technological, social, and economic circumstances.¹⁰⁷ As such, the dimensions of media further complicate the kinds of materials that archives may seek out as historical material and how such material aligns with prevailing knowledge structures. Documents surely carry such complexities and inscriptions of the past. However, what we tend to think of as media brings in additional levels of representation, contexts of production, and literacies when framing media as historical artifacts or evidence. These complexities challenge to the archive's bias (or perhaps, societal bias) towards paper based records and the collection of manuscript materials that support prevailing modes of historical scholarship. In practice, then, archives in the mid to late twentieth century faced the option to treat "new media as decidedly 'odd-ball'" or develop specializations to address the materiality of media. This meant the preservation of the physical form and the totality of media (e.g. the contexts of production and reception).¹⁰⁸

There tends to be a lag between the introduction of a new medium, its rise to popularity, and then the consideration of archival status. Consider photography: it

¹⁰⁷ Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, "Opening Address," 22–23.

emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, but the Library of Congress did not start acquiring and preserving photographs as though they were manuscript collections until the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁹ The ephemerality of radio made it very difficult and impractical to record live radio and maintain fragile recordings. Indeed, the technology to record radio broadcast developed decades after the birth of commercial radio. As such, much of radio's material traces entered archives along with television and the broader interest to collect the records of media. Conversely, Sterne argues that visions and interest in establishing recorded sound archives did exist when the recording technology made it possible. These archives operated on the logic of recorded sounds as living history and tended towards anthropological intent.¹¹⁰ Little has been written about radio or recorded sound archives. Rather, film and archives tend to be the most salient and most researched. The following section highlights literature about the rise of film archives.

Film in Archives

Like the lag of time between the invention of photography and the acquisition of photographs as archival material, the history of film and its location in the archive offers another example. An early text about moving image preservation begins with observation that the “technology for proper archival storage has existed since 1951. What has been lacking is a general awareness of the *value* of preserving a film heritage.”¹¹¹ Film was not

¹⁰⁹ Patrick G Loughney, “Thomas Jefferson’s Movie Collection,” *Film History* 12, no. 2 (2000): 174–186.

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

¹¹¹ Ralph N Sargent, *Preserving the Moving Image* ([Washington, D.C.: Published jointly by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1974), 5.

naturally something that ought to be preserved. Frick argues that film required transformative frameworks about film as historical, artistic, and notions of heritage.¹¹² A brief history of the first film archive in the United States helps to tease out the formation of film archives and framing film's archivability.

Wasson provides a historical overview of the institution considered as the first film archive in the United States: the Film Library at the Museum of Modern Art, established in 1934. Wasson traces the transition of thinking about films as commercial and ephemeral entertainment to films as cultural and artistic forms, thus fair game for an art museum. She argues film was also framed as historical, whether as film history, American history, or more specialized areas of history. Collecting film in an art museum became less about film as a neglected art and more about recovering "a history that had been lost."¹¹³ A discourse that frames film as history also allows for educational opportunities, such as exhibitions and lending libraries, alongside collection and preservation activities. Between bestowing cultural, artistic, and historical value onto films, the Film Library established a structure in transforming an ephemeral item and experience into a museological, archival organization. Films "became stored objects, more resistant to the temporal flows of daily life, the commercial entertainment industry, and the play of populist spaces."¹¹⁴ And by extension, turns the film into a "studied

¹¹² Frick, *Saving cinema the politics of preservation*; Anthony Slide, *Nitrate won't wait : a history of film preservation in the United States* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1992); Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

¹¹³ Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies the Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 29.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

object,” opening up opportunities for analysis, interpretation, reflection, and incorporation into academic contexts.

Ultimately, the establishment of a film archive was not a solitary effort. The film industry was necessarily involved, at times enthusiastically or antagonistically. Film may be cultural and artistic, endowed with historical value, but were still corporate assets;

the bulk of control for feature films rested with studio lawyers in New York, primarily concerned with maximizing profit by treating films as *legal abstractions rather than complex cultural ones*. Access to old films, therefore required an agreement ensuring that no infringement would be made on studio coffers and that the Film Library’s exhibition practices would not in any way detract from commercial exhibition revenues. *Old films had to be first divested of their profitability and second attached to a vague public or civic purpose* in order to secure the legal ground upon which the library’s project could proceed at all.¹¹⁵

But still, the industry appreciated the cultural and historical value, if only for the benefits of lending more credibility and contributing to the growing mythology of film’s history and cultural status.

Overall, the moving image archive represents a variety of clashes. As explained by Wasson, there is the clash between creative and cultural. Frick reflects on the clash between national, Hollywood-type conceptions of a film history in the archive and the regional, local, and personal non-theatrical films scattered throughout all sorts of repositories.¹¹⁶ Jones writes about another clash, that is the film archive as a site of order and chaos. The logic of the archive as “rational, scientific, and disciplined spaces” operates in a dialectic where film archives are haphazard and eclectic collections of films

¹¹⁵ Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. 137, emphasis added.

¹¹⁶ Frick, *Saving Cinema the Politics of Preservation*.

saved from destruction and selected based on personal judgments.¹¹⁷ Film in the archive also represents a particular discourse that privileges film as formative and reflective of a national culture as well as of a legitimated culture. This is evident by the MoMA's leadership in developing a film archive. Other film archives developed, most notably the collections at the Library of Congress, including their efforts to build nitrate vaults and set a national film canon by way of the National Film Registry. Another influential archive is the George Eastman House, notable for its collections of rare and original prints yet difficult to access. Frick suggests that much of the history of archiving film is a history of formulating a heritage discourse that positions films (or rather, particular films) as constituent of national history, identity, and collective memory. Thus, films *must* be saved given its stature as authentic and representative documents of an American heritage.¹¹⁸ For the majority of the twentieth century, archivists and film enthusiasts constructed the heritage discourse, then mobilized this discourse to spur preservation efforts and principally, the specialization of a field.

The Growth of a Specialization

The example of the MoMA's Film Library demonstrates two iterations of time lags. One, there was a lag between when the film industry first emerged as a cultural and economic force and the establishment of the first film archive. Two, there was another major gap between the formation of the first film archives (1930s and onward) and the crystallization of archival practice and the movement to secure film's legacy in an archival form (1970s). Among the catalysts to professionalize and institutionalize film

¹¹⁷ Janna Jones, *The past is a moving picture: preserving the twentieth century on film* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012), 9.

¹¹⁸ Frick, *Saving Cinema the Politics of Preservation*.

preservation (and eventually television) was the American Film Institute in 1967. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, AFI figured heavily in the discursive formation of a film heritage. Jones argues that this institution was instrumental in advancing a view that film needed active and immediate preservation.¹¹⁹ Even with a sense that film (and moving image material in general) was a tremendous historical source, the archival profession was less clear about how to appraise, acquire, and organize moving image materials.

It took some time for archivists to recognize the value in acquiring moving image materials, which was reflected in an overall lack of professional literature about moving image appraisal and preservation. It was not until the 1970s that the first texts emerged that instilled archival spaces with a sense of purpose and offered a scientific management of moving image materials. The first text devoted to moving image preservation stated moving images were “the truest record our time, the richest source of information on the spirit, the attitudes, and the daily life of the 20th Century – not only as an art form, but as an absolute historical resource.”¹²⁰ Still, professional literature considered moving image records as a “special class of records” along with electronic records, photographs, sound records, graphic records, and multimedia formats.¹²¹ Arguably, these records could be appraised in the same way as documents, with attention to the informational value, future use, and overall sense of historical significance. The difference was in the technological

¹¹⁹ Jones, *The Past Is a Moving Picture.*, Frick, *Saving Cinema the Politics of Preservation.*

¹²⁰ Ralph N Sargent, *Preserving the moving image* (Washington, D.C.: Published jointly by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1974), 5.

¹²¹ F. Gerald Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists, 1993), 60–62.

considerations, which required aptitude in recording formats and how to extract information.

The moving image, especially film, raised great concern in its ephemerality and instability of film as a preservation medium. As such, the notion that film ought to be preserved for its historical and cultural significance was intricately linked to the methods of preserving the moving image form. The precision necessary to scientifically store film, to have intimate knowledge of the film process, and to properly handle film raised the stakes in archival science. For instance, one of the first professional texts for film preservation focused mostly on storage conditions (including elusive measurements such as gamma range and stability), the chemical make up of film base and emulsion, methods to physically restore the image, and techniques for operating film equipment.¹²²

Still, the valuation of the moving image's content remains central to the archiving process. After surmounting the technological obstacle to view and hear moving image materials, an archivist requires knowledge of film and television. Sam Kula, who wrote one of the definitive texts on moving images in the archives, identifies three aspects to evaluate. Aesthetic and artistic values are crucial considerations in appraisal. The subjective nature of evaluating aesthetic qualities means that one generation of archivists might overlook moving image records to the detriment of future generations. Another aspect to evaluate lies in the valuation of both the moving image record and the documentation of its production and broader historical development of the industries and technologies. Lastly, he identifies universal retention as another aspect in archiving moving image . This means the interest on the part of an archive to collect all moving

¹²² Sargent, *Preserving the Moving Image*.

image records associated with a director's, writer's, or producer's career. The value here is in documenting a criterion collection of all work stemming from a single source.¹²³

Overall, a fundamental principle in archiving moving images is that “the archivists must always balance the survival of the information and the survival of the record conveying it.”¹²⁴ With moving image records, the content and the media format are intricately linked.

The Commercial Dimensions of Media in Archives

Also linked is the moving image records' content and its commercial or market value. As such, the following section discusses media (not just moving image media) as commercial assets and the corporate or commercially minded archival institution. It is difficult to overlook the commercial implications of an archive. A political economic approach to the archive, specifically as it relates to media, keeps the critical concerns of social structures and implications of power in focus. This approach also brings issues of commodification and commercial control to the foreground.

We may think of media—newspapers, magazines, photographs, films, music, television, radio, video games, and so on—as residing in the cultural realm . More aptly, though, these are commodities made by corporations and reflect dominant social structures, power relations, and values.¹²⁵ Meehan points out that television is the

¹²³ Sam Kula, *Appraising Moving Images : Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records* (Lanham (Md.): Scarecrow press, 2003), 35–47.

¹²⁴ James O'Toole, “The Symbolic Significance of Archives,” *American Archivist* 56, no. 2 (April 1, 1993): 237.

¹²⁵ Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication: Rethinking and Renewal* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996).

“exemplar of modern capitalism’s industrialization of culture.”¹²⁶ Indeed, television nicely encapsulates both cultural and commercial dimensions. It is increasingly difficult to separate the two; the industries that produce cultural products do not simply reduce culture to a commodity level thus divesting any cultural value.¹²⁷ Hesmondhalgh explains the cultural industries as the industries “involved in the production of social meaning” that are packaged in various cultural forms to be consumed.¹²⁸

As historical documents, media contain a wealth of evidence, both in its content as informational and documentary and in its formulation as culture and role in meaning production. Even so, the industrial inclination is to define media as assets. Bill Ivey writes about art in general (including popular culture and media) and how our cultural system operates so that something like the famous image of JFK Jr at his father’s funeral “is simultaneously *cultural heritage* and *corporate asset*.”¹²⁹ Ivey expresses concern about the tenuous status of cultural material when it can be constituted as historical evidence *and* as profitable assets. For example, he discusses the implications of Corbis, the photo licensing company that owns the JFK Jr. image, a photo that is one among millions of other photographs from the past that are historically significant or seemingly irrelevant.

¹²⁶ Eileen R Meehan, “Conceptualizing Culture as Commodity: The Problem of Television,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 3, no. 4 (1986): 450.

¹²⁷ This is a critique of the famed culture industry critique by the Frankfurt School’s Horkheimer and Adorno. They advanced a critical view of mass media and related industries that was foundational for later political economic and cultural studies critiques. However, they were adamant about envisioning the products of the culture industry purely as commodities. See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 53–74.

¹²⁸ David Hesmondhalgh, *The cultural industries* (London; Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2002), 11.

¹²⁹ Bill J Ivey, *Arts, Inc. : how greed and neglect have destroyed our cultural rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 31.

The company owns around 100 million images, of which about less than half of a million are digitized, meaning the images are searchable and more importantly, available for licensing. That leaves the large majority of the collection in a storage facility, inaccessible, largely uncharted, and not available as historical and cultural evidence. A caveat here is to recognize the high costs in the preservation and maintenance of such materials and that there are individuals within such organizations that are dedicated to preserving culturally and historically significant media.

Record keeping and serving the administrative, fiscal, and legal needs of a corporation are certainly vital functions of the archive. However, we can also look to the ways in which the cultural industries make use of archives when driven by the concept of commercial value. If we accept the notion that media contains the very historical and cultural evidence that we tend to find in archives, then there is an inevitable tension between media as cultural artifacts and media as commercial assets. Granted, this is not necessarily unique to media; there are many instances where archival collections with considerable monetary value (read: profitability) are commodified. The archive as guarded property of commercial assets is an archive that privileges the exchange value – such as owning rights so that media can be licensed or syndicated – over the use value, particularly as material for scholarly and historical pursuits. Indeed, Sterne writes about the first sound archives that “existed not for the purpose of preserving history or communing with the not yet living, but rather for very basic commercial purposes: keeping the prototype of a product at hand.”¹³⁰ Anecdotes about film studio archives and newspaper photo archives further illustrate the commercial mindset. When film canisters

¹³⁰ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 327.

and boxes of photos are taking up (valuable) space, they are discarded. But when there is potential to monetize the archives, such as repackaging old films and television shows as restored national cultural treasures or digitizing photos and organizing them in a database ready to be licensed, the cultural and historical dimensions are commodified.

What obligation does a media archive housed within the industry have to researchers, educators, and the broader public? The archive of a television news network, for example, certainly provides a public service in maintaining an audio visual record of the day's news. But the historical value is secondary; primary responsibilities of network news archives are to provide file footage, in-house research, and of course, commercial opportunities like footage sales. The news archive is not a public library or archive for the benefit of historical and academic study; it is a functioning part of an industry.¹³¹ The media industry in general may not quite be in a position to decide what records to maintain or how to provide access. Reflecting on the state of network television's preservation and records management decisions, the Television and Video Preservation Report noted, "from the viewpoint of scholars, the networks are least equipped to deal with questions of historical or cultural value."¹³²

In sum, media presented new and familiar challenges to archivists and archival institutions. Media technologies, particularly audio and moving image recordings prompted archivists to consider the value of the content and the viability of acquiring,

¹³¹ Specifically, one CBS News producer said, "The name of the organization is CBS News. It's the CBS Public Library." Quoted in Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, 55.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 67.

viewing, storing, and providing access to “documents that move and speak.”¹³³ While the archival principles to assess historical value (e.g. uniqueness in conveying evidence and/or information, and future unknown uses) still applied to media’s archivability, the technical components spurred a specialization in dealing explicitly with media’s materiality. Archives had to deal with vast quantities of material in the past, such as the selection of regional and national newspapers. But the newness of media formats and the utility of media’s documentary traces was an obstacle in a profession that traditionally dealt with paper records. Likewise, media’s archivability did not necessarily mean a location in an archive serving researcher interests and broad publics; it also meant the industry’s interest in cultivating the financial benefits of their archives. Focusing specifically on television and archives offers a sharper focus on the complexities of the archive’s purpose, the status of television as historical evidence and as commodities, and the consequences of television’s archivability and accessibility on historiography.

Television, Historical Evidence, and Archives

The final part of this chapter specifically addresses television as historical documents and its location within archival institutions. The following section first considers the significance of television as historical evidence, surveying the literature about the relationship between television and history. The next section focuses on television’s location in the archive. There have been several essays and studies about television and archives, but there are still many gaps in the literature. The last section

¹³³ Harold Naugler, National Archives of Canada, and International Council on Archives, *Documents that move and speak: audiovisual archives in the new information age : National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, April 30, 1990-May 3, 1990 : proceedings of a symposium* (K.G. Saur, 1992).

discusses the connection between the commercial or archival availability of television's past and the impact on television historiography.

Television and History

Television as it relates to history can be difficult to pinpoint given the multiple dimensions of the medium's ability to narrate history, show events as they happen, and generally represent social, economic, political, and cultural life. The following discussion begins with this subject of television and history, specifically what it meant to endow television with a sense of historical and cultural record.

Television can easily be seen as a site for history in the making, with the plethora of news and documentary programming that brings audio-visual record to the written news as the clichéd "first drafts of history." As Scannell explains, television has a historicity in that it "is part of the history-making process."¹³⁴ History and television, though, have a complex relationship. The power and impact of television to broadcast history-as-it-happens is implicated in television's liveness, even as programs are recorded and structured into daily schedules.¹³⁵ That is just one way that history is manifest as content. Television also mediates history, narrativizing historical accounts for program content. For instance, there are channels devoted to histories as well as entertainment programs that are set in historical time periods. We can also look to television programs and commercials as artifacts of time and place, contributing to an overall sense of American life. Looking to television in this way aids in examining content as indicators of overarching ideologies, of structural relations, of gender constructions, etc. Even

¹³⁴ Paddy Scannell, "Television and History," in *A Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 58.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

pedagogically, television serves as a terrific source to supplement teaching, especially since television content offers tangible ways to engage with the past and ways of interpreting the past. Identifying some of these connections is useful in developing a framework for this dissertation.

Several edited collections address these connections, highlighting a range of topics, theoretical approaches, and methodological concerns. In the late 1980s, the National Endowment for the Humanities funded a project with the American Historical Association to address the growing interest but lack of resources for pursuing the historical study of film and television *and* using them as artifacts. Previewing the resulting edited collection, *Image as Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television*, John E. O'Connor writes that the project defined two stages in analysis. In the first stage, the "moving image documents" (film and television) can be analyzed just like any other historical manuscript document, with attention to content and its historical influence. But it also requires attention to visual language, the production contexts (such as the studio system, collaborative creative process, political agendas, censorship, etc.), *and* reception in its time. The second stage takes on the broader as well as more directed areas of analysis, inquiring about the social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. These modes of inquiry include analyzing how the moving image documents represent and/or interpret history, how they confirm "then-current social and cultural values," how they convey unique factual data, and quite simply, the history of television and film as industry and as art.¹³⁶ Here we have clearly defined ways to think about television as cultural artifacts and the methods to pursue historical inquiry. As a text and project

¹³⁶ John E O'Connor, "History in Images/Images in History: Reflections on the Importance of Film and Television Study for an Understanding of the Past .," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (1988).

written by historians for historians, the emphasis on the challenges to pursuing both the historicity of film and television and the treatment as historical material sets up an excellent starting point.

Given an already established understanding about the complexities of media—as technologies, as institutions, as entertainment and popular culture, as integral facets in social and political spheres—communication scholars bring differing sensibilities to histories of television and histories on television. Consider Raymond Williams’ influential *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*; he distanced himself from more traditional histories centered around a technology or specific individuals (the “great man narrative”) or the “negative” effects of television.¹³⁷ Instead he addressed television as a complex social technology, historicizing the technology and its inventors within social, cultural, and political contexts, and then analyzing the developments of television programming flow and the solidification of broadcast practices. This work contributes a model approach to television as a dynamic system that merits historical interrogations as a baseline for building further understanding. Since then, many have written histories about television. Wheatley summarizes five main approaches that have developed in the US and UK television studies contexts: “meta-narratives” about television as institutions and its organization, regulations, and production, “micro-histories” about making specific slices of television, audience histories as it relates to meaning-making and broader social and political changes, textual histories about issues such as representation, aesthetics, etc.,

¹³⁷ Williams, *Television*.

and lastly technological histories.¹³⁸ Collectively, these histories represent the spectrum of approaches to studying television history.

Edited collections such as *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* and *Reviewing Television History: Critical Issues in Television Historiography* offer not only the histories noted above, but also thoughtful conceptualizations about television *and* history (not just the history *of* television as a technology or industry). For example, we can carve out the connections between television and history by focusing on television *as* historian, with programming and entire channels as sites to tell histories to large audiences. We can problematize that by critiquing the business and commodification of history. There are certain styles and techniques that influence how histories are told, such as the dominance of Ken Burns, reenactments, and exploiting television's properties of immediacy. We can critique the "presentism" inherent in programming that selectively highlights the past for political or economic purposes.¹³⁹

Another frame connects television to the formation of cultural memory, social imagination, and a shared sense of national history. As Anderson explains, "American television has sustained an extremely active and nuanced engagement with the construction of history and has played a crucial role in the shaping of cultural memory."¹⁴⁰ Consider the salience of catch phrases or commercial jingles, the collective

¹³⁸ Helen Wheatley, *Re-viewing Television History: Critical Issues in Television History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007).

¹³⁹ Steve Anderson, "History TV and Popular Memory," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*, ed. Gary R Edgerton (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2001).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

experience of watching live coverage of a space shuttle lift off or the Super Bowl, and the shared memories of favorite television shows and experiences of viewing. These arguments support the assumption that television, in all of its facets of production, transmission, and reception, can be constituted as historical evidence. It stands to reason that such evidence should readily be available in archives.

Television in Archival Spaces

While television as an industry and as a popular medium has been in existence since the 1940s, the move to preserve and archive television programming and related materials did not actively happen until the late 1960s and 1970s.¹⁴¹ This was around the same time that television became a focal point in academia. Writing about the ascent of television studies and the connection to storehouses of knowledge, Newman and Levine point out that the Library of Congress codified television's status as a subject of academic attention as well as popular criticism. The Library identified a television studies subject heading in 1979, an indication of "sedimentation of the medium as an object of study."¹⁴² As understood in Foucaultian terms, designating categories of knowledge, such as the Library's classification system, constructs the frameworks for ordering what can be known and how it is to be known.¹⁴³ Overall, the prevalence of television within the institutions of knowledge production implicated television's scholarly value.

¹⁴¹ As noted in the introduction to the United States Library of Congress catalog of television programs. Library of Congress, *3 Decades of Television: a Catalog of Television Programs Acquired by the Library of Congress, 1949-1979* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1989).

¹⁴² Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 156.

¹⁴³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

Much scholarship has been and continues to be published about television, whether from the vantage point of production, distribution, consumption, or reception. However, only a few have tackled the question of the archives and how the availability of material aids in determining how we conceive of television history. As noted in the introduction to a television preservation manual, it is vital to recover a history of television experimentation and industry in the contexts of the film industry, commercial structures, and ideological arguments about television and culture, power, and social relations.¹⁴⁴ This is one example of many instances where people will note the historical significance of television and the importance of its preservation, but one that does not go into further details as to how television came to exist in archival spaces. While there have been and continue to be rich histories about television, which further contribute to broader arguments about television's significance, few have written about the stakes involved in archiving television and its location in institutional archives. This section outlines scholarship about television in the archives and then concludes with an evaluation of the gaps in scholarship.

If one were to research historical and contemporary television in archival spaces in the 1960s and 1970s, there was little guidance. It was not until the 1980s when archivist Fay Schreibman assembled a thorough broadcast research guide that included information on locating television programming and related materials along with some

¹⁴⁴ Barry L. Sherman and Benjamin, Louise M., "TV as History: The Importance of Television Preservation," in *The Administration of Television Newsfilm and Videotape Collections: A Curatorial Manual*, ed. Steven Davidson and George Lukow, (American Film Institute ; Louis Wolfson II Media History Center, 1997), 3.

background on the archival spaces.¹⁴⁵ However, Schreibman's best contribution towards understanding why television exists (or doesn't) in archival spaces was a brief article published in *Film and History*, which specifically focused on the history of television archives in America. She identifies two factors that posed significant barriers to the preservation of television materials in an archival setting, let alone within television networks and studios. One factor was the problem of recording – either the lack of recording during the live television era or the re-recording over taped material. The other factor also implicated the industry in that the “entertainment production companies did not even think of anyone's responsibilities being archival; for the most part, they threw the programs out after a limited run.”¹⁴⁶ Her history of television in archives may have been brief since little had been written about television archives (or few cared to explain why television existed or not in archives). Nevertheless, Schreibman succinctly noted a few prevalent factors in archiving television (e.g. technology, ephemerality), collected the scattered accounts about different archival formations (such as how the Peabody Award Collection at the University of Georgia formalized), and argued television's historical worth.

Around the late 1960s and into the 1970s, people within academic and archival institutional contexts started to take notice of television's significance for long-term preservation. Changing conceptions of television from just something watched on television to something that should be available to scholars and the public was evident in the research and educational collections at universities. A 1971 survey of television of

¹⁴⁵ Fay C Schreibman, *Broadcast Television, a Research Guide*, ed. Peter J Bukalski (Los Angeles, Calif.: American Film Institute, Education Services, 1983).

¹⁴⁶ Schreibman, “A Succinct History of American Television Archives,” 89–90.

television libraries conducted by UCLA's television library (the subject of Chapter VII) found that about thirty institutions "were actively engaged in a television acquisition program," most of which were procured by donation, purchase, local production, off air recording, copyright deposits, or part of a larger collection.¹⁴⁷ It was in this decade when Columbia University supported the Broadcast Pioneers Library, the University of Georgia formalized the Peabody Awards Collection, and Syracuse University created a popular culture and television archive. There was an increased interest in preservation from organizations such as the American Film Institute, National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress (emboldened by the Copyright Act), and a small group of archivists.¹⁴⁸ Schwarz, the study's author and curator at the UCLA Television Library, concluded

commercial programs – conventions, major hearings, outstanding events, the comedy show, the drama and other art forms – many worthy of acquisition, preservation, and examination – are not being collected with speed or preserved in quantity by the educational institutions of our country. They should be.¹⁴⁹

Despite copyright procedures that ensured preservation and heightened interest, material concerns such as funding to preserve old formats and maintain machines to play them continued to hinder sustained preservation efforts.¹⁵⁰ Schwarz's study foregrounded the urgency for educational institutions to preserve what we saw on television, or in other

¹⁴⁷ Ruth Schwartz, "Preserving TV Programs: Here Today - Gone Tomorrow," *Journal of Broadcasting* 17 (1973 1972): 287.

¹⁴⁸ Sarah Ziebell Mann, "The Evolution of American Moving Image Preservation: Defining the Preservation Landscape (1967-1977)," *The Moving Image: The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists* 1, no. 2 (2001): 1–20.

¹⁴⁹ Schwartz, "Preserving TV Programs," 292.

¹⁵⁰ Schreibman, "A Succinct History of American Television Archives."

words, to preserve television products. While it was important to argue for television content's historical, cultural, and educational worth, this study and later ones to come emphasized the collection and preservation of the product, nearly to the exclusion of documentation about how television was produced,

Lynn Spigel provides another overview devoted specifically to the formation of television archives. She probes the “logic of the TV archive” and reasons why television might have been saved or lost. She divides her historical look at television's path to preservation in public and private institutions by talking about the “first tv archives” and then identifying three exemplary institutions. In her brief history of television archival spaces, Spigel contends that the first archives were at university libraries and haphazard collections in communication departments (specifically, in basements and closets). These collections had little else than text based documents and films. These documents, she suggests, are selected with the logic of exceptionalist or ‘great man’ views of history, acquiring the paper trails of “great” network executives, luminary teleplay authors, and “crusading newsmen” as well as legal and regulatory materials.

The real archiving efforts began in the wake of Newton Minow's 1961 speech, which was a turning point for the industry and the promotion of television as public service and as cultural enrichment. Thus, Spigel argues “the history of television's preservation is also a history of the industrial logic through which it was saved.”¹⁵¹ With this framework, she outlines three paths of preservation efforts, which occurred within contexts of the television industry, cultural institutions, academia, and discourses about television as wasteland, as public service, and as culturally and aesthetically valuable.

¹⁵¹ Lynn Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation,” in *A Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 70.

Spigel labels the three approaches to archive television as public relations, as art museum, and as a tourist attraction. These correspond to the Paley Center (or what was known as the Museum of Broadcasting and then the Museum of Radio and Television, the subject of Chapter VII), the Museum of Modern Art's brief flirtation with television (the subject of Chapter IV), and the never-quite-realized Hollywood Museum. In each case, these attempts serve as illustrations of how certain values were attached to television—cultural heritage, art, and nostalgia—in order to justify its preservation. As values were defined, so were the types of programming and aspects of television that are worth saving.¹⁵²

Kompare further elaborates on the connotations of archival spaces in terms of a constructed television heritage. He explains the television heritage was at once a construct of the industry to promote reruns and employ nostalgia as commercial strategy *and* a broader construct that connected television with collective memory and experiences.¹⁵³ The archive or museum was one site that solidified a television heritage, along with the myth of the Golden Age, the formation of the nation-family alongside television, television studies, and fandom. Like Spigel's arguments about the archive as public relations tactic, Kompare frames the Museum of Broadcasting and the Academy of Television Arts and Science's relationship with UCLA as strategies to formulate a television heritage using discourse of "capital-H 'History' in the Museum and the Archive."¹⁵⁴ Both the museum and the archive are sites of legitimation, with the former

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ See Chapter 5, "Our Television Heritage: Reconceiving Past Television" in Kompare, *Rerun Nation*.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 112.

associated more with the public construction of a television heritage and the latter as a strategy to connect television with legitimate History.

The above accounts of television archives are foundational. Spigel's approach is the strongest, which offers a framework to examine the underlying factors and interrelations between industrial and cultural institutions. The emphasis on how television was valued and continues to be valued as a "worthy" object—and how that value shapes and shifts within overlapping discourses—is an especially useful construct. Overall, though, these accounts are quite brief compared to the enormity of the subject.

Schreibman was an archivist and thus her perspective was that of a professional practitioner who branched into the academic community (via the journal and conferences on television preservation in the 1980s and 1990s) to promote the cause of archiving television. Spigel's account is a well argued piece of scholarship, one that synthesizes archival efforts in a critical light. Her history, though, draws mostly on trade and popular press articles as well as the Library of Congress's Television and Video Preservation Report. Kompare's argument is couched within a wider interest in the industrial and cultural dimensions of the rerun, which meant a very brief dip into archival spaces. There are far more factors to consider and map out, such as television's inclusion within university archives and deeper investigations into the archival formations discussed by Schreibman, Spigel, and Kompare regarding the American context of television's material traces in archives. Their work is an invitation to further explore the many facets and layers in the history of archiving television. This dissertation builds on their work, using primary research from the "archives of the archives" to further examine efforts to pull television's material traces into an academic archive.

Not addressed in this dissertation are two major archives that tend to first come to mind when speaking about television archives. Given the choice to focus on television in general (both programs and documentation) and especially the acquisition of entertainment television, the dissertation does not use the Vanderbilt Television News Archive as a case study. Fortunately, others have studied the formation of this essential archive, which requires close attention on the complexities of copyright. Additionally, the decision to focus on academic and industry-initiated archives meant that the Library of Congress was beyond the scope of the study. The Library is a complex institution that merits further study. The Library is a case study of a government archive, albeit one with close academic ties, and requires close attention to copyright and the Library's leadership in preservation efforts. These archives are part of a history of archiving television. While these institutions are beyond the scope of this study, it is important to summarize their significance and the scholarship about these institutions. The following two sections provide an overview of these two archives and the collection of television's recorded output.

Preserving News

As the "first drafts of history," news already has a place in historical inquiry as primary sources, albeit flawed first drafts. The news function of television had been a feature of television since the beginning of commercial television. However, it took decades to develop a system of recording television news for public and scholarly use. In other words, this meant a publicly accessible archive of television news, without having to go to each station and ask for access. The Vanderbilt Television News Archive (VTNA) began its operations in 1968, under somewhat unstable copyright ground. In his

historical study about videotapes, Hilderbrand highlights the VTNA as a case study in copyright and the work in establishing a publicly accessible television news archive.¹⁵⁵

The ease of videotape technology certainly was one factor in enabling Vanderbilt's project. Another factor was the inherent democratic and historical value of television news, whose value as historical record was hindered by its ephemerality and its tight corporate control. So while newspapers were ubiquitous records commonly housed in libraries, what of the midcentury news format?

The Vanderbilt case study is significant in at least two regards: the efforts to establish an archive that later serves as a model for other off-air recording endeavors and the subsequent copyright battles. The VTNA experimented with off-air recording, creating ad-hoc recording systems. They also played with preservation standards that later were integral in discussions about television preservation from 1970s and onward.¹⁵⁶

Hilderbrand explains the formation of the VTNA as follows.¹⁵⁷ Paul Simpson, an interested citizen with connections to congressmen and Vanderbilt University, acted on his observation about a lack of comprehensive television news recordings. The idea was to form an archive of television news that can be used to study news bias, accountability, and a general record of the 1960s (an era when there was an increased interest in pointing out liberal or conservative bias in news, especially reporting the Vietnam War). The network news studios regularly erased news and kept spotty records of transcripts and

¹⁵⁵ Lucas Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

¹⁵⁶ Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*.

¹⁵⁷ Hilderbrand's summary of the VTNA is the most comprehensive overview of the archive's formation. A similar overview, with far less detail, appears in *Ibid*.

newsfilms, all of which were for internal news purposes and not for public, let alone researcher, use. Simpson and the newly established archive in the early 1970s experimented with systematic methods of tape recording and facilitating researcher access. The VTNA began with a rigged tape recording system and soon had enough of a bank to publish the monthly *Television News index and Abstracts* in 1972. Hilderbrand notes that Vanderbilt's operation was intended as neutral, an unbiased repository of news that was up to the researchers to interpret. Still, the news archive was "not without ideology – the ideology that information and historical documentation should serve the public interest by being accessible."¹⁵⁸ In this case, television news was conceptualized as worthy of an archival presence in light of inherent democratic values and public interest standards.

Delineating the status of television broadcasts and copyright was another major outcome of the VTNA. When the VTNA began, CBS in particular took issue with copyright infringement and filed lawsuits in 1973. The *Columbia Journalism Review* speculated that Vanderbilt's distribution policy threatened CBS; perhaps the network wanted to license its copyrighted material to the university like *The New York Times* licensed its past issues via microfilm sales.¹⁵⁹ The litigation was messy. CBS claimed that its nightly newscasts were protected under copyright (they started filing copyrights in 1973) and that VTNA was violating said copyright by editing the newscast and lending tapes to researchers. VTNA argued that they were well within the right to record off-air broadcasts. The availability of recorded news was a public good and off-air recording

¹⁵⁸ Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*, 125.

¹⁵⁹ CJR, "CBS Proposes an Act of Oblivion," *Columbia Journalism Review* 13, no. 1 (June 1974): 1–2.

was a legal grey area. Congress, too, took note of the copyright battle when they debated revisions to the existing copyright act. The result was the Copyright Act of 1976, which included a provision allowing the Library of Congress and universities (specifically with Vanderbilt in mind) to record broadcasts for the purposes of a library.¹⁶⁰ The Copyright Act also figured in to this history of the Library of Congress and their relations with television.

Library of Congress (and the Copyright Act of 1976)

The Library of Congress is a government institution that reflects how works with social, cultural, and political value become part of historical record. Thomas Jefferson was the primary catalyst, who encouraged the growth of the Library as a resource for legislators and as a wealth of knowledge (to compete with rival European institutions). To do so, the government mandated that all copyrighted works be deposited in the Library of Congress. By 1870, photographs were added to the list of copyrightable works, which “established the first legal precedent for development of the Library’s central role in collecting and preserving the national collection of America’s film and television in the 20th century.”¹⁶¹ Motion pictures fit within the copyright scheme as creative works. Plus, films could be deposited to the Library in the form of photographic sheets.

However, this was not the case with television. Early television programming was seldom copyrighted, in part because producers saw no lasting value beyond the initial transmission.¹⁶² Without copyrights, there was little reason to register works with the

¹⁶⁰ Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*.

¹⁶¹ Loughney, “Thomas Jefferson’s Movie Collection,” 177.

¹⁶² Sarah Rouse, “Introduction,” in *3 Decades of Television: a Catalog of Television Programs Acquired by the Library of Congress, 1949-1979*, by Library of Congress (Washington: Library of Congress, 1989), xiii.

Library of Congress. This was “remedied” with the Copyright Act of 1976. Language and legalities regarding what can be copyrighted and how broadcast programs qualified streamlined the process, thereby encouraging greater numbers of copyright entries as well as retroactively securing rights (and depositing older programs in the Library).¹⁶³ To handle the influx of moving image material, immediately following the Act, a new division formed called the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress. The copyright mechanism, along with advances in recording technology and increased recognition of historical value, a huge amount of programming was archived at the Library, including, “theatrical releases, industrials, commercials and pornographic films as well as broadcasts.”¹⁶⁴ Even so, the Library (and archives in general) were challenged by television. As noted in the introduction to the Library’s 1989 catalog of television programs, “broadcasting is a recent cultural medium, there are no time-tested precedents on which to rely,” and therefore, the Library continues to struggle with their role.¹⁶⁵

The Copyright Act of 1976, though, did more than remedy the randomness in depositing television for copyright purposes. It also included subsection names the American Television and Radio Archives Act. Section 113 of the Copyright Act of 1976 established a radio and television archive at the Library “to preserve a permanent record of the television and radio programs which are the heritage of the people of the United States and to provide access to such programs to historians and scholars without

¹⁶³ Mann, “The Evolution of American Moving Image Preservation.”

¹⁶⁴ Schreibman, “A Succinct History of American Television Archives,” 91.

¹⁶⁵ Rouse, “Introduction,” ix.

encouraging or causing copyright infringement.”¹⁶⁶ Such an archive, however, never quite did come to fruition. Funding, the lack of trained moving image archivists, technological obstacles (e.g. obsolete tape formats, deteriorating film and tape, etc.), and funding. This Act, though, was helpful in a particular area: it “introduced ‘fair use’ provisions for television materials, including the right to tape off-air for educational use...[and] to duplicate tapes for on-site access.”¹⁶⁷ The legislation exists to support a national archive, yet researchers, educators, and archivists seldom even colloquially refer to the American Television and Radio Archive as such.¹⁶⁸

The Library of Congress provides a tremendous resource as the largest collection of television programs and films available for researcher use. Copyright deposits provided the Library with many of their programming holdings, but so did donations. Specifically, the Library holds eighteen thousand programs from NBC (many of which are kinescopes), over ten thousand from National Educational Television, over thirty thousand from PBS, and many news programs (though, not to the same degree as Vanderbilt, which partner with each other).¹⁶⁹ Additionally, the Library’s manuscript division also contains numerous collections pertaining to television history. For instance, a bulk of the NBC records are housed at the Library (in addition to the Wisconsin Historical Society, the subject in Chapter V) as well as various manuscript collections

¹⁶⁶ Commerce Clearing House and United States, *Copyright Revision Act of 1976: P.L. 94-553, as Signed by the President, October 19, 1976: Law, Explanation, Committee Reports*. (Chicago: Commerce Clearing House, 1976), 285.

¹⁶⁷ Mann, “The Evolution of American Moving Image Preservation,” 12.

¹⁶⁸ The minor successes but overall failure to implement such an archive is a ripe subject for discussion. During the course of archival research for this dissertation, the Erik Barnouw Papers at Columbia University offer some insights about the difficulties in enacting the American Television and Radio Act.

¹⁶⁹ Howell, “Dealing with Archive Records,” 315–317.

from television personalities, entertainers, and journalists. However, Rouse notes in the Library's catalog of television holdings that donations of recorded television were slow to come and/or the Library was slow to accept or solicit television-related donations. Before the Copyright Act of 1976, the "Library simply underestimated the social and historical significance of the full range of television programming."¹⁷⁰ As researchers began requesting more television programs (and a broad range – not just news or "quality" programs), the Library willingly expanded its holdings.

The Preservation of Television

Overall, it should be comforting to the television historian (or any historian, scholar, or even the public) to know that television does indeed exist in archival spaces. Albeit, television's location in publicly accessible archives, such as the Library of Congress, university archives, or the museum-as-archive tends to be a haphazard assortment of television's recorded output and documentary traces.

As the case studies reveal, the formation of television archives and collections in the 1950s to the 1970s reflects degrees of serendipity, obstacles (e.g. technology, copyrights, the preservation of historical material mindset versus protection of corporate assets mindset), and persistence. Certainly, the many television materials entering archival spaces was part of a broader project to raise "the still-derided medium's cultural status."¹⁷¹ Additionally, archivists increasingly recognized the value to archive popular culture and media industries. Whatever the reason to pursue the acquisition and

¹⁷⁰ Rouse, "Introduction," xiii.

¹⁷¹ Mary Jeanne Wilson, "Preserving Soap History: What Will It Mean for the Future of Soaps?," in *The Survival of Soap Opera: Transformations for a New Media Era*, ed. Sam Ford, Abigail De Kosnik, and C. Lee Harrington (Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2011), 141.

preservation of television's material traces, the fact of these efforts demonstrated that some individuals positioned at key institutions thought it worthwhile to frame television (or more broadly, media) as archival. By the late 1970s and well into the 1990s, it was no longer a question about arguing television's value as historical and cultural material. Discussions about television in the archive shifted to concerns about the physical preservation of television's recorded output, balancing the needs to preserve old formats while dealing with the exponentially growing amount of television.¹⁷² To address the increasing concern about television (read: the programs and even commercials, or more aptly, the broadcast flow) and its posterity for historical study, communities of moving image archivists formed, conferences organized, and grants sought out from the institutions like the National Endowment of the Humanities. The technologies of preservation and the inconsistencies of public as well as corporate archives to ensure the preservation of television's recorded output seemed to take center stage, overshadowing discussions about television's other material traces.

In 1996, the Library of Congress conducted a study about television and video preservation. The bulk of the study relied on three regional hearings where industry professionals, academics, archivists, and others could testify about the need to preserve television's past and secure its future. Drawing on the statements and presentations made by the wide swath of stakeholders, the final report began with the premise, "the American television and video heritage is at risk."¹⁷³ A television and video heritage meant that television was part of American history, culture, and identity; a "an important

¹⁷² Schreibman, "A Succinct History of American Television Archives."

¹⁷³ Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, xiii.

part of the collective experience and memory.”¹⁷⁴ Reflected in the hearings was a general sentiment that if the television industry, academic community, and archives had perceived television’s historical and cultural value earlier, then collectively they could have been more vigilant to save television in the 1950s and onward. The study revealed a consensus that a television history and heritage meant the collection and preservation of television’s products: the programs as well as the broadcast flow or average daily schedule. Kompare explains this interest in the television product as a feature of the heritage construct, which draws on television’s texts and artifacts to bolster a notion of a collective television heritage.¹⁷⁵

The testimonies, hearings, and eventual published report codified a history of television’s inclusions and exclusions from archival settings. For example, one of the most salient testimonies came from Edie Adams, an actress and wife of 1950s television entertainer Ernie Kovacs. She recounted two stories about the fate of her deceased husband’s recorded shows: in the 1960s ABC “was using the wall of Kovacs master tapes as ‘used’ tape to tape over” and in the 1970s several semi trucks full of kinescopes and tapes of Kovacs’ show and others were dumped in New York Bay.¹⁷⁶ Her testimony captured a recurring sentiment that the television industry neglected to care for programs beyond their initial on-air broadcasts. Many testimonies noted how much power lies with the industry to dictate what exists (e.g. throwing away boxes of tapes to clear up storage, fires, disorganized warehouses, etc.). Technological limitations were certainly an obstacle

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁵ Kompare, *Rerun Nation*, 114.

¹⁷⁶ Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, Vol 2, 42-44.

to preservation, but more troubling was access. Television's past and present were increasingly preserved, but "retained in the custody of private corporations whose policies are subject to the ebb and flow of the market place."¹⁷⁷ Other testimonies recounted the pioneering efforts of a few people and places that passionately cared enough to take matters into their own hands and create publicly accessible archives of television's history (e.g. the Museum of Broadcasting, UCLA Film and Television Archive, Museum of Broadcasting Communications). Scholars and educators spoke about television's significance, explaining how television reflects our values, helps define our relationships, deals with social issues (or the lack thereof), shapes identities, and so on.¹⁷⁸ Still, limited access to private archives or even the difficulty for public archives to provide access greatly hindered educational and scholarly abilities to utilize television.

Overall, the Library's final report demonstrated that by the 1990s, television's cultural and historical value was naturalized by academics, archivists, and industry professionals. Television was worth saving and it was important to do so because television was evidence of American culture and history. It was self-evident that there was a television heritage and it was at risk. The final report stressed that much of television's past did not exist because of industry neglect and/or technological challenges. Television was well worth studying, but there were great gaps in what was actually available and more so what was accessible to researchers and educators.

If it was so clear in the 1990s that television was worth saving and studying, then how did this perspective develop? As such, interest in this dissertation is to take a step

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 107–109.

back to the earlier decades when there was no organized effort or professionalized units to address television's archivability. The preservation concerns of the late 1970s and onward is vital to studying the presence and absence of television in archival spaces. But these preservation efforts tended to focus only on the moving image product and already presumed television's significance. Moreover, the Library's Television and Video Preservation Study tends to be the go-to source for filling in a history of television's archivability – but the final report is based on personal recollections, corporate and institutional reports about their particular archiving efforts (and thus, susceptible to mythologizing accounts), and strong rhetoric. Focusing on television's entrance into archival spaces before the preservation-heavy discussions of the late 1970s illuminates the discursive formations of television as cultural and historical material – material worthy of archival inclusions and academic study. The final section of this literature review concentrates on the connections between the accessibility of television's past and historical inquiry.

Accessibility and the Impact on Historiography

Spigel rightly points out how technology, industry practices (such as copyright, network decision making, filing systems), constraints such as storage, and cultural ebbs and flows (e.g. what is considered high or low culture) are at play in the construction of the television collections and whole archives.¹⁷⁹ As such, these forces shape the availability of and accessibility to television's material traces as historical records. As evident by the literature review and the subsequent case studies, there is no single reason why television exists in archival spaces. Before even getting to the point of archivability,

¹⁷⁹ Spigel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation."

television programs had to be recorded or filmed (and capable of replaying), people associated with television had to save their papers (whether the creative or business side or both sides of television), and *then* people enabled by institutional structures had to consider the merits of television (or some other archival material that inscribed television) for archival inclusions.

For instance, recording and playback technologies are significant factors in accessing television's past. On the one hand, academic archives or archival spaces not directly connected with the television industry might have limited opportunities to acquire television's recorded traces. These archives must deal with whether television programs are available for acquisition, the utility of the materials' content for educational and scholarly uses, whether the archive can handle the costs and technical capabilities associated with maintaining program, and if they can maneuver through some uncertain legal ground (e.g. copyrights, permissions to make in-house viewing copies). A researcher accessing television's recorded traces within the archival spaces poses an additional obstacle in terms of access. A level of selection and a level of acceptance that not everything that can be viewed will be viewed is always inherent in the historical process. But still, going to archives can be costly and regionally lopsided.¹⁸⁰ Even in the contemporary moment, digitization and providing online access to an archive's holdings is not quite the viable option as one would hope.

On the other hand, there is a great deal that exists about television history in readily available forms; namely newspaper and magazine articles as well as commercial

¹⁸⁰ Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*.

mechanisms to make television's past available to consumers.¹⁸¹ However, television historians recognize the limits placed on historiography. An imagined whole of television's past is by no means even commercially available; the regime of repetition may support the circulation and monetization of past television programs but is far from complete or ideal for scholarly purposes.¹⁸² Brunsdon explains the easy access to early BBC teleplays now that many programs are available on DVD. However, the object of study is removed from its historical moment. Brunsdon suggests that on one level, the program is isolated from the period in which it was born. What results is a disconnect between the medium and the historical moment. On another level, DVDs of select programming reflect a selection process whereby some histories are offered and others are not.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the labor of going to dusty archives and viewing the programs as broadcast is now transformed into a consumer experience.

While the literal content may be the same, using the commercial product to gain access to historical evidence versus physically locating the source alters one's experience and understanding of the historical material. Yet, that assumes that programs are available in archives and more importantly, are accessible to the researcher. The archives of networks, studios, and other media companies tend to be organized for the purposes of production, not for storage and accessibility of historical material. While many television archives contain historical and cultural material, "since cultural preservation and research

¹⁸¹ For example, Spigel ingeniously drew on magazine advertisements and other print sources to inform her arguments about television and domestic spaces. See Spigel, *Make Room for TV*.

¹⁸² For example, the above report noted that in the mid-1990s, the programs that were available on video cassette or in syndication tended "to be the popular hits and not the mundane or the ordinary." See Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, 113.

¹⁸³ Charlotte Brunsdon, "Television Criticism and the Transformation of the Archive." *Television & New Media* 10, no. 1 (2009).

are not the primary functions of television archives, some of these marginal holdings are regularly destroyed and our cultural memory diminished in the process.”¹⁸⁴ The destruction of programs (as well as documentation of the creative and industrial processes) plays a major role in limiting what might be available to researcher and consequently available for historical inquiry and cultural memory. Another factor is gaining access to those spaces that are not necessarily public. For instance, Scannell explains the hurdle of gaining access to the BBC archives depending on one’s category as user: program maker, member of the general public, or researcher.¹⁸⁵

The cultural ebbs and flows in regards to television can not be underestimated in outlining the formation of television archives. The archivist (or acquisitions librarian) is in effect a gatekeeper for what enters into the archive. And we as scholars may be at the mercy of who is determining what is ‘worthy’ of entrance. One film archivist argues that it is the job of the archivist to curate, to judge a collection for “historical and cultural values,” and to possess knowledge of aesthetics and film history to make those judgments.¹⁸⁶ This is a demonstration of the archive as a constructed space, whereby someone’s judgments of value (in this case, judgment of what is worthy for film history) is translated into what is acquired and preserved as part of archival record. This selection process potentially limits what may enter into an archive and what is rejected on grounds

¹⁸⁴ Wulf Kansteiner, “Television Archives and the Making of Collective Memory: Nazism and World War II in Three Television Blockbusters for German Public Television,” in *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, ed. Francis X Blouin and William G Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 368 – 378.

¹⁸⁵ Paddy Scannell, “Television and History: Questioning the Archive,” *Communication Review* 13, no. 1 (2010): 37–51.

¹⁸⁶ Haden Guest, “The Archive and Academia,” *Cinema Journal* 49, no. 3 (2010): 106–110.

of not meeting certain cultural and aesthetic criteria. Barnouw mused that a level of reflection and distance from one's personal tastes is an essential component when considering which of television's material traces should be included in archival spaces.¹⁸⁷

The acquisition of soap opera programs and researcher accessibility to such programs illustrates many of the issues germane to this discussion. Soap operas are among the oldest and most stable genres, but one that tends to be marginalized given its feminized and trivial status. In discussing the soap opera's archival absences, Levine addresses key concerns about the existence and accessibility of television's traces, especially a genre that tends to be at the bottom of cultural hierarchy. Locating and viewing programs as they aired is a difficult task. She notes that few archives preserve episodes and of those that do, access to a viewing copy may be cumbersome. Corporate archives, such as the soap's top producers Procter and Gamble and ABC/Disney, have archived episodes but sparingly release these proprietary materials via commercial channels.¹⁸⁸ Relatedly, Wilson discusses the UCLA Film and Television Archive, the Library of Congress, and the Museum of Broadcasting (aka, The Paley Center for Media) as three major institutions with television holdings, including soap operas. In each case, decisions about selection "greatly influence and shape the prevailing television canon and narratives of television history."¹⁸⁹ While she acknowledges material constraints such as finances and storage space, the main filter in what an archive collects lies in selection

¹⁸⁷ Erik Barnouw, "Foreword," in *American History, American Television: Interpreting the Video Past*, ed. John E O'Connor (New York: F. Ungar, 1983), xii–xv.

¹⁸⁸ Elana Levine, "Doing Soap Opera History: Challenges and Triumphs," in *Convergence Media History*, ed. Janet Staiger and Sabine Hake (Routledge, 2009), 173–181.

¹⁸⁹ Wilson, "Preserving Soap History: What Will It Mean for the Future of Soaps?," 142.

bias. The genre is serialized, voluminous, and of “low” cultural status or significance. Thus, if archival spaces have soap operas, archivists tend to sparingly sample episodes, either as a random representative sample or guided by award nominations and particular subject matter.

Levine also points out that the soap opera's paper-based evidential material is crucial in historical analysis. Thankfully, there is a “rich well of material... that can help enable partial histories.”¹⁹⁰ Still, the obstacles lie in comprehensive collections, especially locating fan press materials, which libraries tend to overlook. Consequently, the limited opportunities for scholars and educators to pursue the rich histories of soap operas via the archive greatly impact the range of historical inquiries.

In general, consider the degrees in the process between the time something is made and when it enters archival spaces. Television programs had to be recorded and papers had to be saved. People associated with archives had to consider the merits of television's material traces alongside the physical capacity of the archive to acquire and manage such material. Or, people associated with the industry had to consider the merits of saving television's recorded traces and whether to commercially release television's past, partner with a public archive, provide access to researchers, or not bother at all with television's posterity. Users like academics had to vocalize their interests and validate the archive's pursuit of television. They had to locate the existence of television's material traces, gain entry to those archival spaces (or commercial releases of television's past) and sift through the available lot of materials. All these steps lead to another major element in selection: interpretation and contributions to historical inquiry. Indeed,

¹⁹⁰ Levine, “Doing Soap Opera History: Challenges and Triumphs,” 177.

Scannell states that “histories are only as good as the archives on which they depend” and so our historical analyses may well take into account the complexities of the archival process.¹⁹¹

Summary

The purpose this chapter was to provide an overview of television studies and contexts regarding the television industry and archival institutions. Furthermore, this chapter examined the existing literature about the formation and purposes of television archives. The discussion about the television industry during the network era was crucial to establish some background about how television was produced and perceived. As the case studies in this dissertation demonstrate, technologies, industrial practices, and perspectives about television’s cultural status all figured in to the archival process. An understanding of the contexts of television production, the recording of programs, and the climate of criticism provided a foundation to interrogate how television entered the archive from the perspective of the industry. Relatedly, television’s entrance into archival spaces also required an overview of conceptions of the archive and shifting notions of what constitutes as historical evidence. Archives were explained as complex institution with multiple layers of processes and factors. Facets of archival sciences and institutional contexts impacted the types of materials collected and why. Media in particular posed some challenges to the archival profession, but still encouraged the expansion of archival practice and the definition of historical evidence. Thus, television’s archivability, that is, the physical and conceptual ability for television to become historical material preserved

¹⁹¹ Scannell, “History, Media and Communication,” 201.

for future study, was made possible by the intersection between contexts of the television industry, notions of cultural value, and archival practice.

The 1996 Television and Video Preservation Study made it clear that many archivists, academics, and representatives from the industry viewed television as constituent of an American heritage and worth saving. As illustrated in the section about television and history, surely television has a close connection to reflecting as well as contributing to a sense of shared culture and past. However, as noted throughout this chapter, television was neither something easy to archive nor even apparent to do so. By the time of the 1990s, the rhetoric of preserving television's products (or texts) solidified narratives about archival inclusions and exclusions. Television scholars outlined pressing concerns about availability and accessibility, keenly addressing today's frustrations with past decisions to selectively save some of television.

However, there remain gaps in the literature about how television's material traces entered archival spaces. The preservation study is the go-to report about the state of our access to television's past, but it does not go into depth about archival formations (and indeed, draws on the oft repeated founding stories of archives such as the UCLA Film and Television Archive and the Museum of Broadcasting, thus reproducing narratives). Some archival formations have been favored over others, such as focusing on the industry-formed (and thus, ready for critique as public relations efforts) archives rather than academic archives. The tendency when discussing a history of archiving television is to focus on only a fraction of television's material traces, namely the moving image products. A great deal of television's other material traces essential for study also

resides in archival spaces. How did documentation of creative and industrial processes enter archival spaces?

Interrogating the histories of television's archivability, then, greatly benefits from pursuing both television as product and as creative/industrial processes. Certainly today (and at the time of the preservation study), we can appreciate the arguments about television as cultural and historical material, that is, television as vital evidence when pursuing a range of historical inquiries. But that has not always been the case. Thus, it is the goal of this dissertation to trace how television acquired such status. To do so requires an examination of the institutional structures that confer materials with historical value, the people working within these structures, and the intersection of archival processes and industry practices that enabled for television's material traces to enter archival spaces.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS OF INQUIRY

This chapter is laid out in four main parts. The first part establishes the research questions and explains the dissertation's rationale. The second and third parts explain the interpretative and methodological frameworks that guide this dissertation. The fourth part describes the selection of case studies and the organization of analyses in the case study chapters.

Research Questions and Rationale

The research questions are developed largely from the literature review, drawing on texts about television history and the theory and practice of archiving. These questions are also undergirded by the tension between two competing logics regarding television: its creative, cultural, and eventual historical form and its commercially driven industrial structure. Upon its creation, television programs are at once products of commercial and creative circumstances. Likewise, these products can fluctuate between corporate assets and historical material. In their original use, television programs as well as documents start off as scripts, production notes, contracts, films, and so on – all logistical and practical steps in a process to produce television programming (be it from the creative or commercial perspectives). The emphasis in this project, however, is how these materials move into the realm of historical evidence; I am interested in the transformation or reconceptualization of these materials into records of social, political, cultural, and economic thought and practice. Or rather, how television can be an integrative

component to histories, offering entry points into various types of historical inquiry (such as cultural history or business history). The crux, however, is that television had to first be envisioned as something belonging in the realm of history via mechanisms that preserve television as such.

In the simplest terms, the research questions within this dissertation ask how television entered the archive and why we have certain aspects of television's material traces over others. These questions matter when we consider the close connections between the materials that exist in archives and our historical inquiries. To help examine these broad questions, I offer three more specific research questions. These questions focus on the institutional structures that enabled individuals to pursue television (or more broadly, media) for archival spaces as well as rationales why television belonged in such spaces.

RQ1: How did different institutions approach television as archivable in the 1950s to the 1970s? Who were the determinators within these institutions, who could conceptualize television as archivable?

RQ2: What were the factors that enabled television's material traces to enter archival spaces? How did television directly or indirectly enter these archival spaces?

RQ3: How did these institutional structures confer television with status as historically and culturally valuable?

The significance of this dissertation is to connect the dots between the creation and production of television, the conceptualization of television as culturally and historically valuable, and the acquisition of television material (whether directly or indirectly) into

institutions that confer such values. As such, the research questions trace people, institutions, and factors involved in pursuing television as archivable (as belonging in an archive *and* capable of physical preservation). The availability of television materials in publicly accessible archives points to how academics, archivists, and industry professionals valued television beyond the broadcast moment. Television's archival inclusions or exclusions, then, affect the histories that we may write today. For television to enter archives, people and institutions had to conceive of television's archival value, or an aspect of media that included television. By archival value, I mean the inclination to collect, preserve, and make available materials for future use, such as historical study. Television – both programming *and* tangible documentation; news/documentary *and* entertainment; “quality” entertainment *and* all the rest – had to be envisioned as something that belonged in the archive for the purposes of future study.

Given the seemingly sporadic and sprawling chronology of television's entrance into new and established archives, there was no single originary instance where television suddenly was understood as *archival* and *archivable*. The goal here is to identify how different institutions drew on conceptions of television and rationales to directly or indirectly archive television. Different conceptions of what constituted historical evidence and/or markers of cultural and artistic achievement were certainly factors in the selection of television-related materials for archival purposes. Conceptions of television's archivability (or more broadly, the ability and utility to archive mass media) had to come from somewhere and been fostered by motivated individuals. There had to have been individuals who could imagine television (while not wholesale, but at least some facets of television) as belonging in some sort of an archive and preserved for historical posterity.

More appropriately, there were determinators, meaning “organizations, institutions, or credentialized experts... who have been given, granted, or taken the authority to make truth claims regarding specific phenomena.”¹ As such, there were determinators who fostered various conceptions of television as more than temporally and spatially constrained flickering moving images. Establishing that there were historical and cultural reasons to archive television is one matter; actually following through the archival process raised a host of obstacles. Such obstacles ranged from how to capture and locate the ephemeral programs, acquire manuscript materials, and delineate criteria of selection in the face of vast documents and recordings.

In addition to different conceptualizations, television challenged the archival process, meaning the selection, acquisition and preservation of materials as well as the facilitation of access to such materials. Thus, the research questions consider the factors involved in the archival process, such as locating and preserving the moving-image material, negotiating the legal dimensions in acquiring television (such as gaining access to network archives or seeking permissions from corporate rights holders), and the logistics in managing an archive. On the latter point, the archival process necessarily involved considerations of space (e.g. how to store films and tapes, evaluating whether a space can hold voluminous scripts, etc.), financial resources, and the time and labor to secure and inventory collections. Overall, the research questions aid in examining these factors, tracing moments of contemplating, initiating, enacting, and at times, abandoning, the project to archive television.

¹ Jeremy Packer, “What Is an Archive?: An Apparatus Model for Communications and Media History,” *Communication Review* 13, no. 1 (2010): 100–101.

The next part outlines the interpretative frameworks that helped shape and guide this dissertation, which is followed by the dissertation's methodology. Having established the interpretive and methodological frameworks, the final section explains the selection of case studies.

Interpretative Frameworks

Denzin and Lincoln discuss the value in situating the researcher within contexts, both the contexts of the research subject (in this case, television and archives) and that of the researcher.² This includes the biases and social, economic, political, and geographical contexts that shape the interpretation and construction of knowledge. Therefore, I must note that my role as a researcher and my framework for interpretation are influenced by two areas of scholarship: television and archives.

Situating the Researcher in the Context of Television Studies

On the personal level, the interpretive framework is informed by decades worth of television studies scholarship, much of which carries implicit (and at times very explicit) arguments as to why television matters. Television studies is well established in the academy, but I am still aware of the burden in defending television as worthy of study.³ Much of my interpretative framework still incorporates the defensive mode. This is in part an artifact of the early television studies literature. However, this perspective is also a relevant lens for the dissertation. This is especially the case considering that valuations

² Norman K Denzin, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005).

³ Michele Hilmes, "The Bad Object: Television in the American Academy," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 1 (2005): 111–117.

about television's worth (or lack there of) occurred within the study's time frame. More broadly, this dissertation is undergirded by a view of television as an integral force in our society – be it economically, culturally, and politically. The programs on television over the decades and the materials scattered around archives, museums, offices, and basements around the country, do not speak to one truth about society or the television industry itself. The more materials that are available, the better our understanding of the complexities, tensions, and processes of television *and* society, culture, industry, politics, etc.

Archives: Principles that Guide the Process

Returning to the emphasis on the context of the research subject, the interpretative framework is informed by an understanding of the archival context. For this study, it was vital to have working knowledge of the principles and practices that guide the archival profession. The archive's institutional structures and the decisions made by archivists were central features throughout the case studies. Having some familiarity with principles that guide archival practice such as selecting, acquiring, ordering, and preserving materials were crucial to my research process and especially useful when applying the document and institutional analysis methods explained in the methodology section. As such, the following briefly highlights key principles that helped in determining where to start the research process and how to make sense of archivists' decisions.

Archival principles are the application of theoretical and professional considerations regarding why archives exist, how archives operate, and how archivists proceed with the selection and ordering of materials (such as standardizing taxonomies, adhering to the original order or provenance, ordering materials by series and record groups, which documents to keep and which to discard, etc.). I suggest two words that

summarize the theoretical and practical principles that underscore the archival process, regardless of era or prevailing thought: decisions and values.⁴ These are intertwined in that decisions to acquire and preserve materials are guided by criteria of valuation.

Determining value may be fraught with epistemological and ontological consequences when considered from philosophical and theoretical frameworks (such as literary and cultural theory). But in archival science, delineating key features of *value* are essential tools to establish criteria of selection. The selection process includes acquisition, accession, and appraisal; the first two refer more to the formal process (meaning, how records are acquired by donation or purchase and the legal and physical transfer) of acquiring collections while appraisal refers to the process of evaluating records.⁵

Values

Appraisal consists of far more than assigning monetary value, although that is certainly a considerable part. Appraisal involves making judgments regarding the materials' utility. The archivist making the decisions, the archival institution and its relations to other institutions and forces (such as economic and political), and the nature of the archive itself are integral facets in what is selected as *the* documentary evidence of the time, place, and organization.⁶ Appraisal ultimately rests on values, or more

⁴ Literature about professional archival practice began around the turn of the twentieth century. Since then, there have been various conceptual frameworks for what is an archive, how an archive ought to be managed, and the types of materials collected and why. For a discussion on various changes in the archival profession, see Luke J Gilliland-Swetland, "The Provenance of a Profession: The Permanence of the Public Archives and Historical Manuscripts Traditions in American Archival History," *The American Archivist* 54, no. 2 (1991): 160–175; Terry Cook, "Archival science and postmodernism: new formulations for old concepts," *Archival Science* 1, no. 1 (2001): 3–24.

⁵ Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*, 2.

⁶ Terry Cook, "Macro-appraisal and Functional Analysis: Documenting Governance Rather Than Government 1," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 25, no. 1 (2004): 5–18.

specifically the “attribution of value.”⁷ Attribution of value points to the notion of purpose, especially future purpose (e.g. why save this record?). Undergirding all of the following formulations of value is this key principle: anticipating future use. An archivist at an archive created for internal, institutional functions, she or he tends to select documents that might be of use for legal, fiscal, or administrative reasons. An archivist at a historical society or a university’s special collections might decide to select materials based on whether a future historian, scholar, community member, etc., might find such material useful. A notable distinction is the recognition of the materials’ utility for future generations versus the needs of the creator (e.g. legal, fiscal, etc.). Determining future use is difficult, but using some of the following values to help shape selection criteria aids in anticipating future needs.

Historical, research, or enduring value are perhaps the simplest way to indicate that archivists select materials based on how useful the materials are to understand the past and/or because they have a lasting purpose.⁸ The archival profession, though, developed definitions that were more precise in order to assist in defining evaluative criteria. An influential formulation of values is *evidential* and *informational* value.⁹ Evidential value of records refers to the evidence of the creator’s purpose or structure (e.g. in the case of a government agency, how that agency operated and functioned) and

⁷ Luciana Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” *The American Archivist* 57, no. 2 (1994): 328–344. 329.

⁸ Richard Pearce-Moses, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005).

⁹ These are influential formulations because they were by the two leading figures in the professionalization of the archivist, even today. Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making*. (Oxford; London; New York [etc.: The Clarendon Press; H. Milford, 1922); T. R Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

informational value as the content of the records. Evidential value attests to the “significant facts of an agency’s existence – its patterns of action, its policies in dealing with all classes of matters, its procedures, its gross achievements.”¹⁰ Informational value features three criteria: uniqueness, form, and importance. In short, “the best informational records were those holding information that could not be found elsewhere, that concentrated the information in convenient formats, and that could be used in multiple ways by various users.”¹¹ Moreover, informational value can extend to valuing materials for their representativeness of human experience.¹²

There are a few other conceptions of value that provide useful insights into the archival process and how different labels of value shape the criteria that archivists use to select and appraise materials. In thinking about the needs of current and future researchers, evidential and informational value can be lumped together as practical value, since the archivist can more easily anticipate practical purposes to save materials according to these values (e.g. how an organization functioned, descriptions of events, etc.). Influenced by shifting priorities in academic disciplines in the late mid-twentieth century, one archivist proposed *symbolic* value, meaning the more abstract, ceremonial, cultural, and metaphorical dimensions of records, with a consideration of contexts of

¹⁰ T.R. Schellenberg, “The Appraisal of Modern Public Records,” in *A Modern Archives Reader : Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice*, ed. Maygene F Daniels, Timothy Walch, and United States National Archives and Records Service (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, U.S. General Services Administration, 1984), 59.

¹¹ Frank Boles, *Selecting & Appraising Archives & Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), 13.

¹² F. Gerald Ham, “The Archival Edge,” *The American Archivist* 38, no. 1 (1975): 5–13.

creation and use.¹³ Overall, all of these values (basically, those that are not monetary) consolidate as *archival* value, drawing in the historical, evidential, informational, enduring, and/or research values associated with materials in the archive.¹⁴

A basic understanding about the archival process, especially the evaluation of materials, was an important part of this dissertation's methods. Professionalized archival practices in many ways shaped the contours of how television entered archival spaces and which aspects of television the archivists privileged for inclusion. Thus, knowledge about the archival process was an integral component to the methods discussed in the next section, specifically history methods, document analysis, and institutional analysis.

Method

Historical methods were used in conjunction with document and institutional analyses in order to examine the origins and processes of archiving television. Underpinning these methods were frameworks that drew on discourses as means to make sense of documents and their traces of discussions and decisions regarding television in archival spaces.

Introduction to History Methods

Startt and Sloan write, "the object of the historian's quest is to provide an honest understanding of something in the past based on the best evidence available."¹⁵ The approach is to seek out available evidence and "construct" a narrative that captures how

¹³ O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives."

¹⁴ Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 23.

¹⁵ James D Startt and Sloan, *Historical Methods in Mass Communication* (Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1989).

and why television archives developed. Historical methods are used to address how television materials shift from their original uses and into the realm of historical records. The historical method outlined by Startt and Sloan contains three components: gathering evidence, interpretation, and narrative. Interpretation is the process of reconstructing the past based on that evidence and contextual knowledge. Narrative is the final step where story is central. This can loosely be understood as a “traditional” history method, one that seeks evidence that does exist, accepts the limitations for that which does not exist, and reconstitutes that evidence into a knowable truth about the past.¹⁶ Similarly, Edgerton identifies the traditional history method as an empirical approach, with “facts as being outside themselves to be gathered and categorized” into narratives.¹⁷

This method is sufficient in setting up a basic structure – locate evidence, think about that evidence, and formulate the evidence in a cohesive way. While Startt and Sloan do offer explanations for different frames of interpretation, such as a nationalistic frame, the interpretations begins with the assumption that history is to be reconstructed based on the availability of evidence. Sterne suggests an interpretive frame that is more appropriate for the present study.¹⁸ He borrows from Derrida’s earlier work on deconstruction and argues that historical interpretations might embrace deconstructing the documents and the evidence that we use as well as the fallacy of reconstructing the

¹⁶ G. R Elton, *The Practice of History* (New York: Crowell, 1968).

¹⁷ Gary R Edgerton and Peter C Rollins, *Television Histories : Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), xv.

¹⁸ Jonathan Sterne, “Rearranging the Files: On Interpretation in Media History,” *Communication Review* 13, no. 1 (2010).

past. Repurposing Derrida and deconstruction for historiography, Sterne focuses on the trace:

We have traces of that past, which points back toward it... Traces do not provide unmediated access to the past in any simple way... A text, a trace [a historical document]. Makes possible the writing of the past (after all, no history can be written where there are no traces), but that past is only an imagined past.¹⁹

The insight, then, is to approach historiography not as a reconstruction of a knowable past using available evidence, but as recovering the traces *and* absences of the past into a version of a past. This point signals towards the notion that histories are incomplete as well as the archives on which they depend. Ideally, that historiography also works to deconstruct the pre-existing discourses that shade the historical documents as well as the interpretations. The interpretation cannot itself be absent; the historian ought to be aware of interpretative acts in reconstructing the past.

History Methods and the Moving Image

The moving image in general, and television in particular, pose unique challenges to the traditional understanding of material that constitutes historical artifacts. O'Connor writes that "Film and television are not 'materials' in the same sense as the manuscripts and documents that historians are more used to working with."²⁰ Moving image materials require a technology in order to view the content, unlike words on a page or an image on emulsion. Moreover, they also require a context, a consideration of the conditions of production, dissemination, and reception.

¹⁹ Ibid., 81.

²⁰ John E O'Connor and American Historical Association. *Image as artifact : the historical analysis of film and television* (Malabar, Fla.: R.E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1990), 4.

This project assumes that television programs are indeed historical artifacts and evidence. And while the programming itself is not the object of concern for this project, what is of concern is the process by which television, in all of its facets, is accepted as historical artifact. As Wheatley explains, “a historiographic approach cannot... view television programmes simply as ‘evidence’ of social history without attending to the ways in which their images and representations are constructed according to specific production or reception context.”²¹ As such, both the programming and the documents regarding production, distribution, and reception are of value as historical material. Godfrey notes the importance of evaluating evidence in the context of technology and industry practices such as the creative process and the steps in producing a television program.²²

Broadcast and film historians have noted the challenges and limitations in constructing moving image historiographies.²³ The two specific challenges reflect the previous statements regarding the ingredients for “proper” moving image histories: the actual programs and the documents that we may traditionally expect to locate in archival manuscript collections. Sklar explains that the lack of documentation in the archives *and* the limited availability of moving images from the past meant that the historiographical methods tended to focus on the textual meanings found within the available moving

²¹ Wheatley, *Re-viewing Television History*.

²² Donald Godfrey, ed., *Methods of Historical Analysis in Electronic Media* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006).

²³ Brunson, “Television Criticism and the Transformation of the Archive.”; Scannell, “Television and History”; Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation”; Rachel Moseley, “Is Archiving a Feminist Issue? Historical Research and the Past, Present, and Future of Television Studies,” *Cinema Journal* 47, no. 3 (2008): 152–158.

images (namely, films, but presumably also television).²⁴ In other words, films are “read” as a text, drawing on psychological, aesthetic, and ideological/cultural paradigms. As scholarship expanded, so did the need for more primary sources. This translated into archives (for example, he lists the Museum of Broadcasting, UCLA Film and Television Archive, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin) with films, television programs, *and* manuscript collections. This, he argues, shifts the historical method from a focus on the text and a reliance on a slim purview of primary source materials – memoirs, press releases, press interviews) and to an expanded realm of data and evidence.²⁵

While the difficulty in locating the programming rests on legitimate technological issues (as reviewed in the previous chapter), what can be said about the documents? It is worth noting that some have pondered these methodological quandaries. For example, O’Connor writes, “if we are unused to think of this seeking out of a ‘paper trail’ to document the background of a film or television production, it may be more a function of personal and professional prejudice than anything else.”²⁶ In other words, documentation about television (and moving images in general) *does* exist. O’Connor suggests that what is needed is more of a conceptual and methodological framework to creatively study television. In this regard, the dissertation seeks to develop a conceptual framework that addresses how television became historical, which aspects were privileged by various institutional contexts, and why.

²⁴ Sklar, “Moving Image Media in Culture and Society: Paradigms for Historical Interpretation.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 122–124.

²⁶ John E O’Connor and American Historical Association, *Image as artifact : the historical analysis of film and television* (Malabar, Fla.: R.E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1990), 110.

Document and Institutional Analyses

The document analysis method is grounded in Scott's discussion of document analysis within the social sciences. He argues that document analysis as a method must be rigorous and systematic in outlining how documents can be used as evidence and data. Specifically, Scott argues that "great care... should be taken... about the quality of the evidence and therefore about the validity and reliability of the data constructed from the evidence."²⁷ To do so, Scott proposes four criteria in assessing the evidence within and around documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning.

Authenticity refers to the origin of the material, deciphering if the document is genuine, confirming the identity of the author, and whether the document *is* what it claims to be.

Credibility is vital to establishing the evidence as "undistorted and sincere, free from error and evasion."²⁸ Scott further explains sincerity as encompassing the author's intentions in producing the document as well as the accuracy of the document's content.

Prior instead notes that the conditions of production are appropriate under authenticity; who produces the documents and under what circumstances of social organization are integral to authenticating evidence.²⁹ The notion of representativeness is useful for calling attention to documents as part of a larger context. Scott explains that representativeness can point to whether a document is typical, in that the document is representative of other documents and artifacts. Also of interest is to understand the extent to which documents

²⁷ John Scott, *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge, MA, USA: Polity Press ; B. Blackwell, 1990), 6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁹ Lindsay Prior, *Using Documents in Social Research* (Sage, 2003).

survive, whether other documents are deliberately destroyed or lost. He calls this survival and availability.

Scott's last piece of criteria is meaning, which can simply refer to "what is [the document], and what does it tell us?"³⁰ What becomes more complex and subjective is how the researcher approaches theories of meaning and interpretation. In the former instance, Scott calls this the literal reading and the latter is the interpretative. Scott notes, "interpretive understanding is the end-product of a hermeneutic process in which the researcher relates the literal meanings to the contexts in which they were produced in order to assess the meaning of the text as a whole."³¹ Other modes of interpretive meaning can be textual analysis (including semiotics) and content analysis (the enumeration approach). At the core of Scott's meaning criteria are three aspects that must be taken into account: the intended content produced by the author, received content as the moment of audience understanding of the content, and internal meaning or the inferred possible meaning. By offering these criteria, Scott provides a firm foundation for assessing documents from multiple angles and levels of analysis.

Much of the institutional analysis is derived from analyzing documents, with the intent on examining the power structures within an institution and how one institution relates to another. A focus on the institution is part of a political economy of communication. Specifically, institutional analysis "traces industrial structures and their effects" by examining a wide range of data that includes documents that are judged by

³⁰ Scott, *A Matter of Record*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

Scott's four criteria for assessing evidence.³² Emphasizing the institutions involved in archiving television – libraries, museums, television companies, and government agencies – is a vital component in this dissertation. There are many institutions involved, each with their own structure, mission, and relationship to television as an industry and as historical material.

Discourses

Attention to traces of discourses is a useful tool for document and institutional analyses. In evaluating documents and examining institutional structures, there were discourses about what merits inclusion in archival spaces and perceptions about television. Discourse is understood in the Foucaultian sense, referring “broadly to systems of thought.... [and] practices (composed of ideas, ideologies, attitudes, courses of action, terms of reference) that systemically constitute the subjects and objects of which they speak.”³³ While not necessarily a discourse analysis, this dissertation did draw on several key notions from Foucault's methods. For instance, one aspect of his method is to decenter and denaturalize categories. He asks who has the power to define such categories, how are they defined, and how are they deployed. Furthermore, his methods are appropriate for this study in that he is interested in how discourses play out over time, such as the discourses of the natural sciences, punishment, sexual deviance, the body, and so on. His method of archeology essentially involves interrogating categories, questioning statements as a given, analyzing sources, and analyzing how such categories

³² Eileen R Meehan, Vincent Mosco, and Janet Wasko, “Rethinking Political Economy: Change and Continuity,” in *Defining Media Studies: Reflections on the Future of the Field*, ed. Mark R Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 354–355.

³³ Thomas A Schwandt, *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2001), 73.

and statements are gradually naturalized.³⁴ Wasson explains Foucault's archeology method of drawing on discourses as "an entry point to examining society and culture in a given moment."³⁵

Another way to frame this method is what Packer calls the apparatus model for communications and media history. Packer proposes the identification of apparatuses that leads to locating material traces of discourses and "tries to map the surrounding terrain where the crucial battles took place that determined how media and communications would be enacted."³⁶ Apparatus is defined as "a strategically organized network of discursive and nondiscursive elements brought together to address problems resulting from specific formations of knowledge."³⁷ The method involves "constructing" the apparatus archive, which is an amalgamated archive of overlapping discourse (such as regulatory, technological, scientific, professional, and so on) and its cultural manifestations. His materials might include anything from laws to trade and professional journals to manuals to popular culture and to the more traditional sources found in manuscript collections.

Packer further explains that we must ask questions about the determinators – credentialized experts and/or institutions – who are "granted" the authority to make truth claims and about the "free-floating" statements that appear as common sense but work to

³⁴ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

³⁵ Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*, 27.

³⁶ Packer, "What Is an Archive?," 100.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

further legitimate the authority of truth claims and the determinators.³⁸ This also involves questioning the ontological and epistemological claims of the archives where such material might be found; we raise questions about what information, evidence, or traces of discourses are worth knowing, how they got in the archive, and how the project of organizing and describing already set the boundaries of knowing within circulating discourses.

By turning to institutional documents – the archives of the archives – the dissertation traces discussions and decisions about television and its archivability. This also meant the examination of some of the prevailing discourses, or the ways people thought about and perceived television. For example, there were industry discourses, or how television was talked about as a commodity and commercial product. There were critical discourses that were driven by television critics and writers (and intersected with the industry discourses). And there were the popular discourses, or how television was integrated into popular culture. There were discourses about media, prioritizing one medium over another, touting the merits of one form as high culture or defining an area of a medium – such as journalism – as inherently historical. Examining documents – historical and current – for traces of discourses and social practices can illuminate how television was valued and continues to be valued as cultural, historical, and/or economic. The final part of this chapter outlines the types of primary sources, selection of case studies, and organization of the case studies in the following chapters.

³⁸ Ibid., 101.

Collection and Analysis

In sum, this dissertation focuses on both the institution and the materials held within the institution. Meehan explains “historical inquiry proceeds at varying levels of analysis with varying degrees of abstraction regarding the basic unit of analysis.”³⁹ The two basic units of analysis, then, were the structure (the archives and other institutions associated with the formation of television related collections) and the individuals involved in the archival formations. To pursue the analysis, this dissertation draws on a wide array of sources.

Primary sources refer “original unfiltered evidence” and secondary sources are the interpretations of the primary.⁴⁰ Given the nature of this dissertation, I drew from a particular set of primary sources to examine how television-related primary sources entered archives. The television-related primary sources housed within archival spaces include (but are not limited to) scripts, production notes, office records, ratings, advertising agency documents related to television, oral histories, trade articles, newspaper articles, scrapbooks, etc. Collectively, these can be called manuscript collections or archival collections. While these were the subject of my research (e.g. NBC corporate records), these were not the primary sources that I tended to consult. Instead, my primary sources tended to be the “archives of the archives” – administrative and institutional records such as donor records, accession records, correspondence, internal memos, reports, and other aspects of the paper trail that illuminate discussions and

³⁹ Meehan, “Critical Theorizing on Broadcast History.”

⁴⁰ Louise M. Benjamin, “Historical Evidence: Facts, Proof and Probability,” in *Methods of Historical Analysis in Electronic Media*, ed. Donald Godfrey (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 25–46.

decisions about pulling television into archival spaces. Additionally, newspaper, trade press, and journal articles helped to fill in some gaps within the archives' paper trail.

Boundaries of Research

A prominent boundary for research was American television, and mostly commercial television. The period for this study mirrors that of the three-network television era – the 1950s through the 1970s. The period was also chosen to reflect moments when television entered academia as an object of study.

When introducing the study of television *and* archives, the typical response tends to assume television news and the Vanderbilt News Archive. Thus one clear way to define the study's scope was to veer in the opposite direction: entertainment television, but not to the exclusion of news and documentary programming.⁴¹ Primacy was placed on the ephemeral, popular culture forms of programming.

Another common reaction when introducing this study is an emphasis on the programming itself, an interest in how one finds original programming and how one can view the programming. However, the documentation and tangible traces of television production, distribution, and reception are essential for television historiography (and certainly, in general). As such, this study does not just focus on the preservation and archiving of television programming, but also the ways in which manuscript collections were sought out by archivists and accessioned into the archives. To distinguish between these facets, the terms moving image products or television products are used for the

⁴¹ Commercials are another component of television that are fair game for a history of television archives. However, commercials are at the outskirts of this project for practical purposes of needing to define a manageable scope.

programming and the terms documentation or documentary traces for the paper based records.

The method for narrowing the scope of study involved two guiding elements. One intention was to trace early conceptualizations of a television archive, or at least, envisioning television as culturally and historically significant. As such, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) stood out as a cultural institution with an early interest in preserving some of television in some form, serving as an example of a cultural institution with archival impulses or logics. While not necessarily an archival institution, the MoMA was the first to establish a film archive, which might have been used as a model for television.

The other element involved tracing the formations of archives, which are known for their substantial television collections. Substantial means that the archive or library is guided by a collecting policy that specifies television (or more broadly, entertainment or media) as their focus. A suitable indicator can be found in the acknowledgements and sources cited by television scholars (and others who use television) in their research. Two major institutions for television history are the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research (the joint archive between the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, to be referred to as WCFTR or WCTR, the name of the center before Film was added to the title) and the UCLA Film and Television Archive (UCLA). These serve as excellent starting points, especially since they are quite different. UCLA specializes in only the moving image material, the products of television. The WCFTR is a more “traditional” archive, containing extensive manuscript collections that also include moving image materials. The WCFTR is also intimately linked to the

Wisconsin Historical Society (or as it was known decades ago, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin), which is notable as a repository for NBC records as well as other broadcast collections. Both of these serve as academic archives, although UCLA intersects with an industry-initiated archive.

This leads to the other archive often used by academics and featured as a case study. Like UCLA, The Paley Center is notable for its extensive collection of television programs (as well as commercials and radio programs). While not an archive in name, it is an archive in practice. This is defined by the institution's interest in the collection, preservation, and accessibility of programs. The scope of this project, though, takes place when the Paley Center had a different name – the Museum of Broadcasting. This archive is particularly interesting for two reasons: it is more broadly conceived of as a publicly oriented museum and it started as a philanthropic project by CBS founder, William Paley. For the purposes of argument, this archive is understood as an industry-initiated archive as well as cultural institution (as opposed to an academic archive).

Fortunate for television history (and American history in general), there are many archives that feature impressive holdings in television. However, the dissertation highlights a select few institutions as a first stage in a history of how television entered archival spaces. As such, I selected the previously mentioned archives based on the accessibility to institutional records as primary sources, which serve as traces of archival formation.

The following academic and archival institutions also represent concerted efforts to collect television, however, these were not selected for the present study. The Library of Congress is a major archival institution that has long had a stake in television

preservation. However, this institution was not selected as a major case study because of inaccessibility to primary sources about selection decisions. Additionally, a historical inquiry into this archive would be far too unwieldy for the present study. The Library of Congress is a complex government institution, whose stake in archiving television was very undefined and haphazard until the late 1970s when copyright revisions induced the Library to play a larger role in archiving television. Other institutions have a significant role in a history of archiving television, or more broadly, popular culture. These include UCLA (the special collections in the library, as opposed to the Film and Television Archive, which is separate), University of Southern California, New York University, and the New York Public Library, among a few others. Additionally, the following archives are anecdotally notable for their aggressive collecting of entertainment-related materials starting in the late 1960s: the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas-Austin, Boston University, and Syracuse University. The next stage of research will most certainly include these archives, as they were also key institutions that conceptualized television as belonging in the archival context. These academic institutions developed collection policies that conceptualized popular culture, which subsumed television, as valuable historical material. Future research will delve into how these collection policies developed and how television materials were selected for acquisition.

The Case Studies

In sum, this dissertation centers on five case studies, with each case highlighting variations in archival structures and conceptualizations about television as belonging in the archive.

To reiterate, the Museum of Modern Art was a case study because it met the criteria as an institution with archival spaces that considered television's archivability in the early phases of archiving television (the 1950s). The MoMA is a cultural institution with some archival logics, as demonstrated by their film archive. Chapter IV discusses this cultural institution and their experimentations with television in an archival form.

The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research was a case study because of its notoriety as an extensive repository of television related material. The WCFTR is an academic archive, given its location within a university and its management by an archival institution – the Wisconsin Historical Society. When researching the formation of this archive, or rather, research center, it became apparent that the Wisconsin Historical Society also had a research center that dealt with television in the late 1950s and into the 1960s – the Mass Communications History Center. As such, it was important to devote two chapters to the archives in Wisconsin, since the two research centers were born from the same archival institution but reflected the impact of power struggles and competing conceptualizations of television's archivability. Each research center or archiving effort is a separate case study, with Chapter V focusing on the Society as an archival institution that considered the merits of archiving mass communication (and thus, television) and Chapter VI focusing on the formation of the WCTR. Still, it was clear that both case studies reflect the model of an academic archival structure – an archive that supports research and education.

The UCLA Film and Television Archive and the Museum of Broadcasting were the last two case studies because each institution met the criteria of formation and notoriety as a go-to source for television history. Chapter VII features both case studies

because both began as projects envisioned by someone in the television industry.

However, these case studies represent different archival structures: one effort went the way of the academic archive and the other went the way of a cultural institution with an archival logic.

Organization of Analysis

Once these archives emerged as among the most notable for their television collections, it became apparent that a case study approach was appropriate. Or at least, each of these archives represented different purposes and relationships that can be somewhat plotted on a spectrum of archives. The narrative arc for this history moves from experimentation and prophetic prospects to various degrees of mobilizing television as archival. The first case study focuses on a cultural institution – a museum with a film archive that attempts to deal with the televisual form. The next two case studies examine television in the academic archive, outlining interrelations between the archiving institution, academic perceptions of television's worth, and the challenges when television enters the traditional archival context. The last two case studies focus on two industry-initiated archives and the negotiations between television executives, industry organizations, and academics to preserve television. As such, the analysis is organized according to institutional types and their encounters with television and its archivability.

The analysis is also organized by which aspects of television are collected and why. The first case study demonstrated two challenges: the challenge of defining the televisual form within the scope of modern visual arts and the challenge of physically acquiring the television object. Next, there is a shift from the cultural institution context to the academic-archival context. The reasons why an academic archive collected

television were tied to academic study, disciplinary education (such as classes on television writing), and envisioning television's long-range value. On this latter point, the archival principle of anticipating future research needs was crucial in recognizing television's potential to convey valuable historical, cultural, political, and other sorts of information and unanticipated uses. Thus, the academic-archival context features a mix of reasons to archive television as well as an interest in archiving various aspects, including documents of production and recorded programs. Lastly, this history shifts to an analysis of the industry's motivations and challenges in acquiring and preserving the television's output: the program. It is important to keep in mind that there were many overlaps in each of these case studies. Reasons to save television fluctuated depending on the institution and the context. Connecting each of these case studies was the fact various institutions conceptualized aspects of television as belonging in archival spaces. Depending on the context, people envisioned certain aspects of television as worthy of an archival presence over others. Overall, this organization reflects the research questions, in that the analyses traces the different archival structures that enabled individuals to directly pursue television or indirectly collect television, thereby ascribing television with an archival value and institutionally conferring television with legitimacy.

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIMENTS, EXHIBITS, AND ARCHIVAL PROSPECTS: VISIONS OF A TELEVISION ARCHIVE AT THE MOMA

I begin with the Museum of Modern Art as an early encounter with television and its archivability. This effort raised questions about whether or not television should be (and could be) preserved within a cultural institution dedicated to the modern visual arts. Even if television should be preserved, there were questions as to whether it *could* be archived, considering obstacles such as technology and legalities of acquisition.

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) case can be summed up as experimentation with the televisual form, and specifically conceptualizing television as something to archive. As an elite cultural institution with a prestigious film archive, the MoMA had cause to flirt with television. The MoMA arguably had a structure in place that could potentially accommodate television, physically and conceptually. The Film Library was a repository of films, which were collected based on sociological or historical significance, and thus, not just those that were artistic. It was not that far of a conceptual leap to claim that television programs were also significant in that regard. Within the institution, there were various individuals who initiated an interest in television as a medium to disseminate art education. Likewise, there was an interest and the institutional support to experiment with television as an exhibit, which included an archival logic.

Reflecting on the museum's first twenty-five years, the museum's director wrote that recently, television was "drawn into the Museum's orbit of action."¹ It was largely thanks to this director, René D'Harnoncourt, that television appeared in the art world sphere. The museum continually drew from contemporary visual art forms including film, photography, and industrial design into its purview. Thus, when broadcasting shifted from just sound to sight and sound, there was an inclination to consider television as a modern *visual* art and thus potentially applicable in the MoMA's setting.

The following chapter is organized into three main sections. The first section examines the MoMA as a cultural institution and establishes some reasons as to why the museum was in a position to consider television as historically and culturally significant. Specifically, this section introduces the Film Library and how this department dealt with television in its midst. The second section focuses on a 1955 unpublished essay that is an early articulation about an imagined television archive and the challenges in pursuing such a vision. The third section discusses how an early museum exhibit called *Television USA* might be viewed from an archival perspective in that the exhibit director and the Film Library tried to acquire television programs for the exhibit and for permanent retention.

In each stage, the individuals involved with various experiments with television in the museum displayed a mix of awe and uncertainty towards the new medium. The temptation is to assume that the uncertainty stemmed from a sense of cultural hierarchy and devaluing television. At times there were insinuations about television's inferiority to film and visual arts. It was more often the case that the people working at the MoMA

¹ René D'Harnoncourt, "The Museum 1929-1954," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 22, no. 1/2 (October 01, 1954): 11-24.

played with the notion of television as a visual medium, as new modes to express creativity and cultural education, or as historical and sociological records. The MoMA was an institution associated with elitist discourses about what constituted art. However, it also had an accommodating infrastructure, where individuals and departments could explore the possibilities of television within a cultural institution.

The Cultural Institution and Its Consideration of Television

Television, as an industry and as popular culture, was still novel in the early 1950s. Its yet to be fully molded form fostered experimentation in programming amidst the transferal of formulaic programs from radio to television. There were lively discussions about what television was and its potential uses.² As will be discussed in this chapter, the MoMA and its Film Library division participated in shaping how television was to be perceived and used.

By the 1950s, the MoMA was in a position of cultural authority. The art museum is understood as a site of cultural legitimation, with the MoMA as a preeminent institution of high culture. It set the standard for art and its relation to society in the mid-twentieth century.³ The museum had developed a reputation as a forward thinking institution, embracing architecture, photography, and industrial design within the scope

² For example, see William Boddy, *Fifties television: the industry and its critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Anna McCarthy, *The citizen machine: governing by television in 1950s America* (New York: New Press, 2010). McCarthy's argument is especially relevant, examining the programmatic experiments by unions, large industrial corporations, local governments, and organizations oriented towards democratic and artistic goals.

³ Lynn Spigel, *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation : How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 111–112.

of modern visual arts.⁴ In particular, the MoMA had the foresight to develop a film archive in the 1930s when no other institution cared for film as artistic objects and especially as historical documents. The assemblage of film into a library, where films could be preserved, circulated and exhibited, meant that “motion pictures may be studied and enjoyed as any other one of the arts is studied and enjoyed.”⁵ As noted in the literature review, the MoMA’s Film Library crystallized cinema as an aesthetic form and as sociological and historical artifact; a moving image canvas that evoked a similar sense of cultural legitimacy as paintings, sculptures, and other objects found within the museum.⁶ The MoMA was a leader in the art world, and by extension, the realm of high culture. For television to enter that space it had to be thought of as a visual art or at least, sociological and historical artifacts like many of the films in the MoMA’s collection. The MoMA did not necessarily pit television against art in a binary that locked one as low culture and the other high culture.⁷ However, television was not necessarily an easy fit into the museum’s infrastructures. Television as it related to the MoMA was experimental in the 1950s and early 1960s, but at least television was on the MoMA’s radar. Moreover, it was on the Film Library’s radar, meaning that the broader cultural institution had to confront the possibility of television in its midst.

⁴ René D’Harnoncourt, “The Museum 1929-1954,” *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 22, no. 1/2 (October 1, 1954): 11–24.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

⁷ Spiegel, *TV by Design*, 146.

As early as 1944, there was a suggestion that the MoMA ought to consider television. The executive vice president of the MoMA received a letter stating:

The Museum of Modern Art, being the outstanding archive and organized exponent of the modern visual arts, should, of necessity, include television --- as it is the newest of these, and related to cinema in many ways. A complete record of the progress of television would be most valuable and quite in keeping with the aims and purposes of the Museum of Modern Art.⁸

Television connected with cinema as a visual art. The MoMA was an exemplary institution for its archive and exhibition of the visual arts. Therefore, television belonged in the museum. Although television was incredibly new in 1944, with only a handful of stations and short broadcast days, there was an envisioned potential for the new medium. Suffice to say, this letter came from the newly formed American Television Society, an organization devoted to the promotion and professionalization of the new medium. The organization's representative suggested to the MoMA executive that the museum take an interest in the budding visual art. It was recommended that the museum could develop library collections, bibliographies, an archive with "copies of films of televised programs," and museum exhibits, all of which "would be most valuable and quite in keeping with the aims and purposes of the Museum of Modern Art."⁹ In what will be an oft-repeated theme, the attempt of the television industry to establish a relationship with a cultural institution was a loosely cloaked desire to bestow the medium with a sense of cultural legitimacy. Still, the letter demonstrated foresight in recognizing television's significance and envisioning how a modern art museum, with a commitment to preserving cinema,

⁸ "Helen Gaubert to John Abbott," April 06, 1944, Early Museum History: Administrative Records, III.22, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

⁹ Ibid.

might be a catalyst for similar efforts with television. The idea to incorporate television as the newest visual art within the museum's purview laid dormant until the 1950s, just as television achieved national status.

MoMA's relationship to television was multifaceted. Spigel writes about the MoMA's experimentations with television as a vehicle for artistic education, for popularizing modernist tastes, and facilitating a cultural public good.¹⁰ This reflected more of the MoMA's usage of television. Of relevance to this project was how the MoMA conceptualized television as fitting within the confines of its space and mission, either via the already established and prestigious Film Library or as part of exhibit spaces. Whereas Spigel focuses on how television was understood as both art itself as well as a means in which to educate the public about art and the modern cultured lifestyle, I focus on how television was constituted as belonging in their library and exhibitions. I also chose the MoMA because the cultural institution appears to be the first to at least engage with television as a specific, unique medium – one that could be admired and preserved beyond the broadcast moment. The goal is to explore how this effort to loosely archive television represents early conceptions of television's archival value and obstacles in the archival process. The MoMA case study can enhance our understanding about the justifications for television's inclusion in archival settings, particularly the museum and its notable film archive. This case is significant as one of the earlier concerted efforts to at least *think* about television and the qualities that made television a unique medium with social, cultural, and historical implications.

¹⁰ Spigel, *TV by Design*.

Television in the museum might have appeared as a fish out of the water; how might the popular but generally denigrated mass medium belong in an institution known for its cultural authority? It is within the paper records and reports where the tensions about what television was, what purposes it might serve, and reasons why (or why not) it could reside in the museum that help illuminate overarching discourses about television as culturally and historically valuable.¹¹ The museum is a form of an archive in that it selects and houses records and evidence of existence, and moreover the art museum is an archive of the artistic and cultural expressions of a particular time and place. Might that not also be television – a visual art of a particular time and place?

This chapter traces the attitudes and decisions made by MoMA administrators towards television. The central thread is to examine how this cultural institution considered the reasons why television (and which aspects of television) as something more than popular entertainment or something that comes and goes on a television screen. There may not have been a television archive per se at the MoMA, but there are traces of the discourses as to why television *mattered* and thus an impetus to archive. Failures to archive can be just as instructive as the successes. Furthermore, MoMA's flirtations with a television archive demonstrated some of the pragmatic archival issues such as recording technologies and ownership.

¹¹ What proved to be more useful were many of the same documents that Spigel draws on for her work: those related to the MoMA's exploratory study called the Television Project in the 1950s and the development of the early 1960s exhibit called *Television USA*. However, her project was to analyze the museum's relationship to television as a means to expand the museum's sphere of cultural influence and definitions of culture, art appreciation, and so on. I focus on the museum's mechanisms that resemble archival goals, such as collection and preservation of material for posterity. For example, Spigel briefly mentions the Film Library and television, but does not elaborate.

The Renowned Film Library and Television

The Film Library formed in 1935, with the dual aim to secure films as art and as historical records.¹² By the 1950s, the Film Library was an archive of films and a model approach in the collection, preservation, circulation, and exhibition of films. The Film Library was used for a range of reasons, supporting the museum's exhibition and public programming initiatives as well as open for public use via library-style circulation and a film study center. Richard Griffith, the film curator appointed in 1951, was especially keen on preservation and frustrated that the film industry did not similarly share his concern about ensuring a history of film.¹³ Griffith's interest in preservation coincided with his role as a film critic and historian. To be a critic or historian requires access to the objects of study, hence a concern that the fleeting films shown in theaters would be lost forever without an institution devoted to securing films for study. For example, he wrote about Frank Capra for the British Film Institute; a filmmaker Griffith was quite familiar with given his war time service with the Army Signal Corps and working as an editor on Capra's film, *Why We Fight*.¹⁴ He contributed to a growing body of film related literature in the 1950s and 1960s, such as a biography on Samuel Goldwyn in 1956, an overview of film history called *The Movies* (1957, 1970), and a primer on film techniques called *Anatomy of a Motion Picture* (1959). Overall, he demonstrated his love of film in his stewardship of the film archive and active scholarship. Under his leadership, the Film

¹² Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*.

¹³ Eileen Bowser and Ronald S Magliozzi, "Film Archiving as a Profession: An Interview with Eileen Bowser," *Moving Image* 3, no. 1 (2003): 132–146.

¹⁴ Slide, *Nitrate Won't Wait*, 61.

Library was a renowned cultural and historical resource, as well as advocate for film preservation.

Griffith dealt with the obstacles and opportunities presented by television. On the one hand, television was an opportunity to expand the Film Library's holdings, given the mission to collect visual arts and sociologically or historically relevant films. On the other hand, there were many reasons why television was beyond the scope or abilities of the Film Library. Television brought on a host of issues regarding rights, technology, and certainly the tensions stemming from perceived cultural hierarchy.

Griffith did not initiate the pursuit of television in the Film Library, but he complied. Betty Chamberlain, the MoMA's public relations director, wrote in a 1952 memo to the museum's director regarding television and the art museum. She explained that one approach to television can be a library that accounts for television as "curatorial and historical." The MoMA had precedence for viewing television in this light: the Film Library collected films for curatorial and historical reasons more so than for artistic merit reasons. It was not far off to imagine television as within the museum's purview.

Chamberlain suggested that it might be possible to establish a television library, with its own curator and department status. Most importantly, as *separate* from the Film Library: "Dick Griffith says the film people, much as they hate TV, could not possibly raise any serious objection to our operating such a TV department as long as it is not in the same dept. as the film library."¹⁵ Chamberlain's memo to the museum's director was the only indication about the subjective feelings of the Film Library personnel towards television.

There was no objection to television's location within the library per se, at least no

¹⁵ Betty Chamberlain to Rene d'Harmoncourt, Re: Television, April 11, 1952, EMH, III.3, MoMA Archives, NY.

documented traces of devaluing television completely or implying that it was beneath modern art. Those might have been sentiments circulating in conversations, but not in internal and certainly not external communications. If Griffith hated television, then it did not come through in his report on the Film Library or other documents. The obstacles in dealing with television might have exhausted him, especially since dealing with film was already so taxing.¹⁶ He might have been frustrated that his duties devoted to film were at times sidelined by the administration's interest in television. However, he never overtly expressed a hatred for television.¹⁷

Situating Television in the Film Library

Griffith reported on television in the Film Library for the *MoMA Bulletin*, the museum's newsletter. He identified five ways in which the Film Library related to the new television industry. One, he noted that television posed a threat to the Film Library in that the new medium opened new commercial possibilities for film studios' backlogs, making the film studios less likely to donate old films. Two, this also led to some studios requesting the return of previously donated films, which they always owned but never needed to protect as intellectual property.¹⁸ Griffith expressed hope that later agreements could be made with the studios.¹⁹ Three, despite the threats the Film Library proved useful to those in television. He noted that television networks regularly sought help from

¹⁶ Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*.

¹⁷ Spigel (2005) also looked at these documents and concluded that this memo meant that Griffith hated television.

¹⁸ Richard Griffith, "The Film Library," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 24, no. 1 (October 01, 1956): 4–21.

¹⁹ For more on the subject, see Wasson, *Museum Movies*.

the Library in locating documentary film material. For example, “television personalities, such as Sid Caesar, have used the Film Library’s collection as sources of material and of ideas adaptable to television.”²⁰ Four, the Film Library extend the MoMA’s reach beyond the walls of the museum. As early as 1952, the MoMA’s Department of Education was already producing television programs about art.²¹ As part of the Film Library’s mission to circulate films for educational purposes, several 16mm kinescope films of the MoMA’s program, *Through the Enchanted Gate*, were included. A 1953 press release offered various educational uses for these newly circulating films, including “teacher training, parent-child study groups, educational conferences, courses in visual aids for education, courses in television production, and for direct motivation for children's creative activity.”²²

But the fifth and most telling way in which the Film Library tried to relate to television was in the very acquisition of television materials. Griffith wrote that

as an experiment, the Film Library has acquired for its collection the kinescope of a single ‘live’ television production, Horton Foote's THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL, with Lillian Gish, which later was translated to Broadway with the same star. Permissions from sixteen individuals had to be secured before the kinescope could be acquired, and the same sixteen must give special permission for every single public performance, facts which indicate the difficulties that lie ahead should the Museum, as is now often suggested, found a television archive analogous to the Film Library.²³

²⁰ Griffith, “The Film Library,” 12.

²¹ See Spigel, *TV by Design*, chapter 4, “Live from New York – It’s MoMA!”

²² Museum of Modern Art, “Kinescopes of Museum’s TV Program on Creative Art for Children Now Available”, April 15, 1953, http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/press_archives/1950s/1953 (accessed February 5, 2013).

²³ Griffith, “The Film Library.” 14.

There was little indication why this was selected as the first television program. However, the indication of authorship, famous celebrity, and later Broadway appearance equates to a program that represents artistic accomplishment. As Spigel speculates, this acquisition has the qualities associated “with more general critical hierarchies already established by the leading East Coast critics of the 1950s.... ‘live’ production; the presence of well-known stage talent...; and/or an indigenous relation to New York.”²⁴ There was no press release (or at least, not locatable) announcing this film acquisition. However, there was a press release announcing the kinescope film’s exhibition, which touted the cinematic and theatrical merits of the actress and the writer. There was an acknowledgment about the large-scale cinematic re-presentation of a television form that was actually the theater form. Griffith was quoted as saying that museum patrons could “make instructive if inexact comparison between the methods of the three media - inexact, because the presentation on a movie screen of a production designed for TV inevitably limits its impact.”²⁵ Television in the museum was part of the cultural elite activity of critical study, critiquing the formal qualities of the stage, celluloid, and the television film. As such, television was considered in relation to other established media and cultural forms.

The most relevant concern associated with this acquisition, however, was the frustration with the permissions. Unlike a single piece of art or more appropriately, a film made by (and owned by) a studio, there was no clear and *single* ownership that could enable smooth permission processes. Griffith had such help from Horton and Gish (the writer and the star, respectively), but still had to “secure permission from author, director,

²⁴ Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation.” 76.

²⁵ Museum of Modern Art, “Thursday Evening Film Series: The Trip to Bountiful”, October 17, 1956, http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/press_archives/1950s/1957 (accessed February 5, 2013).

producer, all of the cast, sponsor, network” and more each time the acquired program was to be displayed and used.²⁶ While Griffith might have seen merit (at least, publicly stated in the press release) in a television program, the process of acquisition was far too cumbersome. It was more trouble than it was worth to secure permissions for multiple purposes, even if such programs could nicely fit within the Film Library’s mission to collect, preserve, exhibit, and circulate a variety of films (including television films).

Committee Deliberations on How to Utilize Television

Much of the above information comes from the published communication between the library and the public via their magazine, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*. But within the institution, there were committees and some documented discussions about the place of television within the Film Library and the larger museum. For instance, the Film Library included a number of committees, such as the Trustee Executive Committee. In 1956, the committee changed its name to reflect that television was under consideration – the Trustee Committee on Film and Television. This committee included only one person from the television world, William S. Paley, who was also an avid art collector and active in the MoMA’s administration. Only meeting once, this committee mostly discussed the status of the library, its presence in academic settings, and future film exhibitions. Griffith also spoke to the committee about the challenges with the film studios that he mentioned in the *Bulletin* report. He retold how Warner Brothers and Universal had recently withdrawn many of their films as well as

²⁶ “Richard Griffith to Rene d’Harnoncourt, Re: The Best of Television,” November 11, 1960, 2, Rene d’Harnoncourt Paers, IV.221, MoMA Archives, NY.

how increasing competition from film distributors threatened the Film Library's acquisitions.²⁷

Moving on to television, the committee discussed strategies to move forward and renegotiate their relationship with the film studios in the face of the new television medium. Griffith suggested approaching the studios with an arrangement where the MoMA can present historic films on television, pitching the museum's cultural prestige and a sense of film history to potential sponsors. Such a proposal essentially sought to capitalize the MoMA's film holdings under the banner of high art and culture, remediating old films for a new platform. Overall, the short-lived committee focused on "negotiations for Film Library television programs" and a "proposal to establish stock film service for television (including location, appraisal of films and general expert advice."²⁸ There was never a follow up or further details, but at least there was a framework, albeit a framework fixated more on repurposing the Film Library's holdings for television rather than a framework for expanding the Library's holdings.

The committee somewhat reconstituted as an ad-hoc assembly in 1960, this time to re-evaluate the governance structure of the Film Library. The Film Library was technically governed separately from the museum under the title, Film Library Corporation. The ad hoc committee recommended that the Film Library officially assimilate into the museum's department structure but still have a trustees committee for advise on film acquisitions. Of particular relevance for this project, though, was the strong recommendation that the Trustee Committee on Film and Television "omit the

²⁷ "Minutes of the First Meeting of Trustees Committee on Film and Television", April 27, 1956, RdH, IV.329, MoMA Archives, NY.

²⁸ Ibid.

words ‘and Television’, and at least for the time being, to place any Museum activities in the field of television under the supervision of a separate committee.”²⁹ The minutes never indicated exactly why, but inferences can be made. There were at least two reasons that contributed to the Film Library’s operational repudiation of television. As Griffith explained in the Film Library report, it was cumbersome to track down permissions and rights for a television program. Griffith also articulated another reason in the report and in committee meetings regarding the motion picture industry. The industry was still reeling from the new medium and the threats to film assets and competition for audiences. The same minutes that reflected the recommendation to drop television also noted the industry’s present predicament. Specifically, members on the Film Library Advisory board who represented the motion picture industry, were in a difficult position to advocate for television’s inclusion at “time when economic upheaval and the sale of old film properties to television agencies,” which indicated a conflict of interest.³⁰ Perhaps there were also more subjective concerns about the presence of television within the Film Library. However, evidence suggests that the reasons had more to do with operational concerns as well as with focusing on positive relations with the film industry, since that was the main goal of the Film Library.

Television was not directly within the purview of the Film Library, or at least not the place to initiate any projects associated with television. While not a priority, the Film Library did include some programming that originated on television, albeit most of which was MoMA produced programming. However, as will be discussed in the following

²⁹ “Report of Ad Hoc Committee for Films and Television to Board of Trustees,” Nov 10, 1960, 4, Alfred Barr Jr. Papers, Correspondence 1959-1974, Folder 12.11, MoMA Film Library Archives, New York.

³⁰ “Report of Ad Hoc Committee for Films and Television to Board of Trustees,” 2-3.

section, Griffith was not wholly removed from television; he was the key individual when other departments such as exhibits and public programming, needed expertise on moving image materials. The insistence to explore television's possibilities and experiment with the new medium came from the top of the museum hierarchy, spilling into the Film Library and carving out the museum's relationship with television. The Film Library did not initiate any projects to pursue television, but Griffith and the library did participate in two key efforts to explore television across the museum's structure. One was the Television Project, a multi-year exploratory study in the mid-1950s, and the other was a museum exhibit in the early 1960s called *Television USA*. Both initiatives heavily relied on Griffith's expertise. In the former initiative, Griffith was responsible for what may be one of the earliest efforts to outline the operation of a television archive, including reasons to do so and the obstacles in the way. The latter initiative required his expertise in facilitating relationship with the television industry to acquire recorded or filmed television programs for the exhibit.

Appendix to the Television Project: Envisioning an Archive

*"If the record of this newest and most pervasive pulse-quickener and association-maker is to be kept, the time is now. It is already very late."*³¹

In 1952, the museum's public relation director noted that the film department, which mostly meant Richard Griffith, hated television.³² Perhaps she got it wrong or Griffith had changed his perceptions by 1955. It was in that year that Griffith wrote a

³¹ Richard Griffith, "A Prospect for a Television Archive," in *The Museum Looks in on TV* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955), 289–301.

³² Betty Chamberlain to Rene d'Harnoncourt, Re: Television.

remarkable assessment about the need for a television archive. The essay was part of Griffith's overall contribution to a MoMA initiative called the Television Project, a project to experiment with the potential of television as a medium to both promote the museum's goals via television programs and to consider how television physically belonged within the museum. The project was catalyzed by a three-year grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.³³ The purpose of this grant was to explore how the museum related to television. This entailed three primary aims: to research and study the television form and production techniques, to produce programming, and to inquire about the possibility of establishing a library similar to the Film Library.³⁴

Studying production techniques and producing programs tended to take precedence over the last goal. Still, the goal to develop a library or archive received some attention. The Television Project and its connections to the Film Library represented early surrogates for conceptualizing television as *archival*, as well as something belonging in the museum's purview. By surrogates, I mean a museum with an archival space for film considered the merits of television archive before institutions with specific archival missions, such as the academic archive, pursued television programs as historical artifacts. The Television Project paper trail demonstrated that there were individuals who did indeed think of television programming as something that could enter the museum.³⁵

³³ This was not uncommon in the 1950s. Rockefeller, the Ford Foundation, and other philanthropies promoted the study of television, and radio in earlier decades. See the edited collection, *The History of Media and Communications Research* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008). Alternatively, the MoMA had a direct connection to the Rockefellers – Nelson Rockefeller was a trustee and a president at one point.

³⁴ Sidney Peterson, "The Medium," 1955, Reports and Pamphlets, 24.1, MoMA Archives, NY.

³⁵ For example, one thought was that a television archive would be of service to the history of television as a visual art, similar to the Film Library's foundational goal to promote the history of film as a visual art. Betty Chamberlain to Rene d'Harnoncourt, Re: Television.

For example, members of the Television Project tested the waters concerning the pursuit of a television archive. A March 1954 memo filed by the Television Project leads, Peterson and MacAgy, reflected the earlier proceedings at a lunch meeting with the top museum administrators, Griffith, and Caroline Burke from NBC. The memo indicated a plan to propose a “TV archive project” to ABC, NBC, and CBS.³⁶ This plan included practical concerns such as storage space, financing, surveying the availability of material, and selection. Concerns included how to select programs, where to store them, and how to finance the whole operation were foundational and necessary considerations when approaching the networks. The memo also indicated that such an archive would serve several functions including private study, educational circulation (like the Film Library), and “possible re-use on TV.”³⁷ Action never followed these talks about approaching networks for cooperation, such as “acquiring NBC kinescopes.”³⁸ Still, it was significant that such talks took place as a gesture towards bridging network libraries to cultural institution stewardship. Another gesture towards the preservation of television was a written proposal for what a television archive might look like. While the 1954 memo was a passing moment with little documented traces, the 1955 written proposal offers by far the most substance about attempts to pursue an archive of television.

³⁶ “S. Peterson and D. MacAgy Memorandum, Re: Lunch Meeting”, March 19, 1954, EMH, III.15, MoMA Archives, NY.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Receipt for Luncheon to Discuss Acquisition of Kinescopes”, March 23, 1954, RdH, IV.333, MoMA Archives, NY.

Griffith's Prospect: An Imagined Television Archive

There were few actual outcomes from the Television Project; a few attempts at developing television programs and a couple of unpublished manuscripts that summarized their findings about television's properties as a visual medium.³⁹ Of particular relevancy to this dissertation, though, was an essay located in the appendix of one the unpublished manuscripts, *The Museum Looks in On TV*. The bulk of this manuscript summarized the findings from the Television Project: television aesthetics, production techniques, audiences, and overall observations about television as a visual medium and as popular culture.⁴⁰ Tucked away in the appendix was an essay written by Richard Griffith titled "A Prospect for a Television Archive."⁴¹ The following section examines Griffith's essay, with attention to how he wrote about television, the reasons to collect and save television, and the challenges in implanting such an archive.

Griffith wrote about television not as an art object but rather as a medium with rippling effects on society and culture. He wrote about television programs as historical artifacts, meriting archival care. Given Griffith's status as a film critic and historian, his estimation of television's visual and sociological qualities carried a lot of weight. He was well versed in film aesthetics and the history of the industry; to speak highly about television demonstrated a notion of television that was counter to discourses that placed television in an inferior status to film.

³⁹ Spiegel, *TV by Design*.

⁴⁰ Douglas MacAgy, *The Museum Looks in on TV* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955).

⁴¹ Griffith, "A Prospect for a Television Archive."

Despite the affirmation of television, Griffith's was not necessarily specific to how *his* Film Library might expand into television, let alone the museum. He implied that television required its own archive – not because of its separateness from the high art of film, but for the sheer vastness, variety, and reach of television. Throughout the essay, Griffith was not aloof to the problems of selection. He remarked on numerous other factors to consider such as selection, storage, and permissions; considerations that perhaps were of even greater difficulty in a still-developing medium with confounding ownership and technological instability.

Griffith covered three broad points: television's significance, the trials and errors of the MoMA Film Library as a formative case study, and how a television archive might face similar but also unique concerns about selection, acquisition, preservation, and use. He began with a quote from the Film Library's founder, Iris Barry, about the reach of films and how "astronomical numbers of tears are shed, pulses quickened, unrealized associations set up." Furthermore, the film medium "disappears from sight, leaving behind little more than the wholly incalculable effect they have had on their multitudinous audiences."⁴² This sentiment reflects concerns about the materiality of film, which Griffith extended to television. He reasoned that perhaps television was even more ephemeral and more far reaching than film, thus providing cause enough to pursue an archive of television programs..

Obstacles and Ideals in Archiving Television

Griffith perfectly summed up one of the central problems in actively securing television for future study and use: the exponential growth in programming threatened the

⁴² Ibid., 290.

survival of existing programming. The small fraction of programming that originated on film or was kinescoped as well as the volumes of printed scripts, were in danger of disappearance as the new programming displaced the old. With parallels to the motion picture industry as a guide, Griffith predicted that the networks “will preserve only those negatives which might conceivably have a future commercial value, and will by force of need consign to the furnace many productions of limited popular appeal but *of immense importance to the history of the medium and the industry.*”⁴³ How can one know the development of a medium, of an industry, and presumably given the context, of the visual arts, without the tangible output?

Drawing on his experiences in the Film Library, Griffith suggested how a television archive might form. This was accomplished by addressing the archival functions of selections, acquisition, preservation, circulation, service, and maintenance that guided the Film Library’s operation. In the task of selecting ‘representative’ films for the Library, Griffith warned that “film scholarship is too young to risk a preservation policy based on taste alone” and thusly should be an “attitude... adopted by a television archive.”⁴⁴ Selection was not to be made by isolated individuals and their specific tastes, but by various people with stakes in television, be it as “aficionados, professional or amateur,” scholars, educators, and the people *in* television such as executives, artists, and craftsmen.

Acquiring television material might have been more difficult than film. Griffith speculated that industry-friendly agreements had to be made that respected the rights of

⁴³ Ibid., 291. Emphasis added.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 291–292.

the networks *and* those involved in the production via the various trade unions. This meant that any agreements to acquire, exhibit, and circulate television films could in no way threaten its commercial viability. Furthermore, networks, creators, writers, actors, musicians, and distributors all had to participate in agreements with a proposed archive. Part of the industry-friendly agreement also meant that the responsibility for costs of printing copies, storage (which could share costs with already-existing film storage vaults), and maintenance would be with the archive. Essentially the archive was a custodian. The implied subtext was that the archive was necessary because the networks (as well as the film studios) could not be trusted as custodians given their commercial imperatives over the affordances of an archive with historic, cultural, and artistic considerations in mind. As an aside, of course the archive must also consider the commercial aspects of maintaining an archive within a cultural institution (as opposed to a commercial institution) in order to financially survive. For example, the MoMA Film Library had its own financial battles, including failing to convince the studios for support. Thus, they had to turn to grants and public programming, which made them all the more dependent on securing exhibition rights when acquiring donations.⁴⁵ These wearisome experiences with funding and trying to convince studios for aiding preservation efforts no doubt figured into Griffith's recommendations. Griffith concluded that for a television archive to properly function and thrive it "can only work successfully in an atmosphere of mutual trust, stemming from a belief on the part of the television that an archive is both needful and useful."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ For more on the frustrations with securing rights, see Wasson, *Museum Movies*, particularly chapters 4 and 5.

⁴⁶ Griffith, "A Prospect for a Television Archive," 295.

Griffith's unpublished essay contained perhaps the most coherent reason to archive television *and* the purpose of such an archive. Like film, television was a coalescing of creative and commercial factors. Additionally, like the Film Library, a television archive could facilitate scholarship and retrospection. To summarize Griffith's statements would miss the eloquence of his treatise on the television medium as well as the role of an archive. He frames the impetus to archive television in the same breath as film:

It is the nature of both mediums to reach out to a maximum number of people, and ultimately both are responsible to the will of the people, whatever other factors may interpose themselves between creator and audience. It is the glory of the motion picture that its masterpieces have been born in the marketplace, in the heat of commercial endeavors, and all signs point to a repetition of this state of affairs in television. It seems more than likely that the curatorial staff of a television archive would find itself drawn toward the assembling of as widely representative, rather than as narrowly qualitative, collection as possible...⁴⁷

The rhetoric that television was beholden to the "will of the people" provided enough ground to justify a broadly conceived television archive, one that would be representative of the commercially successful (the popular) and the culturally accomplished, quality programming. Although Griffith stressed the "masterpieces," this was tempered by the sentiments that one, scholarship did not necessarily favor masterpieces, and two, that a television archive should seek to be representative on multiple levels of mastery, commercial success, and historical markers of the medium's progression. Griffith might not have been an archivist by formal training, but here he demonstrated an essential archival principle. Specifically, he was acting on the principle of anticipating future uses, acknowledging that using the standards of the present would be detrimental for future

⁴⁷ Ibid., 292.

scholars, students, and in general. Likewise, Griffith hinted towards another archival principle, that of access. What separated the archives of a network or studio from archives associated with cultural or academic institutions was the degree of access to materials. In defining the purpose of the Film Library, Griffith again connected it to the aspirations of a television archive. He explained that the Film Library

believes its greatest achievements has been the provision of works of art for first-hand study in educational and cultural institution on a national scale. In this way it has become much more than an archive merely; it serves also as a source of the materials of scholarship and as a guide and stimulant to the understanding of the enormous changes the mass mediums have made in all our lives, and of their potential for the future. This, surely, would be the ultimate aim of a television archive as well.⁴⁸

Griffith's estimations about what a television archive might look like and what purpose it might serve represented lofty goals. Specifically, the television archive should provide accessibility to the accumulated records of television and in doing so, foster scholarly understanding and historical appreciation. This paired nicely with another one of Griffith's stated purposes, that of assembling an archive in the service of the art and techniques of television production. He explained, "the practitioners of any art need ready access to their own heritage." A television archive might aid in making the specificity and uniqueness of a "new medium with a dynamic structure" more visible, to both the television practitioners and to a community of scholars and students.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the archive was a service to the industry. One conventional notion of the archive was that of an internal archive for record keeping purposes. Given the increasing demands for space in studio libraries, an arrangement with auxiliary archive

⁴⁸ Ibid., 296.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 297.

was a logical solution. Thus, Griffith recommended that a television archive might be framed as a service, providing expertise in selection and preservation. He also proposed that a television archive could alleviate the problems of storage space and the consequences of blindly liquidating films and scripts, which had been happening frequently and with little structure. He explained that

An archive with selection standards geared to the purpose of preserving the history of the art would relieve the networks of the responsibility of inadvertent or unavoidable destruction of important productions, at the same time that it would enable them to clear much vault space needed to house new product. Its existence would enable the industry as a whole to concert an orderly plan for *the preservation of the crucial and the elimination of the peripheral in television history*.⁵⁰

This excerpt provides a key understanding to Griffith's mentality and approach to archiving commercial products that contain cultural and historical dimensions. Griffith's previous experiences dealing with the loss of motion pictures certainly informed this perspective. Elsewhere there were references to the immense loss within film history due to neglect and tendency to purge seemingly useless film stock.⁵¹ Such a loss of television materials – Griffith wrote of both programming and scripts – was already inevitable in 1955. Despite Griffith's earlier intonations about television as transcendent of art given its wide societal impact, it is telling that he reverts back to the art discourse. What he seemed to be suggesting was that an archive, which was presumably rooted in a cultural institution, would work to select and preserve "the history of *the art*" and its "*important productions*" that are "*crucial... in television history*." This, lest we not forget, was also a service to the industry in elevating and delineating its status as an art, by ensuring that the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 297–298. Emphasis added.

⁵¹ Wasson, *Museum Movies*; Caroline Frick, *Saving cinema the politics of preservation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

crucial productions in television history were preserved in the confines of an expertly-managed archive.⁵² The notions of the *crucial* and the *peripheral* would most certainly be the contested terrain in the formation of television archives.

Again paralleling the purpose of the Film Library, another service to the industry was that of providing a reliable and quality resource for stock footage. As such, a television archive would service the industry as a key resource in not only brokering stock footage, but also as resources of knowledge *about* the location, ownership, and availability of stock footage. Griffith made sure to be clear that such a service did not impede on network libraries, in-house stock footage researchers, or undermine the archive's purpose to collect for "solely artistic and historic" reasons rather than "assemble footage for stock purposes." Instead, such a service was a "by-product" and drew on the amassed expertise of the staff. He offered the rationale, "time is money, in television more than elsewhere," as further justification for a television archive as service-oriented, aiding in the location, negotiation, and acquirement of footage.⁵³

Griffith's imaginative and practical concerns about a television archive were provocative. Yet, it was unclear who read this essay and the broader manuscript, *The Museum Looks in on TV*. It is possible that the only audience was the project participants and the project funders (the Rockefeller Brothers Fund). Perhaps the museum board also perused through the reports. In that case, it was feasible that CBS's William Paley may have read the report as a museum trustee, or at very least, had knowledge of the

⁵² Similar connections were made between the Film Library and the service to the film industry. See Wasson, *Museum Movies*.

⁵³ Griffith, "A Prospect for a Television Archive," 298–299.

Television Project and Griffith's insights about a television archive.⁵⁴ Griffith's essay at times seemed to have been written for an audience that needed justification for television's value, whether artistic, societal, and/or historic. At other points, he tended to be cautious of an industry-oriented audience. This audience might have also required a detailed justification of television's value, but more likely, was an audience containing individuals who might take offense to an archive that duplicated network libraries or potentially infringed on copyrights. As evidenced by the overall essay, Griffith felt that the industry had a large stake in an imagined television archive; and presumably, the industry needed convincing about their role in preserving television history.

The Project Ends and Television Recedes

In summary, the Television Project was a formative venture, providing case studies to learn from and initiatives that explored the complexities of a new medium outside of the academic and industry settings. It should be noted that the emphasis always leaned more towards programming concerns and figuring out ways in which MoMA might benefit from pursuing television production rather than efforts to collect and preserve television as a parallel to the Film Library. When the Television Project grant concluded at the end of 1955, the so called Television Department had amassed somewhat of an archive, albeit an archive of MoMA-originated programming and tests in broadcasting art. Once the grant was over, museum administrators transferred the Television Project's materials to the Film Library. This included about seventeen 16mm films (kinescopes) including some television programs like single episodes of the CBS 6

⁵⁴ This comment is a bit of a foreshadowing remark. Decades later, Paley would initiate a study about the prospects for a television archive, and then founded the Museum of Broadcasting in 1976. This archiving effort is discussed in Chapter VII of this dissertation. I bring this up now to suggest that Paley had the idea for a television archive while he was associated with the MoMA.

o’Clock Report, NBC’s Home, and Art in America but mostly test kinescopes of museum events and program concepts, several reels of reversal and magnetic tape with varied content, and film and editing equipment.⁵⁵

Not enough to constitute its own department anymore, these materials represented the remnants of what might have been had the museum pursued a television archive. Griffith’s experiences and reflections concerning challenges in acquisition and selection represented one dimension as to why such an archive never materialized. One of his colleagues later reflected that Griffith would say he lost much sleep over worries of deteriorating film, diminishing collections, and a lack of funding.⁵⁶ It is easy to imagine the headaches that television might bring into the already stressed endeavors undertaken by the Film Library. Additionally, the overall direction of the Television Project shifted towards programming and away from collecting. The Television Project officially ended in 1955 as talks about television receded into the background. However, television, as the commercial and popular culture mass medium, was not completely erased from the Museum’s orbit. People in the museum made one more attempt to engage with a broad scope of television in some sort of archival manner. Television resurfaced as a focused effort in an exhibition called *Television USA* (1963), which is the focus of this chapter’s final section.

⁵⁵ “Television Department Equipment Memorandum”, December 29, 1955, RdH, IV.330, MoMA Archives, NY.

⁵⁶ Bowser and Magliozzi, “Film Archiving as a Profession.”

Television USA and the Exhibition as Archiving Mechanism

The idea to mount an exhibit of television programs had been presented in the early 1950s by one of the museum's major donors, Nelson Rockefeller.⁵⁷ During the Television Project years in the mid 1950s, the idea arose again. As one of the Television Project's heads asked Griffith, "could a short cycle of selected TV films or kinescopes be selected and secured without undue effort?"⁵⁸ Griffith's experience with acquiring *The Trip to Bountiful* certainly demonstrated that securing telefilms *and* the multiple rights were far from an "undue effort." Still, as discussed in this section, a retrospective exhibit of television was within the purview of the museum's activities.

The idea to develop an exhibition of television programming was similar to the exhibitions put forth by the Film Library for the purpose of historic and artistic reflection. However, this idea never did quite materialize during the Television Project (1952-1955). It was not until 1960 that a serious consideration of a television exhibition was posed. The exhibit, at first titled "The Best of Television," had the aim to showcase "kinescopes films representing the best surviving television programs shown during the past fifteen years."⁵⁹ Jac Venza, who had worked in television production and maintained strong ties to the industry, directed the exhibit. Richard Griffith was integral to the planning and execution of the exhibit.

The salient point about the MoMA's interest in a television exhibit is to highlight the work that goes into such an exhibition and what happens after the exhibit. For the

⁵⁷ Spiegel, *TV by Design*.

⁵⁸ Douglas MacAgy, "To Richard Griffith", March 6, 1953, EMH, III.2.a, MoMA Archives, NY.

⁵⁹ Richard Griffith to Rene d'Harnoncourt, Re: The Best of Television.

sake of argument, the exhibit served as an archiving mechanism in that materials are selected, acquired, ordered in a particular way, and then saved in some form for posterity. For example, in order for the Film Library to show a film for its historic value, the film curator had to first acquire the film, preserve it, and create a user copy. The very act of seeking out the film already signaled a film's importance for various reasons (be it artistic, historic, representative of a certain genre or area of filmmaking). Similar arguments could have been made with exhibiting television in modern art museums contemporaneous to television's ascent.⁶⁰ As Griffith alluded to in his essay on a television archive, timing was crucial. If television was to be kept for its historic significance, then it may already have been too late. Television programming and even its documented form as scripts were already sparse. He further postulated that a lack of quality recordings and the studio's lack of efforts to save such recordings might further prevent an endeavor to exhibit television programs in the museum. Thus the concept of exhibiting television – even a selected “best of” collection – gestured towards a valuation of television that transcended its ephemeralness and reorientation of perceptions.

Rationales for Exhibiting Television

The MoMA contribution to this historical composite of television in archival settings closes with a final attempt to locate, acquire, and secure rights to television programs for the purposes of an exhibit and possibly include the acquired programs in museum's archives. Although the exhibit may have been a small slice of select television programming – 54 programs from fourteen years of programming – it was nevertheless

⁶⁰ Lynn Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation,” in *A companion to television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 67–102.

more representative than what might have been expected by an art museum. The press release announcing the now named exhibit, *Television USA*, stated:

The series, which marks the first time television has joined the other 20th century visual arts at the Museum, is planned to provide a second view, in retrospect, of some of the outstanding original tv [sic] dramatic shows, adaptations of theater classics, comedy shows as developed in the new medium, news and special events shows that recorded historic moments and experiments in presenting the arts and sciences.⁶¹

This marked the first time the museum publicized their active involvement in television as a visual art, as opposed to Griffith's test case in acquiring *The Trip to Bountiful* or the programming efforts of the Television Project. By this point, critics displayed poignant appreciations for television as a visual art, thereby contributing to a discourse that made television an acceptable object of traditional artistic and narrative criticism. For example, newspaper critics like John Crosby, Jack Gould, and Gilbert Seldes, had long argued on behalf of television's qualities that made it worthy of a public discourse on a similar terrain as other arts.⁶²

The medium had time to mature, even if that maturation was a mix of "vast wasteland" and visual/narrative modern art forms. In fact, that was all the more reason to develop an exhibit about television and its quality programs, especially a retrospective that constructed a sense of television's 'Golden Age.'⁶³ Thus, the exhibition of television in a cultural institution served two key roles: archival and cultural legitimation. As an archive, the exhibit facilitated opportunities to acquire and preserve programs. As cultural

⁶¹ Museum of Modern Art, "Television USA: Thirteen Seasons", January 23, 1963, http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/press_archives/1960s/1963.

⁶² For example, see Gilbert Seldes, *The Public Arts*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

⁶³ Kompare, *Rerun Nation*; Spigel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation."

legitimation, the exhibit designated which aspects of television could be associated with discourses of artistic achievement and cultural significance. Television was acknowledged as both a medium to display ‘conventional’ artistic achievements (e.g. theater) and a *new* medium. It might not have been feasible for the MoMA to pursue a television archive that paralleled the film archive. A compromise between completely ignoring television and a full-scale attempt to archive television was an exhibit that collected and displayed a curated retrospective of television.

The idea of an exhibit brought on new and familiar questions, primarily about how to select programs, how to identify the existence of programming (or even scripts as a surrogate), and how to secure broadcasts for exhibition. The following sections detail the various challenges in planning and accomplishing such an endeavor. There were two underlying themes. One was the physical problems in acquiring programs. The other was more abstract, namely subjective perceptions about television’s inclusion in the cultural institution.

Justifying the Obstacles to Exhibit Television

The efforts leading up to the exhibition shed further insight into how people in the museum and in the industry perceived television. As Griffith wrote in the appendix essay for the Television Project, there must be a “mutual understanding” between the industry and those invested in ensuring preservation for cultural enrichment.⁶⁴ As the idea developed, industry cooperation was essential, as was support from the Film Library and broader museum community. Early on, Griffith showed some enthusiasm but ultimately questioned whether it was worth the effort. His concern was rooted in his experiences in

⁶⁴ Griffith, “A Prospect for a Television Archive.”

acquiring *A Trip to Bountiful* as a test case for television in the Film Library. Perhaps his emphasis on rights and permissions was a mask for a disinterest in television and its entrance in the art museum. However, it is more likely that Griffith expressed concern about the cumbersome process to secure filmed or taped television programs, especially quality recordings, as well as secure rights for exhibition. Writing on behalf of exhibit director, Jac Venza, and other people interested in mounting an exhibit, Griffith explained to the museum director about the three problems in mounting such an exhibit: survival of prints, quality of prints, and clearance. Griffith's observations about their challenges in pursuing the exhibit points to a central concern in this dissertation – the factors at play in the archiving of television. Griffith wrote:

So far as it is known, no one within the industry or outside it has any clear and detailed knowledge of what actually does survive. If the networks have any rule of thumb by which they decide what to keep and what to discard, this too is a mystery. It is known that much has been junked simply for lack of storage space. On the other hand, it is probably that many producers, directors, and players have kept private prints of shows particularly dear to their hearts.⁶⁵

Just as we may speculate today about the whereabouts of early television programs, so did Griffith and his colleagues working on the exhibition. Even though they were working with people from the networks, that did not guarantee the location or acquisition of programs. Subsequent chapters in this dissertation will echo this concern stated in 1960: the survival of television programs (assuming live programs were recorded on film or tape, or filmed to begin with) was capriciously dependent on studio space and personal motivations to either maintain or destroy programs.

⁶⁵ Richard Griffith to Rene d'Harnoncourt, "Re: The Best of Television," 1.

Even if prints did survive, there was the question of selection. Griffith and his colleagues proposed that Jac Venza “enlist the (volunteer) help of about five people prominent in television, chosen chiefly from among producers, directors, and writers.”⁶⁶ Expertise in all of television was impossible, even when there were only three networks. Therefore, the volunteers would aid in selecting exemplar programming based on their areas of expertise. The problems of selecting and locating the television programs were daunting. The legalities of acquisition and public exhibition presented many hurdles, including securing permission from each individual and organization involved in the production. Technologically, low quality kinescope recordings had to be transferred to film and it was uncertain how a small screen program would fare on a large exhibition screen.

The selection process was ultimately limited by a factor beyond the control of any criteria of quality, exemplification, and popularity. Reflecting on the exhibit, Griffith noted, “many programs could not be included because they are lost, were never recorded on film or tape, or could not be cleared.”⁶⁷ Additionally, Venza explained that while the networks in 1948 started internal libraries of kinescoped and filmed programs, “as the volume of programs increases year by year, more and more prints have to be destroyed to make room in the libraries for their successors.”⁶⁸ The material reality could make for futile attempts in forming an archive, let alone acquiring programs for an exhibit.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁷ N.Y.). Film Library Museum of Modern Art (New York, *Television U.S.A.: 13 Seasons. [Exhibition]*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1962), 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15–16.

As alluded to in the section subhead, Griffith wondered if the exhibit was worth doing in spite of the obstacles. The biggest obstacle might be the general perception of television. As Griffith eloquently explained:

Is it worth doing? Television today is widely regarded as a trash medium. That has come about because of the immense amount of time which has to be filled. The stuff that is devised chiefly to fill that time is indeed pretty much trash. But the programs which would truly deserve the title ‘The Best of Television’ are astonishingly numerous and astonishingly good. They are also highly original... [and] could not have been presented in the same way in any other medium, including the medium of motion pictures as we ordinarily conceive of it. Our proudest boast has always been that the Museum recognizes new developments in the arts ‘before they have become respectable’ (A.H.B. Jr [early MoMA director]). Were we to be the first to point out the rich harvest of creative achievement in this fashionably despised medium, I think we would do ourselves honor, please our public, and quite possibly, have a measurable influence on the future of television programming.⁶⁹

There were considerable technological and legal obstacles, but the endeavor to exhibit television was indeed *worth* the time, effort, and money. The museum was a leader and a cultural authority, and thus it was conceivable to frame an incursion into a television exhibit as the duty of the MoMA. It was within the MoMA’s capability to sift through the trash and select a range of programming that illustrated the triumphs of the medium. Moreover, Griffith demonstrated a conceptualization of television as a *unique* and *specific* medium, something different than motion pictures and the other visual arts held within the cultural institution. Rather than an emphasis on artistic merits, Griffith expressed interest in the medium’s *creative achievements*. The fact that it was ‘fashionable’ to despise television was reason enough for the MoMA to take a leadership position in publicly delineating the quality from the trash. This was an opportunity for the

⁶⁹ “Richard Griffith to Rene d’Harnoncourt, Re: The Best of Television,” 3–4.

museum to designate a canon of worthy programming. Indeed, the programs selected did match up with the programs we tend to associate with the early wave of “quality” programming.⁷⁰

Planning the Exhibit: Cooperation and Selection

The plan of action included asking the heads of CBS, NBC, and ABC for “their personal blessings on the project and requesting also that they instruct their film librarians and other staff people to cooperate and assist.”⁷¹ Indeed they did. Letters in 1961 were sent by D’Harnoncourt to network presidents, CBS’s Frank Stanton, NBC’s Robert Sarnoff, and ABC’s Leonard Goldenson. First, a letter was sent to CBS in January, presumably due to the museum’s already established connection with CBS via William S. Paley, who served on the museum’s Board of Trustees. The letter established three points. One, that as a leader in 20th century visual arts, the MoMA wanted to exhibit a “retrospective” of the first fifteen years of television. In doing so would give television similar “results” as exhibiting film, architecture, design, and so on. Meaning enveloping television in a discourse would allow for the critical and artistic evaluation of television as creative endeavors. Specifically, D’Harnoncourt explained “by focusing attention on those areas in which the Museum feels the medium has made significant contributions to the art of our time, the exhibition would help the public to develop general standards of understanding, enjoyment, and evaluation.”⁷² Presumably, to set the standards of

⁷⁰ For more on the discursive formation of “quality” programming, see Michael Z Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁷¹ Richard Griffith to Rene d’Harnoncourt, "Re: The Best of Television," 3.

⁷² René D’Harnoncourt to Dr. Frank Stanton, January 12, 1961, RdH, IV.221, MoMA Archives, NY.

television that should be remembered later on as artistic achievements of the medium. This point reappeared in future letters, press releases, and exhibit publications, signaling *the* impetus for the museum as an archive of sorts. The second point was that such an exhibit required determining the existence of sufficient “high quality” films and tapes – assuming that the desired programming *was* recorded. Lastly, D’Harnoncourt requested monetary contributions from the three networks

Between the January letter to CBS and the April letters to ABC and NBC, Griffith reported to D’Harnoncourt about the efforts of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Frank Stanton of CBS deferred the project to another CBS executive, James Aubrey, who requested **(that)** the MoMA **to** determine if there were any conflicts between the museum and the Academy’s newly minted archive project (which will be discussed in later section as well as the next chapter). Far from a conflict, Griffith explained that the two institutions might collaborate, with the exhibit coinciding with the Academy’s first National Television Assembly in New York City, to be held later in the year. Since not only the network executives, but also the unions supported the Academy and its Assembly, Griffith indicated that “clearance of exhibition rights would be greatly facilitated by this alliance.”⁷³ However, securing the prints and the rights would take much longer, but at least the two institutions were familiar with one another. This represents the overlapping efforts to archive television, whether in a museum exhibition or industry trade organization, albeit both originating from institutions with close ties to the industry itself.

⁷³ Richard Griffith to Mr. D’Harnoncourt, Re: TV Series, March 09, 1961, RdH, IV.221, MoMA Archives, NY.

The networks could not object to such an exhibit. As other television scholars have pointed out, network executives were quick to pursue efforts that legitimated television as a cultural medium and one that operated for the public good.⁷⁴ Sarnoff wrote that the task was “most worthwhile” and even more impactful than the museum’s previous retrospectives on “other areas of visual and plastic arts” since television was the most public of arts. Aubrey, an executive at CBS, framed the effort as historically significant *and* “of great value in underlining the powerful role of the medium in informing and entertaining the American people.”⁷⁵ With the blessings and support (in the form of money and personnel to help research and locate programs) from the three networks, the exhibit proceeded successfully. Moreover, for the purposes of historical record, the MoMA’s exhibition constructed an archive that reflects discussions and decisions pertaining to television’s significance. Albeit, this archive was comprised of programs constrained by a set of quality-related criteria as well as bound to material existence and availability.

The exhibit included fifty-four programs, with the intention of offering a representative sampling of television’s finest and most popular output. Drama and documentary programs were expected as part of the exhibit. Live anthology dramas were a marker of the already-romanticized Golden Age and revered as quality programming. Television documentaries belonged in the exhibit as an extension of the documentary films in the Film Library. For example, the exhibit included the *Requiem for a*

⁷⁴ Boddy, *Fifties Television*; Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*; Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation.”

⁷⁵ Robert Sarnoff to Rene D’Harnoncourt, April 19, 1961; Jim Aubrey to Rene D’Harnoncourt, May 31, 1961, RdH, IV.221, MoMA Archives, NY.

Heavyweight, Marty and CBS's *Harvest of Shame*. Likewise, the exhibition included programs that neatly fitted into the art world context, featuring other art forms like ballet and opera as remediated on the television screen. But the exhibit also incorporated the more popular, albeit the most refined, aesthetically mastered, television fare popular of that era such as *Gunsmoke* and *The Red Skelton Show*. The exhibition even included commercials, which synced with the museum's embrace of industrial design.⁷⁶

Overall, the selection criteria focused on identifying programs that “used the medium to the top of its capacity” and programs that audiences might have missed in the past.⁷⁷ Following the exhibit, the MoMA Director d’Harnoncourt tried to officially secure the prints for the museum, asking the network executives “to allow us to act as custodian of the prints.”⁷⁸ He suggested that the museum serve as a repository for the networks so that in the future the museum can pursue more exhibits without the battles of locating prints and securing exhibition rights. A search through the MoMA film library catalog indicates that D’Harnoncourt (and presumably Griffith as well) was not successful in securing prints of the exhibit’s programs for perpetuity. What does remain, though, is the published booklet accompanying the exhibit, *Television USA*. In there, the programs selected are memorialized along with brief articles that contextualized why television in the art museum and the intention in formulating a retrospective of the ubiquitous visual medium. The director of the exhibit, Jac Venza, explained, “we do not present our

⁷⁶ Industrial design included the commercial arts (advertising), furniture, household items, and so on. See Spigel, *TV by Design*, 176.

⁷⁷ Museum of Modern Art (New York, *Television U.S.A.*, 3–4.

⁷⁸ René D’Harnoncourt to Sarnoff/Aubrey (carbon copy letter), August 1963, RdH, IV.221, MoMA Archives, NY.

selections as candidates either for a laurel wreath or for a time capsule. Our intention is simply to show how the art has developed, and what in its record seems to us most memorable and most durable.”⁷⁹ In this sense, television was not subsumed in discourses of high culture and associations with art objects within the museum. Instead, it was to be appreciated as art-in-formation, a modern visual art that was new and familiar with lasting impact on American society. The eventual selection of television programs for the exhibit might have represented the canonical set of programs associated with high culture rather than crass commercial entertainment. However, the exhibit demonstrated that television was something that could be encountered in a setting that denaturalized it and highlighted its various achievements.

Experimenting with Television as Cultural Artifacts and Worthy of the Archive

The exhibition, and MoMA’s various incursions into the television medium, provided one path in which an institution conceptualized television outside of its ephemeral broadcast moment. In organizing a retrospective of television, the MoMA was among the first to glean from the already saturated television medium exemplary programming, marking those programs (and perhaps similar ones that were not locatable) as worthy to be remembered and preserved. In exploring and studying the possibilities of television in the Television Project, the MoMA pursued an early effort to conceive of how the cultural institution might relate to and utilize television. In even acknowledging television, the Film Library had to contend with television’s similarities and overlaps with film, thus justifying why television might or might not belong in the well-

⁷⁹ Television U.S.A.: 13 seasons, 16.

established film archive. Overall, the MoMA case study addresses the question of when did the concept to archive television emerge. This cultural institution had some precedent in conceptualizing moving images as worthy of an archival presence, especially given artistic *and* historical/sociological significance, as demonstrated by the Film Library. It was evident that the concept to treat television in a similar manner was in circulation at the MoMA. However, concept does not always equate to action. Still, the degrees in which the MoMA engaged with television as more than commercial entertainment or confined to its ephemerality demonstrated possibilities for television as worthy of an archival presence.

The MoMA as a case study sets up many of the reasons to archive television. First and foremost was the foundational argument that television could be something more than pictures on a tube or mindless entertainment or commercial vehicle. Television was ephemeral and ubiquitous, a form physically tied to a medium in order to be viewed and typically experienced in the domestic sphere. Nevertheless, the MoMA case demonstrated some possibilities in envisioning television's permanence, recontextualizing the ephemeral as records of culture that ought to be preserved for posterity. To that effect, television flow was divided into categories of content that contained an intangible and lasting cultural value. As such, some of television was worthy of an archival presence when conceptualized within a visual arts discourse. This was demonstrated by Griffith's test case in acquiring a television program for the film archive and evident in the television exhibit.

Alternatively, Richard Griffith's "Prospect for a Television Archive" demonstrated the idealized television archive, one that was not necessarily rooted in the

visual arts and culturally elite discourses. Television programs could be audio-visual documents like the films in the Film Library, which was one of the stated reasons for the Film Library to collect a range of films. Evident in Griffith's essay was the idea to approach television as records of a time and place, of a creative output, and of the visual medium's development. The Film Library offered a model to preserve television in the name of documenting the historic development of such a business and art. Such an archive would serve to assemble the history of the industry and craft.

The Film Library, though, was also a model concerning the obstacles in constructing an archive of recorded moving images that were largely the commercial products. Material constraints, such as recording technologies, funding for preservation and storage, and the bureaucracy of copyrights, obstructed any chance at forming a parallel television archive to the already strained Film Library. While there was some elasticity to a concept of television that might fit within the existing structures of the cultural institution, the result was a narrow view of television's cultural value.

From the MoMA case study, we have a sense of what was possible. Concretely, that meant valuing television as more than ephemeral broadcasts or products of a culture industry. However, neither the institutional structures nor the individuals could enact on that possibility. Television entered the MoMA in very limited ways in that only a few television programs were selected for the Film Library and for the television exhibit. The programs selected were limited by physical constraints, such as what existed in recorded form, as well as conceptual constraints, such as judgments about which programs were worthy of inclusion. The structural and ideological contexts did not allow for a broad conception of television or the full pursuit of a television archive that paralleled the Film

Library. The intriguing part, though, was that television was conceptualized as something worth saving; there were inclinations to think of television as records with cultural, social, and political overtones. In the subsequent two chapters, these dimensions of television are further explored as they intersect with a more conventional institution entrusted with the preservation of historical and cultural documents: the archive, specifically the academic archive.

CHAPTER V

TELEVISION INSCRIBED AS MASS COMMUNICATIONS: TELEVISION ENTERS THE TRADITIONAL ARCHIVE

Far away from either coast where the television industry most strongly staked its claim, an archive in Madison, Wisconsin slowly began collecting materials related to television in the late 1950s and into the 1970s under two different but related auspices: the Mass Communications History Center and the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research. These research centers, enabled by a mature archiving institution, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, collected various aspects of television's material traces. These materials ranged from institutional records documenting a broadcast network's operations to personal manuscripts of television writers to telefilms and tapes.

The MoMA case study demonstrated attempts at justifying television's inclusion in an established cultural institution, which was one avenue to legitimate television via the museum's cultural authority. Conversely, the case studies in this chapter and the next chapter illustrated the struggles in articulating the archivability of mass media and the performing arts. In both cases, the academic archive's pursuit to acquire collections associated with mass media or the performing arts subsumed television. Archivists and academics directly or indirectly sought out television, but the result was the same. Television could garner legitimacy by virtue of its location in an academic archive, which was an authority in defining historical value. It was not so much the project of either of these research centers to elevate the cultural status of television, but rather to broaden the scope of materials deemed worthy of academic and historical study. Even so, the

academic archive was a site of legitimation. Television's location in an academic archive signaled to academics, industry professionals, and critics that television had value beyond the moment of broadcast.

The overarching intent of this chapter and the next one (Chapter VI) is to trace how television entered the academic archive. The academic archive is an institution whose operation is closely associated with or directly operates within the academic context, supporting instructional and scholarly pursuits.¹ People in the academy and in the archive had to conceive television as belonging in an archival setting (and by extension, educational and scholarly settings) and envisioned as historically beneficial beyond initial broadcast. Moreover, archivists, academics, and people in the industry required foresight to transform the contemporary into the historical, complete with troubleshooting how to archive nonconventional materials and capture ephemeral broadcasts for posterity.

The existing archival and academic institutional structures in the 1950s were not quite yet conducive to envisioning television's historical, cultural, and intellectual value. Television challenged archival processes. How did television align with pre-existing or more conventional territories that archivists and historians were used to, such as histories of the American business, labor, and political movements? How were they to handle the intersecting dimensions of television? For instance, should the archive focus on collecting television as an institution of modern mass media, as a business, as an instrument for public persuasion, as a platform for news, as popular entertainer, and/or as creative endeavors? What sorts of manuscript collections could be gleaned from individuals

¹ The State Historical Society of Wisconsin was and still is an independent body from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, however the two support one another, especially in academic missions.

working in television? How would they broach the legal maze in securing the physical rights and ensuring that copyrights remain with the owner? How would they archive the data – be it the volumes of printed and written records or the transient and ephemeral broadcasts? Above all, who would be interested in such material? Over the course of the 1960s and the 1970s, institutional structures and individual conceptions embraced these various facets of television and its location in the archive.

Tracing the ways television entered the academic archive affords great insights into the complexities of the archival process as it intersected with perceptions of television and its scholarly utility. The archive in the mid-twentieth century was a traditional institution in that it was accustomed to paper records and still cautious of popular culture amidst ‘serious’ historical manuscripts. For television to enter that space, it had to ‘fit’ with the archive’s collecting scope and the academy’s disciplines. Ideally, television had to align with ontological structures that were familiar to archivists, historians, and academics. For the case studies discussed in this chapter and the next one, this meant that archival determinators conceptualized television as either part of mass communications or the performing arts. Television could belong everywhere yet nowhere. It was inscribed in both conceptualizations but also fell in the gaps between mass communications and the performing arts, thus outside the purview of either collecting effort.

The project of distinction, as it occurred within the archival process, were essentially rationales that guided how the academic archive collected and organized television-related materials for the archive’s users (e.g. historians, researchers, professors on campus, etc.). In other words, archivists and academics tended to conceptualize

television as archival through already existing privileged archival (and historical) categories, such as collecting business records and manuscripts from journalists or artists. The academic archive was an established institution, one that traditionally dealt with paper materials but was still flexible and forward thinking regarding the content and form of the materials. A major feature with the academic archive case studies in this chapter and the next was the emphasis on archiving television processes – the paper-based material traces. This was in contrast to the industry-initiated archives that focused on archiving television products – the programs. Granted, the academic archive case studies certainly dealt with television products, but the mature archiving apparatus was better suited for paper based documents, such as television scripts (a corollary to the audio visual product, but can still demonstrate processes via hand written edits). Thus, the academic archive defined television’s archivability within the prevailing institutional structures with the capacity to archive paper-based materials.

This chapter chronicles how the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (referred to as the Society or SHSW) developed a specialized collecting focus in mass communications, housed under the title the “Mass Communications History Center” (MCHC). The aim is to discuss the Society’s struggles to define mass communications for the purposes of shaping collecting policies and how that definition subsumed television. The archivists at the Society were conscientious of their role in knowledge production and were aware of the stakes in defining what has historical value and the implications on research. As such, they recognized the need to know what should be collected, reasons to do so, and hence, generate interest in mass communications research, which also meant television research. The framework noted in the introduction loosely

organizes this chapter (as well as the subsequent two chapters): discussion about the institutional structures, then reasons to archive television, followed by how individuals activated by their institutional structures directly or indirectly brought television into the archive. The analysis of the MCHC and the inclusion of television within its collecting scope begins with a brief background on the Society, the formation of the MCHC, the process to define mass communications, and how television was conceptualized within the contours of the Center's collecting efforts. Then the discussion outlines some of the Society's struggles with defining selection criteria, with the acquisition of the NBC corporate archives as an illustrative case. This leads to the ways television was included in the Society's efforts to collect what they called the "raw materials" of mass communications history.

Institutional Context: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW or Society, sometimes also referred to as the Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS) is an exemplary archive in terms of its archival management and application of principles. It is also somewhat of an anomaly as an academic archive. The Society was charged with preserving local and state history but was also an academic archive by virtue of its close relationship to a top tier research university. As such, the Society and the University of Wisconsin enhanced each other's operations and status as premiere institutions for research and historical inquiry.² The Society was founded in 1858 and continues today as a large archive with smaller factions dedicated to specific collecting goals. For instance, the Society is widely

² Clifford Lord, "Notes on Mass Communications Center 1955-1956," Memo, c 1956, 3, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

regarded for its strengths in collecting materials related to Wisconsin, the American West, labor and social movements, and American business. The Society is also an institution that archives its own administration, preserving records of administrative functions for accountability and transparency purposes. Hence, there is a paper trail documenting the discussions and decisions about collecting the records of mass communications and television in particular.

In the early 1950s, mass communications was not a part of the Society's collecting agenda. Like most historical societies, the Society emphasized local and state history. Moreover, as an archive connected with an academic institution, the Society developed collecting strengths that would benefit scholarship and education. Operationally, the archive had amassed similar materials, which was a common feature of archival principles to pursue collections that archivists logically grouped together as a collecting strength. One of the Society's collecting strengths were collections pertaining to "modern phases of economy" like business, labor, politics, and agriculture.³ It was this organizing principle, along with a general interest in social life, which provided the conventional archival frameworks for the inclusion of mass communications.

Two other factors also assisted in the eventual collecting focus on mass communications and television. A substantial donation from one native Wisconsinite initiated the idea to pursue a dedicated collecting effort. Vocal and persistence faculty members then helped to define the scope of that effort. The availability of donors and invested faculty helped the archivists at the Society to form a new, unexplored, and broadly defined collecting area, shaping the contours of what an archive of mass

³ Lord, "Notes on Mass Communications Center 1955-1956."

communications history would look like. The next section introduces the new collecting effort, called the Mass Communications History Center. Also discussed are the factors involved in its formation as well as the early conceptions of television in the archive.

Ideations for an Archive of Mass Communications

The idea for the center started with the 1955 donation from a well-known radio commentator, H.V. Kaltenborn, the “dean of American radio.” Kaltenborn, a Wisconsin native, climbed the ranks of radio and shaped the broadcast news style. He saved his papers and donated them to his state historical society. His substantial donation had “limitless potential... here were materials that would enrich studies of recent American history, broadcasting, radio analysis, public opinion”⁴ Kaltenborn amassed radio and television scripts, correspondence, photographs, and general documentation that captured the span of radio broadcast history, political events, national and world affairs, and the business of radio and journalism. He even had saved letters from his listeners, which served as a “rich historical evidence of public reaction to the events Kaltenborn reported.”⁵ Kaltenborn said that the Society was “so impressed with *longrange historic value* of my materials that they have decided to develop a mass communications center.”⁶

“Impressed” was rather boastful. Perhaps the Society was more impressed with the sum of money Kaltenborn provided for a proposed mass communications center. Nevertheless, the Society saw greater potential for a new collecting effort yet to occur in any archiving institution. That is, the collection of records pertaining to modern day

⁴ SHSW, “Mass Communications History,” *Wisconsin Then and Now*, August 1956, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶ Lord, “Notes on Mass Communications Center 1955-1956,” 2.

media for future use. As explained in the Society's newsletter, given their "notable newspaper collection" and strong base in specialized collections focusing on American history, business, and labor, there was a "natural foundation for a new Center."⁷

The Society's director, Clifford Lord, emphasized three reasons as to why the Society was ideally positioned to develop a center devoted to mass communications history. One, that the Society was the best place in the nation for historical research in American history. Two, that the university supported the center and thus materials would be used for scholarly and educational pursuits. Three, that the new center was serious as a "real research center in [the] communications field," seeking out donations from prominent people like Edward Bernays, A.C. Nielsen, and "other pioneers in other aspects of radio, tv and newspaper work."⁸ Kaltenborn was especially active in convincing his colleagues in radio to follow his lead and donate their materials (and ideally some supporting funds) to the new specialized collecting effort.

Initial Influences from UW Faculty

When announcing intentions for this new collecting area, the Society explained "definite areas of collection and research ... [are] press, radio, television, motion pictures, public relations, public opinion measurement."⁹ The Society sought the input of the wider university community to help define these aspects within the new mass communications collecting area. Faculty in the speech and journalism departments as well as other university and state stakeholders offered their perspectives. News via the press, radio, and

⁷ SHSW, "Mass Communications History."

⁸ Lord, "Notes on Mass Communications Center 1955-1956," 2.

⁹ SHSW, "Mass Communications History."

television were without a doubt fair ground for the archive. There was no faculty member advocating on behalf of motion pictures, but it was included in the list because two Wisconsin brothers donated their papers documenting silent cinema and their notable production, *Birth of a Nation*. A professor in public relations, Scott Cutlip noted the “need for an accurate, complete history” of the professionalization of public relations, a subject ripe for present and future scholars and students.¹⁰ Thus, the archivists agreed to fold public relations under the mass communications umbrella. Public opinion measurement correlated nicely with research agendas of social scientists studying propaganda, public opinion, and audience measurement.

Television and radio were appropriate areas within mass communications to pursue, however, no one seemed to provide any suggestions other than news or how broadcasting related to modern business. Still, television was included in the projected scope of the new center. It was evident that the archivists and their faculty advisers conceived of television in a narrow light; specifically television was a vehicle for news and information and a new medium for “pioneer news analysts.”¹¹ The early rationale for collecting in the television area pivoted on its close connection with radio and the continuity of news commentators whose careers spanned radio and television.¹² There were also archival precedents to value pioneering efforts with technology, seeking

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Les Fishel, “Working Papers for a Conference on Mass Communications History,” April 1960, Office Files (unprocessed), Mass Communication History (Background), Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

documentation of experimentation, patents, and regulations. In this sense, there was room for television as a technology.

Overall, it was clear that the direction of the proposed center would be steered by the happenstance of donations, by faculty recommendations, and archivists' pursuits. In this regard, the areas of press, broadcasting (as it intersected with news), and public relations had the strongest advocates. While faculty were involved in television by way of a television research lab and an educational channel, chances were that they were too busy with experimentation and instruction to offer input. Between 1955 and 1958, first round of donations reflected the ideas about what a mass communications archive ought to contain. That is, an archive mostly focused on journalism, whether in print or broadcast forms. The following section delves deeper into the structure and purpose of the new research center.

The Formation

The Mass Communications History Center officially launched on January 25, 1958. The Society acquired collections from twenty-six contributors at the time of the official dedication ceremony.¹³ The Society summarized the contributions in their newsletter as the “papers and personal documents from other [than Kaltenborn] noted newsmen, commentators, cartoonists, radio pioneers and movie producers.”¹⁴ The bulk consisted of the more journalistic oriented mass communicators, those labeled as “newsmen and commentators.” This included notable journalists such as Louis Lochner,

¹³ Barbara Kaiser, “Annual Report MCHC,” June 1959, Administrative subject file of the State Archivist (1990/180), Box 3, Mass Communications History Center Background, WHS.

¹⁴ SHSW, “Launching the MCHC in Style,” *Wisconsin Then and Now*, February 1958, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

Cecil Brown, and Austin Kiplinger, all of whom would be oft repeated in promotional materials and letters to potential donors. The prevailing tone at MCHC's unveiling event veered towards the somber role of mass media in informing the public, shaping public opinion, and fostering the virtues of democratic society via freedoms of the press and speech.¹⁵

The Society archivists recognized that the subject of mass communications was beyond their expertise. As such, they relied on committees to aid the selection and acquisition processes.¹⁶ About a year into the Center's founding, a Faculty Advisory Committee formed, including individuals who would be instrumental in both the MCHC and the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research: Fred Haberman (Chair of the Speech Department), Scott Cutlip (public relations), and Robert Hethmon (theater) and other UW faculty. These men participated not only by making suggestions in committee meetings, but also were instrumental in the selection and acquisition processes; they wrote letters to leads, hosted possible donors by showing them the campus and MCHC facilities, traveled to New York to finalize donations, reviewed records and made recommendations, and aided in fundraising.¹⁷

The Society also sought input from outside the university, looking towards the industry for their expertise (and presumably, prestige). The National Advisory Council was "composed of distinguished leaders representing the various media encompassed by

¹⁵ Louis Lochner, "Communications and the Mass-Produced Mind," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Summer 1958, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Feature Articles on MCHC (1956-1959), Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹⁶ "Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee," September 25, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

¹⁷ Kaiser, "Annual Report MCHC," 3.

the Center...[with men] selected because of their prominence and experience in their respective fields.”¹⁸ These men advised the Center with leads, meaning people who are important in their field *and* might be willing to donate their papers. Not only did they make recommendations, they helped to facilitate meetings for the Society staff and at times made personal visits, “helping to persuade mass communicators to donate” collections and even money.¹⁹

The Council represented the following areas (using the terminology listed in the Annual Report): broadcasting media, press, advertising field, marketing research-audience analysis, public relations, and motion pictures-theatre field. By the end of 1959, there were fifteen members. Of the fifteen members, three represented broadcasting (although two of them were identified as broadcasting-press), four represented the press (without any hyphenated qualifications), three represented advertising, and two represented public relations. Three additional individuals represented the academic realm (the former SHSW director, Clifford Lord), motion pictures-theater, and the hyphenated amalgamation of marketing research-audience analysis-broadcasting (used to label A.C. Nielsen’s contribution to the council). On the one hand, there was no one solely representing television or radio. On the other hand, arguably each of the areas represented by the Council were invested in television to a degree and could make recommendations concerning television.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Status Report National Advisory Council,” December 10, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS. This document lists the people who have accepted membership as well as those that have declined or yet to respond. In regards to television, or more broadly, broadcasting, the MCHC did try to include executives overseeing broadcasting. But CBS President Frank

The MCHC as It Related to the Society

The Society formed the MCHC not as a separate archive, but as a designated special area of collecting within the larger archiving institution (the Society). As such, the MCHC was not “a physical entity separate from the other collections of the Society,” but rather distinct in name only or “a separate Center on paper.”²¹ It was a deliberate choice to label the new effort as a center instead of a “special collections” because the Society director “felt that University faculty who do not now consider mass communications a useful area of for research will be inclined to use the mass communications resources more readily if they are integrated with our other collections.” The designation of “Center” was more a “promotion device,” one that logically organized similar resources and “advantageous in soliciting donations of materials and money.”²² Moreover, at a practical level, the MCHC could not be a separate entity, as it required the resources and structure of the SHSW. The result was a Center that still operated within the SHSW but organized research aids and other materials that could draw some boundary.

The resources of the SHSW included staff to administer the Center. The key person that carried out MCHC’s vision from beginning and well into the 1970s was Barbara Kaiser. She became chief (as she liked to sign letters), also known as the director. Kaiser’s boss was Les Fishel, the director of the Society, who also expressed deep investment in the mass communications efforts. The Society staff who became associated with the MCHC included: Ben Wilcox (Chief Librarian), Alice Smith (Chief of

Stanton, the head of NBC News, the president of the National Association of Broadcasters, and the publisher of *TV Digest* all declined membership. They also reached out to television critic, John Crosby, and to a woman from advertising, but neither responded at that point.

²¹ “Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee.”

²² Ibid.

Research), Josephine Harper (Head of the Manuscripts Division), and Paul Vanderbilt (Curator of the Iconographic Collections). Clearly, the MCHC still functioned within the SHSW and relied on the cooperation and support from other divisions.

As the Center proceeded in its activities, these individuals worked together to develop collection policies, discuss definitions and scope, and go on field trips to seek out collections. Field trips were an essential part of the archive's overall strategy to obtain commitments for manuscript donations and ensure follow-through with the donations. Although actual processes will be discussed at greater length in a later section, it is worth mentioning here that each of these individuals were active in the collecting process for the MCHC (while presumably also working on other areas of the Society's collecting areas). Furthermore, these were endeavors that required substantial resources, a factor that remained at the forefront of debates regarding the purpose of the Center and whether it would continue to be a worthwhile effort.

The MCHC and the University

There is no doubt that the University of Wisconsin-Madison benefited from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The two institutions were (and continue to be) linked, especially in regards to finances and the legal dimensions of donations and ownership. The Society requested financial assistance from the university to further bolster the MCHC. Resources were needed to ensure that the MCHC would flourish, particularly money to support acquisition (field trips to convince potential donors and survey records, funds to transport newly acquired collections, etc.), staff for processing, and storage space.²³ The MCHC's catalyst, H.V. Kaltenborn, also provided funds via his

²³ Kaiser, "1959 Annual Report;" Les Fishel to Fred Harrington, August 06, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

Kaltenborn Foundation and lobbied his colleagues to attach monetary donations to their manuscript donations. In general, the university administration recognized the mutually beneficial relationship between the two institutions. It helped that Fred Harrington, who was vice president at the time of MCHC's founding in 1958 and later became President in 1962, was a historian who valued contemporary history. Kaiser and her colleagues would keep Harrington updated about the MCHC on topics such as the Center's growth or about the cooperation between the SHSW and the university library. In this regard, the university administration could further build up resources associated with mass communications, such as accumulating relevant books and periodicals for the university library.²⁴

The Society contributed to the University's reputation as a prestigious research institution, given its substantial holdings. The University, then, bolstered the Society's case for soliciting donations, as donors could be reassured that their papers benefited scholarly endeavors. The leadership of both the Society and the University to pursue a new area of scholarship and archival collecting further strengthened these connections. The Society was certainly a separate institution from the University, but it was evident that the two institutions supported each other. The fact that the Society collected with educators and scholars in mind demonstrated the close ties between the archiving institution and the academic institution. Still, the Society functioned as a separate entity. As noted earlier, a staff of professionally trained archivists ran the Society. They fostered a relationship with the academic community, encouraging input about the types of materials the archive ought to pursue. The next section shifts to a discussion about how

²⁴ Barbara Kaiser to Fred Harrington, July 23, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

the archivists refined their understanding of mass communications and outlined rationales to pursue the MCHC. It was especially important for the archivists to rely on the academic community to understand the meaning of mass communications and what materials constituted as a body of mass communications history.

Rationales for the Inclusion of Mass Communications in the Archive

The purpose of the center was continually refined and oft repeated in press releases, articles, promotional pamphlets, and letters to potential donors. The core purpose was to collect contemporary materials related to mass communications. Contemporary in the sense that archives tended to collect antiquarian materials or manuscripts accumulated at the end of one's career. It was not the common practice to solicit materials of the relatively present era as these processes were happening. This purpose was articulated in a proposed three-page press release, which explained:

The purpose of the Center is to collect, preserve and make available to scholarship, in one central location, the basic **raw materials** that trace the development of modern mass media – press, radio, television, public relations and the movies... The Mass Communications History Center is national in scope and its collections emphasize the basic materials that contributed to the changing patterns of radio and television development, the growth of the public relations profession, the behind-the-scenes development of pioneer movies producers and the materials that lie behind the headlines in the growth of the daily press.²⁵

Indeed, this was a comprehensive and expansive effort. This press release template and subsequent newspaper articles featured descriptions of the collections thus far collected by the MCHC in 1959 that were not wholly representative. There was at least one collection related to film, a couple about public relations, and several collections

²⁵ MCHC, "Brochure," c 1958, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS. Emphasis added.

pertaining to radio or television. However, the majority of the collected skewed heavily towards broadcast journalism. All of the radio and television collections might be better identified as journalism collections, highlighting the changing patterns of the presentation of news and information *on* radio and television. This is not to speak ill of the effort or suggest a mischaracterization of what the Center envisioned itself to *eventually* become. Rather, this points to the factors that help shape (or perhaps bias) an archiving effort in particular direction.

An influential factor in the acquisition of mostly journalist type of collection was the involvement of broadcast news analysts in soliciting donations. Having leading journalists with connections to radio and television stump on behalf of the new archive was certainly useful to help build a budding collecting efforts. This concrete factor demonstrated the importance of active involvement. Less concrete, though, were the various discourses circulating in the late 1950s, which archivist and academics implicitly drew from to help shape collecting priorities.

Fueling the goal to collect the “raw materials” of mass communications were three prevailing discourses from which the archivists could articulate rationales to archive such material. One such discourse connected journalism and the free flow of information with democracy. The resulting rationale justified the records of mass communications as belonging in an archive because media promoted democracy. Other statements loosely organized under this discourse granted a historical gravity to the press and the Fourth Estate function of journalism.²⁶ Similarly, broadcasting and especially television had

²⁶ Louis Lochner, “Communications and the Mass-Produced Mind,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Summer 1958, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Feature Articles on MCHC (1956-1959), Wisconsin Historical Society.

unprecedented capacity to widely disseminate information, particular information vital for the operation of democracy. Another discourse centered on media effects. Records of broadcasting and especially the institutions of mass communications were essential primary source documents to track media effects and how media functions. This rationale correlated with trends in academic study of television and mass communications in general, such as functionalist studies of mass media systems, positivist effects studies, or debates about mass media and its impact on a “cultural democracy.”²⁷ Another discourse might be identified as the exceptionalism of American industry. In this regard, mass communications ought to be collected as exemplars of market capitalism, with media as essential to the functioning of American enterprise. Collectively, these discourses imprinted on the archival process.

Articulating Rationales

It was in the newly minted brochure, newsletters, press releases, articles, and internal communications where the Center’s sense of purpose articulated what was in the air. For instance, the brochure identified three specific purposes, which drew on popular and academic notions of media effects, democratic functions of the media, and media in relations to a so-called American way of life. First, was the justification that media were a part of the “field of American history” because media had an impact on the “American mind and on American events.” The second point narrowed the justification to the “cumulative effect of radio, press, television and cinema in influencing – and in great measure, reflecting – American public opinion.” This sentiment was indicative of the

²⁷ Bernard Berelson, “The Great Debate on Cultural Democracy,” *Studies in Public Communication* 3, no. Summer (1961): 3–14. The functionalist perspectives about mass communications also recall the work of Paul Lazarsfeld, Elihu Katz, etc.

broader academic and political discourse about public opinion and the effect of media on a mass and impressionable public. The third point widened the scope to a democratic purpose, fitting into concurrent discourses about mass communications (but really, the press) as channels “for carrying essential information to a citizenry who free and intelligent expression of opinion lies at the base of the democratic process.”²⁸ Such channels implicated the transmission of information as well as commercial, educational, and regulatory structures. Thus, notions of public service and mass media effects heavily shaped the guiding vision for the MCHC.

The concept of mass communications, and thus the Center’s purpose, was typically presented within the context of journalistic practice and purpose. An article in a journalist trade journal explained the MCHC as a treasure trove to study the Fourth Estate (which, to be fair, seemed appropriate for a publication geared towards journalists). The Fourth Estate encapsulated the journalist in broad terms, “whether they be writers, commentators, radio and TV newscasters, cameramen, cartoonists, movie producers and/or script writers, public relations experts, or technicians in the mass communications field.”²⁹ The *Wisconsin Alumnus* explained that “the Center recognizes the Fourth Estate – meaning all the media – as a source for historical data” and emphasized the acquisition of “representative journalists.”³⁰ Although the articles would broaden the Center’s purpose to collect all materials under the specter of mass communications (radio,

²⁸ MCHC, “Brochure.” The third point about democratic purposes conjures up the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press and similar reports as representative examples.

²⁹ Louis Lochner, “Storehouse for Living History,” *The Quill*, March 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

³⁰ “Mass Communications -- New Pipeline to History,” *Wisconsin Alumnus*, 1960, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

advertising, public relations, film, and of course, television), the predominant tone privileged the journalist and receded the rest to the background.

In more private settings, the purpose of the center was more ambiguous. Certainly, the formation of an archival collection dedicated to the history of mass communications was an ambitious project. Outwardly, that purpose could be communicated either in grandiose, broad reaching scope (a ploy for seeking out donations) or communicated through a more specialized prism, such as the Fourth Estate. The internal uncertainty stemmed from navigating an unknown terrain, namely the collection of contemporary materials. Moreover, the materials might not neatly fit into manuscript categories or existing cataloging taxonomies. Figuring out a purpose could, at the very, least begin with a common archival purpose to collect materials of “pioneers” – the individuals and institutions involved in shaping mass communications. Hence, the archive could prioritize acquiring the collections of pioneers, innovators, the “firsts,” and highly influential men in each aspect of mass communications. For example, the earliest notes about the Center’s formation indicated that the archivists should approach radio pioneers like Edward R. Murrow and Walter Winchell.³¹ The word “pioneer” appeared in many documents that reflected internal discussions about the Center’s purpose.

Additionally, the purpose of the archive was to serve the dominant modes of historical enterprises. Specifically, the “Great Man” types of history that highlight the exceptional men and moments that were *the* essential catalysts to move something like journalism or broadcasting forward. However, there was also a sense of purpose regarding the acquisition of materials that could offer broader views of mass

³¹ Lord, “Notes on Mass Communications Center 1955-1956.”

communications development. A Society archivist commented that perhaps the “ultimate” purpose of the center was “in the field of the history of ideas more than with the chronologies of personalities, corporations or media.”³² This sentiment gestured towards a more expansive purpose beyond the “Great Man” historical narratives. Another archivist noted that the purpose was to “stimulate research in this field of history” rather than wait for historians who are more comfortable with histories of previous centuries to realize the significance of the mass communications.³³

Qualifying Television in the Beginning Stages

As the MCHC started to take shape, Kaiser and her colleagues may have had some aspirations to collect television *as* television. In other words, to seek out donations pertaining to one’s career in television, but not necessarily as a television journalist or as an executive who dealt with the commercial aspects of television. The brochure idealistically noted – “In its initial planning, the Center places equal emphasis on the entire field of television.”³⁴ The subtext and the story of the Center’s origination indicated otherwise. The Society’s newsletter announcing the MCHC demonstrated television’s salience, but also a failure to translate television’s multifaceted significance into archival holdings. The article explained that television surpassed the movies as primary mode of entertainment, outdated the book, extended the forms of radio (especially in entertainment programming), *and* presented the news. The insinuation, then,

³² Paul Vanderbilt to Barbara Kaiser and Les Fishel, Memorandum with Diagram, October 12, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

³³ Barbara Kaiser to Jo Harper, Memo, February 02, 1959, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1959-1960, Wisconsin Historical Society.

³⁴ MCHC, “Brochure.”

was that the Society was interested in all of these facets and more. However, that was tempered by two influences. In one regard, the Society pulled on the discourses that positioned television as controversial for “its combined impact upon the American mind.”³⁵ Television belonged in the archive because it was a crucial medium for public opinion but also for its dulling and potentially harmful effects. In another regard, television was simply a medium, a vehicle. Television was presented as a backdrop for prominent news commentators whose careers crossed from radio to television. This serves somewhat as an illustrative metaphor, that television in the archive was a backdrop, highlighting the best of journalistic practice. Similarly, television was a backdrop for business operations, via advertising, public relations, and the operation of the networks themselves.

Television as a backdrop was in some ways indicative of the medium’s newness. Archives tended to not collect contemporary culture or business. Television was only about a decade old, but it was still too new for the archive to know what the new medium’s raw materials were. Television was also converged with other industries, modes of communication, or societal functions. Furthermore, television tied to commerce, democratic functions, performing arts, technology, and so on. The closest medium or industry, radio, was very desirable for the MCHC. The brochure for the new center summarized a range of reasons as to why the archive ought to pursue radio, which effectually the archivists could apply to television.

The rationales of broadcasting’s significance included journalism, entertainment, public opinion, commercial enterprise, and regulated public good. Despite the generous

³⁵ SHSW, “Launching the MCHC in Style.”

conceptualization of broadcasting's significance, the brochure stated that the MCHC "places initial priority on the papers and recordings of pioneer news analysts and commentators, recognizing that these materials are basic to studies of broadcasting history, radio analysis, and public opinion." The brochure continued with a hierarchy of selection by highlighting interests in "such collections as radio management, public service broadcasting, educational radio, broadcasting regulation and control, and audience analysis."³⁶ Essentially, this meant everything *but* entertainment. Or at least, everything except an interest in the unique qualities of television as specific medium, rather than how television operates alongside existing structures of news, regulation, public service, and democratic ideals.

The brochure and other documents might have indicated a vision to archive "the entire field of television."³⁷ However, the careful prioritizing for desired radio materials set a similar path for television. The criteria for selection centered around Fourth Estate qualifications along with dimensions of management, education, regulations, and reception (the 1950s formulation of reception studies, meaning public opinion measurement). The closing statement in the brochure for the radio and television collection area further indicated how television was to be conceptualized as an influence "on the American press, theater and motion picture industry." This paradigm served as a convenient way to tie together the mass communication ecosystem. Television was either integrative in the whole system or a vehicle for news, information, and commerce.

³⁶ MCHC, "Brochure."

³⁷ *Ibid.*

The stakes of archiving television were dependent on how television was parsed out, whether as its own medium or as part of varying discourses that can mark some television as worthy of selection and some television as not on the radar. Carving out boundaries of selection was necessary in light of archival practice and the voluminous sprawl of potential raw material for the archive. As a branch within a larger institution where space and resources were at a premium, defining criteria of selection was essential for prioritizing how space was used and how resources were requested and allocated. Arguing that mass communications would soon be a growing research trend was balanced with how materials were to be judged for their historical value in the long run. Thus, the favored discourses that governed criteria of selection were the ones favored by the archivist and academic communities.

For utilitarian purposes, television was discussed as broadcasting media to encompass the careers and output of journalists and news analysts whose careers included a combination of newspapers, radio, and television.³⁸ A journalist who worked in radio or television was identified as broadcast-press.³⁹ Television was a commercial enterprise the archivists discussed broadcast networks or pursued donations from “allied fields” like public relations and advertising.⁴⁰ Television was instrumental for public opinion as demonstrated by an interest in acquiring the papers of A.C. Nielsen. Absent were the ways in which television was popular culture or entertainment. There was little discussion about television, as it may exist in archival or disciplinary categories, which

³⁸ Kaiser, “Annual Report MCHC.”

³⁹ “Status Report National Advisory Council.”

⁴⁰ MCHC, “Brochure.”

could qualify television as artistic, literary, and creative achievements or processes. How the archivists could imagine and distinguish television was essential in facilitating pathways to the archive. The process of definition was integral to formalizing a process of selection. The archivists had enough trouble figuring out mass communications, let alone television as its newest component. It was about a year into the MCHC's operations that the question was raised – what is mass communications? The excitement of starting a new collecting effort eclipsed the very necessary step in defining the scope of the endeavor. The following sections illustrate how the people involved with the MCHC debated definitions that would guide the next stages of the archive's formation.

The Trouble with Defining Mass Communications

The purpose of an archival and research center to collect the “raw materials” of mass communications history was an appealing notion. Many materials could coalesce to form a substantial foundation for such a center, one that would be an essential place to visit when pursuing studies in the emerging field of mass communications.⁴¹ The individuals ensconced in MCHC's construction grappled with the very questions that we commonly associate with academic study: What *is* mass communications? How is it to be understood? Is it a field of study? Is it something that is better understood as distinct areas? What are the industries and practices involved? More important were the questions endemic to the archival world –what are the raw materials and “how extensively and intensively does the Society plan to collect within each field of mass communications?”⁴²

⁴¹ “Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee.”

⁴² Barbara Kaiser and AES, JH, BHW, PV, Memo, September 25, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

The Mass Communication History Center did not emerge in a vacuum. The 1950s was a period of growth for the study of mass communications, both in academia and in the industry (and not mutually exclusive, either). As one article about the MCHC's efforts puts it, "a considerable amount of research has been done on the methodology, techniques and impact of current communications media. So far, the historical aspect of the rise and development of mass communications has not been examined except in fragmentary ways."⁴³ There was just cause to form such an archive. However, the task to archive mass communication was expansive and overwhelming. How could an archive take on the project of assembling the raw materials of mass communications when there was debate about what it was?

The MCHC had been in operation for about a year, but the definition of mass communications was still rather amorphous and unclear for the purposes of developing a collection policy. In a staff meeting, the Society's Chief Librarian, Ben Wilcox, succinctly posed the problem that undergirded the tight connection between delineating definitions and archival practice:

Have we ever defined what mass communications is? Why was it so defined (omitting such areas as books and including theatre and cinema)? Are we actually entering the separate areas of advertising, public relations, etc. and using the term mass communications just for promotion? If so, our task is more than gigantic.⁴⁴

This sentiment reflected the Center's growth in obtaining manuscript collections, but somewhat haphazardly. Those who advocated for the Center who were not archivists, namely Kaltenborn and speech department faculty, were invested in securing manuscript

⁴³ "State Society Receives Grant," *History News*, September 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

⁴⁴ "Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee."

collections that aligned with their interests (e.g. the press, public relations, and theater). The dedication of non-archivists were an essential part of the Center's purpose and collecting process. That said, their active involvement resulted in a somewhat lopsided representation of mass communications. Besides, such lopsided growth also posed existential questions.

Questionable Grounds for a National-Oriented Center

The Kaltenborn donation not only catalyzed the MCHC, but also discussions about the merits of the types of materials that his collection included. To indicate the complexities brought on by his donation, Wilcox reflected that Kaltenborn's

‘papers’ were not the usual collection of ‘personal’ papers, rather there were files of ‘fan’ letters, transcripts of broadcasts, and other material related to the business of a noted ‘broadcaster.’⁴⁵

The Chief Librarian's use of quotes suggests an uncertainty concerning the use value of materials associated with a relatively new profession, the “broadcaster.” The contents of this collection troubled conventional notions of historical evidence and their utility, especially the “fan” letters. Despite the ambiguity regarding the “new” records and their value, Wilcox noted that the collection was comprehensive and Kaltenborn was a famous Wisconsinite, which merited inclusion in the archive. Furthermore, it was hard to deny that a *news* broadcaster's manuscript collection reflected “a vital period both in national history and in the development of radio and television.”⁴⁶ Still, Kaltenborn's materials tended to be paper based, hence, not far off from other sorts of materials

⁴⁵ Benton H. Wilcox, “Staff Proposals for Collection Policy,” 7.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

typically collected by a historical society such as correspondence, journals, and business records. Thus a precedent was established: broadcast materials were of historic and research merit given fame, perspectives on American history (but still an authoritative view on history as a credentialed journalist), and/or the technological and commercial development of mass media as seen from a prominent position of power.

In soliciting staff proposals for a unified collection policy at the Society, including one specific to the MCHC, Wilcox was careful in managing the balance between an obligation to the state and the University, especially as it related to the dispersal of resources. Although, the balance of priorities tipped towards the Society's obligation as an institution entrusted with the preservation of state history. The Kaltenborn donation certainly fulfilled both imperatives, but spawned an area of specialized collecting that required substantial resources and troubled existing archival principles of selection and assessing materials for historical and research value. While Wilcox could not argue against the Kaltenborn collection, he had his doubts about the MCHC:

It would be difficult to quarrel with the original decision to accept and save the Kaltenborn papers... He was a Wisconsin man; he was the first radio newscaster of national stature; he has had a long and distinguished career; and his records are remarkably complete and well organized. As an example, as well as because of the person, they constitute a remarkable collection. The mistake has been in permitting this to open the door to the collection of similar material that can be had, without any discrimination. We began with newscasters, branched out to journalists, then to PR men in general, and now we are seeking the accumulate records of all the broadcasting corporations... And we expect the state to come through with the financial support for implementing these plans. On what grounds do we expect such state support?⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13–14. Emphasis in original.

This perspective represents the dissenting points regarding the legitimacy of a nationally oriented research center housed within a state institution. If the Society was invested in a comprehensive and national archive of mass communications, then it was necessary to have a firmer sense of what mass communications meant and what “obligation the Society has in regard to mass communications.”⁴⁸ The Society leadership could eloquently speak about the promises and merits of such a center. Pragmatically though, it was difficult to pursue a well-informed collecting policy without clearer directions. Wilcox even recommended that the MCHC’s work should stop indefinitely while they evaluate whether such a center had scholarly interest, assess the strains on existing resources, and especially work to limit the collecting scope when defining mass communications. Wilcox personally thought that the MCHC had “little value to the University community, [and] little intrinsic research importance.”⁴⁹ His perspective was rooted in the notion that the Society operated more in the antiquarian tradition and reflected the overall lack of interest in the academic community to pursue historical studies of modern media. Nevertheless, he participated in staff discussions about the task he recommended – defining mass communications. The next section addresses the archivists’ internal struggles to ascertain the scope of mass communications and its historicity.

Mass Communications as Defined by Archivists

Les Fishel (the Society director) and Barbara Kaiser (the MCHC director) were thoroughly invested in the merits of the MCHC, confident in the Center’s significance,

⁴⁸ “Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee.”

⁴⁹ “Staff Proposals for Collection Policy.”, 14.

and aware of nascent faculty interest. Nevertheless, Wilcox had a fair point. Fishel pointed out that the Society understood the areas of mass communications along the lines of the National Advisory Council and as outlined in the MCHC brochure.⁵⁰ De facto, it was a mix of press, broadcast (radio and television), public opinion measurement, advertising, public relations, (which were collectively understood as allied fields) and motion pictures-theater.⁵¹ However, that did not solve the present problem of how to precisely define mass communications for the purposes of a collections policy.

There were two interrelated responsibilities for the archivists to determine: the task of definition and the task of selection. The Center's purpose, as derived from professional archival principles, was to "acquire **selective** and **representative** collections which provide research materials on all facets of the development of mass communications media."⁵² The conundrum was that in order to know what to select and what was representative, one must know the facets of mass communications. Consequently, the work to define mass communications involved conceptualizations of television, thereby establishing frameworks for qualifying television as historical and archival. To a degree, the archivists already designated a number of conceptual frameworks that undergirded the selection of materials – the discourses discussed in the previous section regarding the Fourth Estate, democracy, and industrialism. However, it was important for the Society archivists to define mass communications in terms that

⁵⁰ "Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee."

⁵¹ MCHC, "Brochure."

⁵² Kaiser, "Annual Report MCHC," 4. Emphasis added.

were endemic to the field and were perhaps a bit more philosophical about what mass communications meant in postwar America.

Several people on staff took a shot at defining mass communications. As a result, they helped to shape the types of materials flagged as priorities and representative of mass communications. The common conception of mass communications was rooted in the dissemination of ideas and information, regardless of medium. Mass identified the reach, with recent mass media as exemplars of the exponentially growing ability to communicate ideas and information. That was what made mass communications remarkable and a worthwhile endeavor for the archive.⁵³ Mass communications was deeply integrated into social, political, and economic life. Taking a holistic approach to collecting, the raw materials of mass communication invariably interacted with the Society's other strengths, especially business and social movements. Thus, mass communications was conceptualized along multiple dimensions and interdisciplinary uses. For instance, one Society archivist broke down mass communications into facets of industry (corporate structure), technical aspects, art (art of creative production and art of "shaping mens [sic] minds"), regulation, and channels used to promote particular ideologies.⁵⁴

They all agreed that television was vital, even if it was not the most salient of mass media. The archivists' memos concerning mass communications demonstrated that their notions were steeped in a transmission model of communication, which were most

⁵³ JLH to BK, April 26, 1961, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1961, WHS.

⁵⁴ Ben Wilcox to Les Fishel, Memorandum with Diagram, October 09, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

likely influenced by contemporary research trends about public opinion and media effects. Their conceptualizations also demonstrated a sensibility attuned to the complexities of mass media as industries, technologies, and institutions entrenched in capitalist and democratic enterprises. Given their expertise in evaluating materials for historical value, the archivists also honed in on the products of mass media, especially broadcast programs, as historical records. These discussions represented the archivists' efforts to prepare for their next stage in defining mass communications, and hence, their collecting scope – a conference precisely on the subject of determining what *mass communications* was and what made up its raw materials for historical study.

Seeking Help: A Conference to Define Mass Communications and Its Study

Recognizing the expansive archival task, the MCHC sought help to “know the direction which our future collecting should follow, to determine the areas where research is most needed and desired”⁵⁵ They turned to the Rockefeller Foundation, which was a philanthropic institution familiar with mass communications, and pitched a proposal. The goal was to invite “a number of 20th Century historians – political, economic, social – and perhaps some men in the industry to discuss mass communications and attempt to ‘conceptualize’ the field.”⁵⁶ Successfully funded, Kaiser and her colleagues identified the leading mass communication specialists of the day: Paul Lazarsfeld, Harold Lasswell, and Wilbur Schramm, the three “pioneers” in mass communications research spanning from sociological effects to propaganda to the processes of transmitting information. The MCHC archivists also had the foresight to

⁵⁵ Kaiser, “Annual Report MCHC,” 5.

⁵⁶ “Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee,” March 19, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

invite Gilbert Seldes, who was the only one with intimate knowledge of television, especially entertainment, which stemmed from his roles in the industry, as a critic, and as a professor. Also invited was another professor, Samuel Becker, who directed television research at the University of Iowa. The archivists approached historians who had an interest in social and cultural history as well as those with knowledge of mass media history. For instance, Fred Siebert participated in the conference, was notable for his role in the recently published *Four Theories of the Press*, as well as David Potter, who developed a specialty in advertising and social history.⁵⁷

To facilitate the conference, the archivists prepared working papers with the intention to set the contours of discussion and provide foundational knowledge about the Center, its collections, and its purpose. At the outset, mass communications was rooted in Lasswell's formulation: "who says what to whom through what medium with what result."⁵⁸ This formulation proved useful in organizing the disparate corners of mass communications, pulling together journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, film, and public opinion measurement into more manageable categories of communicators, content, medium, audience, and effects. It was evident that mass communications was first and foremost an interdisciplinary effort. It cut across institutions and departments as well as types of histories and academic pursuits.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ "List of Proposed Participants," c 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

⁵⁸ "Working Papers," 4.

⁵⁹ "Working Papers"; Les Fishel, "MCHC Conference Summary," April 1960, Office Files (unprocessed), Mass Communication History (Background), Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

As the conference proceeded, there was a firm sense that the raw materials of mass communications (whatever they might be) most certainly conveyed data essential for historical studies, be it political, economic, technological, social, and/or cultural. The participants also agreed that mass communications presented and interpreted vernacular history by way of documentaries, oral histories, and so on. Five areas were identified for the historical study of mass communications, although still broadly conceived: structural developments, policy developments, “new media as art forms,” effects (as well as a parallel intellectual history on the development of media effects research), and vernacular history as seen through media such as documentaries and contemporary interpretations. The participants tried to rate these areas in an “order of priority of importance for the history of mass communications,” but they agreed that each area deserved attention depending on who was researching and for what purpose.⁶⁰

The participants agreed on three issues. The first account was that the papers of journalists already fit within the history field, even more so when understood as observers of history-in-the-making (and thus needed little discussion during the conference). The second was that motion pictures were beyond the Center’s scope and resources (which also did not need further discussion). Finally, the field of public relations and advertising integrated within mass communication so well and the broadcast media context, which was thus fair grounds for a collecting scope.⁶¹ By process of elimination, television and radio were the cornerstones in broadly conceptualizing mass communications and the challenges in securing broadcast history within an archive.

⁶⁰ Fishel, “MCHC Conference Summary,” 9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 10–12.

The Implicit Problems in Archiving Television and Its Study

While the conference summary rarely made explicit reference to television as a sustained subject of discussion, television was indeed at the forefront of the conference participants' grappling with mass communications history. References to television appeared as coded language and concerns. An industry representative advocated for archiving electronic media for its aesthetic value that can be appreciated in future decades because of the contemporary tendency to "bewai[l] the mediocrity of programs."⁶² There was an emphasis on preserving mass media for the purposes of cultural and social histories, given that mass media interacts with popular culture, social relations, and political life. The participants never quite said 'television,' but they explicitly indicated an interest in "the study of program-content, the impact of mass media on American culture and vice versa, the decision-making process in the mass media, and the province of the cultural historian."⁶³ These facets may certainly be relevant for other aspects of mass communications, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio. However, it was with television that concerns of content, impact, and the behind-the-scenes dealings of mass media as institutions integrated into the broader social systems were most poignant. Furthermore, The concern with the newness of mass media to convey a vast swath of data (or what they called "bulk") previously not known by newspapers indicates the most pervasive mass medium of the day – television – was on their minds.

The need to archive television might not have been urgent, as the participants agreed regarding the urgency to archive radio and stave off the rapid loss of paper records,

⁶² Ibid., 4.

⁶³ Ibid., 7.

audio recordings, and knowledgeable people. However, envisioning television (and radio) as the raw materials of history troubled the methods of history and archives. How might fan letters be used? Or business records of a media institution? How to know which business records were a waste of space or significant? Or most vexing to historians, how might programs be used? For example, the historians at the conference were not convinced that “program content could be usable, presumably since the techniques of history had not yet developed to the point where this type of data was functional.”⁶⁴

An oft-repeated concern was that of sampling, a term used by the social scientists, which was also integrated into the archival process. Surely the archive could not collect everything in mass communications. While that was the ideal for historians and social scientists, the archive was not physically capable of such a task. They recognized that it was imperative to find “methods which could preserve essential data for future historians without overburdening collecting institutions with unsortable masses.”⁶⁵ This question of sampling and scope divided the participants into their disciplinary boundaries. Historians wanted everything available, with no prejudice in the selection process, allowing them to sift and winnow. It was their craft and discretion to determine a document’s significance; even if contemporary historians did not see the value, there was faith that future historians might. While the historians were more comfortable with institutional histories (meaning, supporting the acquisition of the media industries’ institutional records), current trends in the history profession also made room for cultural and social histories that could draw on mass media content and processes for rich, bottom-up

⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 3.

histories. The historians present at the conference accepted the inevitability of incompleteness of records but hesitated at the insistence for sampling methods.

The social scientists pressed for sampling – citing expertise in sampling techniques when presented with seemingly unlimited data such as television programming. Additionally, they argued that librarians have been sampling newspapers for a long time, with epistemological consequences when “poorer” quality newspapers like tabloids were not preserved and therefore not used for scholarly research.⁶⁶ They also insisted on a sampling method that collected everything available around a topic so as to have suitable data sets for modeling. For instance, one approach could collect a week’s worth of program content and documentation from one station in a particular geographic area, or another approach could focus on a topic like race relations.⁶⁷

In all of these instances, there was little mention of particularities; attention mostly focused on the abstractions of structuring the archive and implications of selection. The participants expressed concerns about their fears of losing data about innovation (specifically, technological innovations), lack of historical continuity, or missing the preambles to issues in the making. In these abstractions, participants seemed to be talking more about the problems specific to television and radio, such as capturing “transient” programming and selecting the best *and* mediocre and poor programming, rather than the problems in selecting paper materials or identifying sources.⁶⁸ Perhaps the most concrete

⁶⁶ Ibid., 4, 8.

⁶⁷ Wilcox to Fishel, October 09, 1959.

⁶⁸ Fishel, “MCHC Conference Summary,” 8.

sentiment arising from their abstract concerns was the suggestion that “all radio and television records before, say 1950, on paper, wax and tape be preserved immediately and indiscriminately.”⁶⁹ While these materials seemed to be ubiquitous, they would soon be scarce as they disintegrated or were destroyed by networks needing space for the most current material. Despite such awareness, reasons to save broadcast records (programs and documentation) and its future uses were still quite abstract.

Overall, the conferees vocalized one of the central principles guiding archival practice – anticipate future research needs and uses. How might an archive be able to determine the raw materials for future study? Lazarsfeld even wondered whether mass communications was “historical enough for the Historical Society.”⁷⁰ Typically, it was not the task of historians and social scientists to consider what of the present should be saved for the future; one must have the imagination to anticipate future uses, let alone using non-conventional materials as primary sources for historical inquiry. Printed works of mass communications, especially the newspaper, had long been essential, or as Robert C. Wade (historian and urban studies) put it, “no one would think of writing the history of the past two centuries without a heavy reliance on newspapers.”⁷¹ Perhaps it was only a matter of time and increased cognition that radio and television were just as essential. Reflecting on the conference, Les Fishel, the Society’s Director, noted that historical societies were in the ideal position to collect the records of *local* radio and television stations. He further pointed out that no one else might collect these records, whose

⁶⁹ Fishel, “The Massive Field of Mass Communications History,” 3.

⁷⁰ Fishel, “MCHC Conference Summary,” 7.

⁷¹ Mass Communication History Conference, “Ideas About History of Mass Communication,” April 07, 1960, 6, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

“historic value is still untried, but it is a safe guess that historians will soon turn seriously to study these media.”⁷²

The fact that radio and television were ephemeral and largely electronic, rather than tangible and print based, made it especially difficult to consider its uses in parallel lines to the newspaper. Gilbert Seldes reflected that radio broadcasts and silent newsreels might have been acceptable as secondary sources in an era when print media dominated, but “the coming of sound to the movies and of kinescopes and tape to television provides primary material – of which some historians of our time have not availed themselves.”⁷³ Archivist and academics alike observed that broadcast records would increasingly be of historic value, in spite of the obstacles. It was also evident that the conference participants were fixated with a major problem that we still grapple with today – volumes and volumes of data. In an era of not only mounting paperwork and documentation, but also fragile media conveying audio and audio-visual data (e.g. wax cylinders, acetate discs, film, magnetic tape, etc.), it was essential to identify selection criteria as well as strategies for dealing with the technologically-dependent data. The conference resolved the concern about substantial interest in a mass communications archive, but it did not offer firm structures that could guide selection and acquisition of mass communications’ raw materials. That task was mostly left up to the professionalized practices of the archivists. The following section examines the archival process and how the traditional academic archive dealt with mass communications in general and television’s material traces in particular.

⁷² Fishel, “The Massive Field of Mass Communications History,” 5–6.

⁷³ Mass Communication History Conference, “Ideas About History of Mass Communication.”

Archiving the Raw Materials of Mass Communications

In the formation of an archive, a collecting policy guides “purposeful acquisition as opposed to haphazard accumulations of materials.”⁷⁴ The driving principle for the MCHC was the aspiration to “acquire one reasonably complete collection in each area which would be representative and significant enough so that researchers going into a history of a particular field would have to use our resources.”⁷⁵ As such, the MCHC would be the go-to center for the emerging field interest in mass communications history. Such a vision necessarily required a delineation of areas in order to execute purposeful acquisition.

As evidenced by internal memos and the summaries of the conference, this project of delineation was a difficult subject. Although, the archivists identified two easy target areas to pursue: the press and the business of mass media. A focus on the press, including the papers of broadcast journalists, required little in the way of selection criteria for locating donors other than substantive documentation and some level of notoriety or longevity as a journalist. The business of media was essential to collect, which also included the technological experiments and regulation. There was little question as to the scholarly value in institutional records “revealing of the minds of the executive at work in making decision.”⁷⁶ In both cases, these types of collections contained “conventional” manuscript materials such as business records, correspondence, and diaries. However, the

⁷⁴ Benton H. Wilcox, “Staff Proposals for a Collection Policy,” 1.

⁷⁵ “Meeting of MCHC Staff Committee.”

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

dimensions of broadcast media brought on new challenges to the types of materials typically found in archives.

As if figuring out how to fulfill a mission for representativeness across the mass communications field was not enough, the archivists faced a venture into new territory. The selection and appraisal of broadcast-related material was mostly a new category of historical materials. This included material such as “radio and television scripts, unpublished news dispatches, recordings, tapes, photographs... fan mail, personal correspondence, promotional files, unpublished minutes, reports and organizations files of the communications industry.” The archivists knew that they had “accumulated a wealth of raw material but [their] successes have also revealed that there are still many untapped resources.”⁷⁷

It was fortunate that the SHSW and the MCHC had Paul Vanderbilt as part of the team to determine criteria. His insights were beneficial in at least two ways. One, as the head of the iconographic division (the visuals), he had liberal perspectives about the uses of visual material, often which were ephemeral such as postcards. He understood that while today’s historians might not see value in visual ephemera, someday someone would.⁷⁸ Two, he was rather philosophical when contributing to discussions regarding the direction of the MCHC and the principles of selection. With the problems of space and limited labor, he advocated for selection criteria rooted in “quality.” He did not mean quality as in the evaluation of materials for their significance and importance, which he

⁷⁷ “Working Papers,” 5.

⁷⁸ See the “Abstract and Summary” in the Visual and Sound Resources in the Audio-Visual Archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, c 1975, Collections Policies 1975 Folder, Box 5, SHSW, Division of Archives & Research Services, Administrative Subject File of the State Archivist, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

argued was up to the “talents of the researcher.” Rather, quality meant applying the following three factors to individual documents or to a series: is it factually substantive, is it representative of a cohesive structure, and does it aesthetically reflect “the ‘feel’ of the actuality which produced it, in temper, tempo, personality and means – by its language, or craftsmanship (or lack there of), or paper, typography, design, or manner of execution.”⁷⁹ Thus, he proposed, researchers will be able to make their own judgments, with the MCHC as facilitators. His sentiments, however, were mitigated by the material constraints placed on an institution dealing with volumes upon volumes of documents and materials that had to be efficiently processed by a small staff and stored in limited spaces. With this perspective in mind, the following examines the establishment of scope and selection criteria as it related to the Mass Communications History Center.

Determining Criteria of Selection and Scope

As noted earlier, the Society’s chief library was distributed by the MCHC’s unwieldy collection policy, or lack there of. Specifically, Wilcox raised alarm concerning the snowball type of collecting, where one collection leads to another until the archive has accumulated far beyond its means and scope. Such a perspective was warranted, especially given the center’s trajectory.

In the conference working papers, the archivists explained the Center’s development, “we agreed that initially we would concentrate upon collecting the papers of radio news analysts, and if the related University Departments were sufficiently interested, we would think in terms of establishing a basic collection in twentieth century

⁷⁹ Vanderbilt to Kaiser and Fishel, Oct 12, 1959, 2-3.

mass communications.”⁸⁰ Indeed there was an interest, which resulted in the stream of unwieldy collecting that threatened Society resources and integrity. Moreover, evidence suggests that the archivists, per the Speech Department’s requests, envisioned their collecting scope even beyond broadcast as news or as networks (and stations), and into “the historical development of art forms and program types such as radio drama, the comedy-variety show and the religious broadcast.”⁸¹ Given the protest that the MCHC had too much sprawl, initial interest in chronicling the development of program types receded to the background as news, public relations (thanks to the active faculty), and more “conventional” history topics such as politics, labor, industries, and social institutions rose to the top of the collecting hierarchy. Clearly there was a need for established criteria. The only area that seemed to be certain, at least from the start, was criteria for journalists. These were identified as “length of time the analyst had been broadcasting, the extensiveness of his audience, and his apparent influence and reputation.”⁸² Additionally, the make up of the National Advisory Council was another avenue for selecting potential donors, a system relying on personal connections and notoriety.

As evidenced by the conference proceedings, the archivists reached a stronger understanding as to what constituted mass communications and the types of materials of interest to scholars. Two points were certain: collect for a representative picture of *all* of

⁸⁰ “Working Papers,” 7. The Working Papers for the conference were a source of information that seemed to be a bit more transparent regarding the MCHC’s development, as opposed to their development as told via publicity and news articles.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 8.

mass communications (determined to include the press, radio, television, motion pictures, advertising, public relations, audience measurement, and organizations involved with media such as advocacy, policy, and trade groups) and strategically sample documents and materials so as not to overwhelm the Society resources. They had to balance *research value*, a notion that can be understood in concert with archival principles to select materials for future use, with the sheer bulk and volume of materials. This latter point was especially pertinent for business records. How the archivists dealt with the selection of this type of records can be instructive for other types of records. The evaluation of records for their significance, representativeness, and quality (in Vanderbilt's sense of quality, discussed earlier) was an archival process that can be applied across the spectrum of record types. The archivists' correspondence and memos regarding the acquisition of institutional records provides the most comprehensive documentary traces about the archival process. The following two sections illustrate the archival process using business records, with the NBC acquisition as a case study.

The Challenges with Modern Day Business Records

Before even dealing with the non-print broadcast materials, the archivists had to determine criteria for selecting the mounting volumes of paperwork generated by modern-day business. As discussed in the literature review, the professionalization of archives included the scientific management of records under a paradigm that advocated for systematic records disposal and retaining only the "important" documents.⁸³ The

⁸³ For example, NBC had a plan for selecting and safeguarding records in the face of a disaster, specifically a nuclear disaster. See Francis Fullam, "Vital Records Protection Program," July 03, 1963, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, Press Releases, Etc., WHS.

records of mass communications history were in effect a “*type of modern business records*. . . . they are (1) massive in quantity, (2) predominantly of routine character, and (3) of very low grade research potential.”⁸⁴ If it were up to the Society’s Chief Librarian, then certainly these obstacles would be too great a hurdle and too great of a drain on limited resources, resulting in missed opportunities.

For Kaiser, these obstacles were welcome challenges, requiring solutions so that the Center might have a chance to succeed. The answers were not clear, but she did offer these questions about selection as part of her proposal for the MCMC collecting policy:

With the broadcasting industry: do we collect the available records of every commercial station, every major network, or do we solicit records which will be representative of the development of the independent commercial station, the development of a major network?⁸⁵

It was not a question of “should we” or “shouldn’t we.” Rather, Kaiser and her colleagues sought input regarding how to achieve representativeness across the mass communications ecosystem. Central to that system were “network and organizational records.”⁸⁶ The interest in pursuing these sorts of records was also based on one of the conference participant’s recommendations to pursue records related to the structure of a network and its policies.⁸⁷ Accordingly, the archives of a broadcast network were an ideal component for an archive dedicated to collecting the raw materials of mass communications history.

⁸⁴ Ben Wilcox, “Staff Proposals for Collection Policy,” 13.

⁸⁵ Barbara Kaiser, “Staff Proposals for Collection Policy,” 23.

⁸⁶ Donald McNeil to Fred Harrington, February 20, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

⁸⁷ “NBC Records to Date,” September 10, 1960, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1959-1960, WHS.

NBC, “The Most Ambitious Undertaking”

As the only network with publicly accessible and researcher-friendly archives (and not just in Madison, but also the Library of Congress and David Sarnoff’s archives), NBC’s records provide raw materials for analyzing administrative structures, executive decisions, programming files, technological development, audience reaction, and policy intervention. In the 1950s, no one was approaching the networks for their organizational files. The archivists at the Society understood how a modern institution operated in terms of record management, in that only documents essential to administration were kept while the rest were discarded as guided by a records destruction schedule. They approached NBC with this assumption, asking to examine discarded administrative records and other organizational materials and select those with that will be “useful for historic purposes.”⁸⁸

The NBC institutional archive (the records collectively known as their archive) included organizational, administrative, and programmatic files as well as audio and moving image material. Such an archive within a larger archiving institution demanded tremendous resources, but came with great rewards. The NBC records illuminated industry practices, network decisions, relationships with politicians, advertisers, public opinion / audience measurement, the creative process, and more. Most importantly, the records offered the first effort to *systematically* archive television. It was not necessarily the Society’s intention to document television as a specific object of study, rather they were interested in archiving the business and structures associated with mass

⁸⁸ Clifford Lord to C.K. Sullivan, March 10, 1958, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1957-1958, Wisconsin Historical Society.

communications. The major broadcast network was an exemplary institution of mass communications, thereby an ideal choice to draw into the archive.

Kaiser wrote of the NBC arrangement as “the most ambitious undertaking” due to the sheer volume of materials that the Society had to sift through and process.⁸⁹ Early in 1959, the MCHC had “received two shipments from NBC comprising 116 boxes of paper records and five crates of recordings,” with 51 boxes and over 16,000 recordings on the way for screening by the archivists.⁹⁰ These files and recordings represented decades of technological experimentation, station and network management, and the breadth of network programming spanning across radio *and* television. At first, the volume of materials did not seem to concern Kaiser. She noted in the 1959 Annual Report:

our first experience in collecting the records of a large communications industry has given us valuable information about the kinds of material which are available and the type of records which should be permanently preserved. This pilot project with NBC has worked out so satisfactorily that we have now approached the Columbia Broadcasting System and secured to its permission to make a survey of the records in its offices and warehouse and submit a proposal similar to our arrangement with NBC. We have also had preliminary talks with several officers of the American Broadcasting Company.⁹¹

Initially, representativeness meant collecting records across the mass communications industries. The arrangement with NBC was so promising that Kaiser was optimistic about the negotiations with ABC and CBS. We know that such arrangements never did come to fruition. Perhaps the authorities at the Society determined that the drain on resources far outweighed the benefits of securing three networks rather than one network as

⁸⁹ Kaiser, “Annual Report MCHC.”

⁹⁰ McNeil to Harrington, February 20, 1959.

⁹¹ Kaiser, “Annual Report MCHC,” 4.

representative of the industry. NBC was already a labor intensive and voluminous collection. Kaiser noted that if the ABC and CBS negotiations were successful, than that would “triple the amount of material from major networks along,” and thus triple the resources.⁹² It was also feasible that neither network was interested in the type of arrangement made by NBC with the Society. Thus, the Society accepted the notion that one major mass communications institutions – NBC – would be representative of the whole industry.

The NBC materials started coming into the Society just as the Mass Communications History Center officially formed. Over the next decade, NBC continued to send more boxes of office files, scripts, audio reels, films, tapes, and more. Drawing on the MCHC internal files concerning the NBC acquisition, the process can be described as follows. The relationship started sometime in 1957 or so, most likely brokered by H.V. Kaltenborn’s connections with NBC executives. As noted, NBC operated with a records destruction schedule, designating certain files as non-current and non-essential every five to ten years and slated for the incinerator. Generally, this included executive files, memos, correspondence, receipts, legal documents, advertising, promotional files, public affairs, and other types of business files as well as programming logs, station logs, scripts, and other files related to radio and television broadcasting. Communicating mostly with the NBC lawyer and the Central Files Office, NBC accepted the arrangement. From that point, Ruth Preston of the Central Files Offices regularly sent Barbara Kaiser letters informing her which files were up for destruction and open for Society selection.

⁹² Kaiser, “Staff Proposals for Collection Policy,” 24.

The Society was offered a generous array of record groups. It is important to keep in mind that the first stage of selection occurred within NBC. The network did not send *all* their documents to the Society. NBC self-selected and identified the documents that were not confidential or necessary for current operations. Even records already marked as “inactive,” such as executive files, could still be held within the NBC institutional archives.⁹³ Many of the early NBC correspondence and departmental files were legally out of reach to the Society in the early 1960s because of litigation (a lawsuit filed by Philco against NBC).⁹⁴ Even so, the Society had access to all sorts of institutional records. NBC provided lists containing a variety of record groups (such as advertising and promotions, programming, operations, engineering, etc.), television scripts, station logs, and occasionally recordings of radio and television programs that were slated for destruction.⁹⁵ Kaiser and Fishel were in frequent communication with their point persons at NBC. Fishel corresponded mostly with NBC’s lawyer overseeing records destruction and donation to the Society. Kaiser corresponded every few months with Ruth Peterson who was in charge of NBC Central Files Office. They would correspond about which records were ready for destruction and which records the Society was interested in evaluating for acquisition. For example, NBC sent executive records from the following divisions in mid 1960 (which totaled 32 cartons): General Music Director, NBC Owned Stations, Public Affairs, Radio Programs, TV Network Programs (mostly associated with

⁹³ Ruth Preston to Donald McNeil, May 29, 1959, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1959-1960, WHS.

⁹⁴ Francis Fullum to Barbara Kaiser, May 17, 1962, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1961-1962, WHS.; Following the lawsuit, Fullum did open up the files for the Society.

⁹⁵ For example: “NBC Record Groups - First Shipment,” c. 1958, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1957-1958, WHS. There are many more examples in the chronologically ordered files in Box 4.

the show, *Producers Showcase*), WRCA-TV (station and program manager files), National Advertising and Promotion, News, and Press (public relations files).⁹⁶

The Society could not take everything; the Mass Communications History Center was not solely devoted to NBC and was still focused on acquiring collections from across the mass communications spectrum. A method of selection was crucial to achieving representativeness that balanced researcher needs with Society resources. Reflecting on the NBC records in late 1960, Kaiser noted “prior to screening, the paper records would have filled 525 archive boxes....the records which were retained fill 202 archive boxes.”⁹⁷ A systematic approach to weeding out redundant, routine, and marginal documents was essential to the task of paring down the massive NBC archive.

There were four factors that aided the process. One, NBC provided documents that aided in organizing the records as well making judgments about the historical value of records. By outlining the different divisions, such as the executive office, the artists’ services department, the legal department, and the program department (to name just a few) as well as the individual executives under each department, the archivists had guidance on how to organize the massive volume of data.⁹⁸ For example, key departments to acquire were Program, Sales, and General Management, whose responsibilities include business affairs, talent and program administration, and

⁹⁶ Ruth Preston to Barbara Kaiser, April 19, 1960, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1961-1962, WHS.

⁹⁷ “NBC Records to Date.”

⁹⁸ “Resume of the NBC Operation,” March 30, 1962, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1961-1962, WHS.

operations and engineering.⁹⁹ Two, Kaiser often relied on the expertise of the speech department professors who taught classes on radio and television production.¹⁰⁰ These professors would mostly help select scripts, programming logs, and other materials that might aid instruction. Three, Kaiser heeded the advice of Ruth Preston, the NBC point person for record destruction with intimate knowledge about NBC operations. For instance, she recommended that Kaiser take all the files of a long time NBC executive who was known to keep extensive records and another executive whose files could illuminate sales operations.¹⁰¹ Four, the archivists had their professional training to help guide how to process such a massive and complex collection. Maintaining the original organization of NBC's internal filing system was crucial for the archival principle of provenance. As such, records were kept according to NBC's institutional structure, including original folders used by NBC. Archival training also offered an inherent logic for prioritizing records. The recommended priorities were to

Save policy materials, research materials, materials on a particular project (such as television, a 'spectacular') and other materials which are obviously meaningful. Throw technical details, such as time scheduling, use of studios, etc. and meaningless memos, letters, etc. A rule of thumb: If the materials means anything significant to you, keep it; if it does not, throw it.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Barbara Kaiser, "Organization of NBC," March 1965, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1963-1964-1965, WHS.

¹⁰⁰ Specifically, Ness Ordean examined radio scripts and other materials that he thought would be appropriate for teaching radio and television writing. Similarly, Jim McNeely would also consult on television scripts.

¹⁰¹ Barbara Kaiser, "Files Selected from NBC Records on March, 1965 Trip," March 22, 1965, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1963-1964-1965, WHS.

¹⁰² "Directions for Integrating New Material into the NBC Collection," January 1966, Administrative Subject File of the State Archivist (1990/180), Box 3, Mass Communications History Center, WHS.

These priorities were the product of at least five years of experience with processing NBC records. Additionally, Kaiser articulated these for the integration of new materials into the already massive NBC collection. Leading up to this moment were a number of other factors that were implicit in processing NBC records for the MCHC.

A key element in evaluating records was to consider the MCHC's holdings holistically, looking for files in the vast NBC archives that mutually support existing or desired collections. For example, early on Kaiser flagged files related to H.V. Kaltenborn, RCA (which was a desired collection), National Association of Broadcasters, and the advertising agencies, BBDO and Young & Rubicam.¹⁰³ Kaiser also would select files associated with ratings, such as network files about Nielsen ratings and Crossley ratings, which would enhance the MCHC's strengths in audience measurement.¹⁰⁴ News and public affairs materials were prime materials to supplement the MCHC's substantial holdings related to journalism and news production.¹⁰⁵

Another key consideration was the extent to which records revealed the processes of a mass communications institution. For example, sale promotion files were valuable because those records "originated at a level at which some policy decisions affecting audience promotion were made."¹⁰⁶ By 1960, the NBC archives at the MCHC contained mostly records of Engineering, Public Relations, Network Operations, and the Owned

¹⁰³ BK to JH, "Re: Screening of NBC Records," Memo., February 02, 1959, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1957-1958, WHS.

¹⁰⁴ Barbara Kaiser, "Notes on NBC Materials Requested During Trip 9/21/70-10/2/70," Memo, October 1970, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1968-69-70-71, WHS.

¹⁰⁵ Barbara Kaiser, "NBC Executives in NBC Collections," May 1966, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1966-1967, WHS.

¹⁰⁶ "NBC Record Groups - First Shipment."

and Operated Stations. MCHC had yet to acquire the very desirable records from Management, Station Relations, Research, Comptroller, Legal, Personnel, and the Film Division. The Management Department, which included the President and Executive Vice Presidents, were “without a doubt to be the most valuable addition we could hope to attain.”¹⁰⁷ By the mid 1960s, MCHC acquired files from their desired departments. Twenty-five network executives were represented within the NBC archives, with an additional eleven manuscript collections of executives connected with NBC.¹⁰⁸

To further weed out the historically valuable from the marginal, the archivists developed valuations based on uniqueness, routine records, and saturation of record groups already well represented. Uniqueness meant that the selected files for archival preservation were the only sources for evidence. For example, the processing archivist flagged a group of records pertaining to television ad proofs because “this type of evidence is available in newspapers and magazines in the final form and... tends to show up in the reports from stations.”¹⁰⁹ The routine records were of marginal value. The archivist in charge of processing noted “one folder is not much different from another folder in the same group... It would appear that a random sampling of the folders in each group would be just as valuable as any selection based on any more elaborate scheme.”¹¹⁰ As such, files flagged for archival preservation could be capriciously weeded by whoever worked on the collection. Saturation for a record group, such as WRCA files, TV

¹⁰⁷ “NBC Records to Date.”

¹⁰⁸ Kaiser, “NBC Executives in NBC Collections.”

¹⁰⁹ “NBC Record Groups - First Shipment.”

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Network Programs, or Public Information Office, meant that the Society had enough files to convey a sense of what each department did in a given year. Overall, the archivists were attentive to executive files and records pertaining to the MCHC's discursively formed priorities. For example, in 1962, the processing archivist accepted half of the boxes sent by NBC, selecting mostly "real office files," fan mail for NBC's new anchor, Chet Huntley, and one box of radio and television scripts (mostly news).¹¹¹ In this case, the archivist privileged records that illuminated business dealings, journalism and media as public forum.

The process whereby NBC's Ruth Preston informed the Society which records were up for destruction and then the Society made their selection continued into the 1970s. The NBC archives at the MCHC swelled with files representing programming, operations, stations, and other administrative departments.¹¹² Toward the end of the decade, though, there was a shift in Society-NBC relations. In 1967, NBC amended the legal agreement with the Society. The Society could continue to acquire the same types of records, but now had to seal the records for ten years.¹¹³ This was a reasonable request. It was NBC's subsequent changes that began to chip away at the strength of the Society's NBC holdings.

To deal with the exponentially growing paperwork, Preston informed Kaiser that NBC was automating record destruction, which meant departments did not have to report

¹¹¹ "Resume of the NBC Operation."

¹¹² As evident in a various letters and memos in MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, Folders 1966-1967, 1968-69-70-71, and NBC '72.

¹¹³ SHSW to NBC, Re: Contract Change, January 23, 1967, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1966-1967, WHS.

to Central Files and more importantly, no lists of materials for the Society to use as selection guides.¹¹⁴ At least, Preston and Kaiser developed a close relationship by this point, so there were still channels for the Society to select desired materials. Next, NBC increasingly held correspondence and memos from the available scope of materials for the Society to consider. Fishel expressed concern to an NBC executive:

If these materials are withdrawn or destroyed, the integrity of the total collection is disturbed and in many instance, the basic substance is removed from particular files. This increases ...the risk that results of future research about NBC will be distorted.¹¹⁵

While it is unclear whether NBC's legal department reversed their decision, it was evident that the MCHC's access to executive files was decreasing. As will be discussed in the following chapter, it became increasingly difficult to acquire the sorts of materials illuminating institutional structures, executive decisions, and the minutiae of mass communications processes in the 1970s. The few examples from NBC illustrate why: tighter control from networks and shifting priorities from valuing the research potential of modern business records to guarding these records for legal and commercial reasons.

In sum, examining how the Society dealt with their most massive acquisition provides insights into their overall archival processes. Particularly, the NBC archives demonstrated the complexities involved in acquiring a collection and methods of selection. There were factors beyond the archivists' control, such as the donor's wishes, which for NBC meant legal restrictions and institutional mechanisms of selection. Other factors in the selection process were the contributions of individuals who guided what the

¹¹⁴ Ruth Preston to Barbara Kaiser, June 20, 1969, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1968-69-70-71, WHS.

¹¹⁵ Les Fishel to Thomas Ervin, January 13, 1969, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1968-69-70-71, WHS.

Society ought to consider and why. In this regard, NBC's Preston was one level of selection; her cordial relationship with Kaiser and the Society meant that Preston took time to alert the Society about the materials available for selection and even made recommendations. Likewise, speech department faculty, university administration, and active donors helped to shape what was collected and for what purpose. Another level of selection was the archivists' training and sense of purpose. The MCHC facilitated a space for archivists to define the significance in acquiring records of a major media institution and guidance for sampling techniques. Confident about their purpose and guided by possible future uses, Kaiser and her colleagues prioritized certain records over others. The scholarly community further aided the selection process, such as speech department professors recommending which scripts to select and growing graduate student interest in using NBC records, broadcast collections, and others for dissertations. The NBC acquisition spanned over a decade. In that time, the MCHC saw one of their primary objectives unfold: stimulating research in mass communications history, especially pursuing recent histories. In broadly collecting the records of a mass communications institution, the MCHC facilitated a wide array of research possibilities, including a growing area of study – television.

Identifying Television's Inclusion

Between the conference and the Mass Communications History Center's collecting policies, we can start tracing television's inclusion in the archive. More specifically, we can identify the ways that archivists (and in their capacity as surrogates for academics) justified television as archival and valued for its historical and cultural

dimensions. Patterns emerge regarding the discourses that enabled television's entrance into the archival setting. By discourse, I mean the ways the Society discussed and presented the MCHC and their archiving efforts, as well as coverage about the MCHC in newspaper stories and the broader academic and industry communities. As discussed earlier, the MCHC's brochure, newsletter, and press releases framed their endeavor to archive mass communications history in particular ways, such as emphasizing the journalistic and informational dimensions of broadcast media. Embedded in these discourses or rationales to pursue a particular collecting area, were valuations about television.

The overall framework for the MCHC and its role to amass the "raw materials" of history drew on three dominant discourses, or rationales, for archiving mass communications and thus, television. One discourse privileged the institution, with particular attention to documenting its internal structures as well as its centrality within a larger, functionalist system. The NBC records exemplify how television and its various facets entered the archive when the goal was to archive the institution. Another discourse was the Fourth Estate or the amorphous notion of the public good. In this case, these notions comprehensively refer to journalism, the informative function of the media in a democratic society, and the role of media as public opinion leaders. Lastly, and relatedly, was the discourse concerning the educational aspects and promises of television. Illustrating this connection was the acquisition of National Educational Television records. These discourses were not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, they supported one another. These were the dominant modes of thinking as the Society formed their new history center. In many ways, these were discourses that already had currency in archival

and academic contexts. The archivists did not need to construct alternative frameworks for accessioning television. Television already fit into these established notions of what was “worthy” for archival collecting and academic study. The following highlights each of these loosely defined discourses. Suffice to say, a consistent thread throughout the archivists’ actions was the pursuit to mostly archive television processes. In other words, the Society mostly pursued the acquisition of paper-based documentation concerning the industrial processes and societal functions of television as it was understood within the mass communications ontology.

The Institution

Collecting priorities emphasized institutional histories, something that historians and archivists were comfortable with already. As evidenced by the conference, the participants were quick to identify “business history of the mass media” as an essential area of research and archival collecting.¹¹⁶ Likewise, the institutional histories paired well with the pioneer discourse, especially as part of the conventional mode of historical inquiry about “Great Men.” It was clear that mass media was a major commercial institution – as well as social, cultural and political. Mass communications was as much about information (or content) as it was about *how* that information was produced, disseminated, and received. As such, the institutional lens included commercial enterprises (like the networks and public opinion measurement), government (specifically, FCC regulations), and what Barbara Kaiser called the “control” organizations such as the National Association of Broadcasters.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Fishel, “MCHC Conference Summary,” 6.

¹¹⁷ Kaiser, “Staff Proposals for Collection Policy,” 23.

The institution was thus a lens for multiple disciplines and scholarly research pursuits, which crossed through types of history (like political and economic) and sociological, psychological, and behavioral studies. As conference participant, David Potter (representing the history discipline), pointed out, the “multiplicity of institutions in this field” makes it difficult for a traditional institutional rationale for historical analysis, where historians “might study the organized segments in mass communications.” Segments overlapped and traversed across the typical notion of an institution as a single entity. Instead, he suggested what he called a “functional or cross-sectional view, one that would trace an activity from sponsor to advertising agency, into the broadcasting networks and out to one local station.”¹¹⁸ Extend that to the audience and then there was a systems-view of mass communications, with the institution as the centralizing force.

Broadly, the Society sought out business records, acquiring a representative array of documentation about advertising, public relations, and public opinion measurement. These were especially relevant for television’s inclusion, given their integral roles in the television industry. As noted by the conference participants, “since advertising agencies were placed between the media industry and the sponsor much as attorneys act between clients, the records of the agencies would be useful.”¹¹⁹ For example, television materials can be found in one of MCHC’s early donations, the Bruce Barton papers. Located in the advertising leader’s archives, are documents about television network relations, program sponsorship, and scripts. The MCHC strategized to accumulate various collections that could strengthen institutional analyses of mass communications, which invariably

¹¹⁸ Fishel, “MCHC Conference Summary,” 13.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

included television. This was especially evident in the NBC acquisition. The following subsection briefly highlights some of the ways in which various aspects of television entered the archive via the institutional framework.

Television By Way of Chronicling NBC

As noted in the previous section, one of the first major acquisitions was the NBC archive of non-current and marked for corporate records. The overall intent with acquiring the NBC records was to document the business of media, ranging from the network's organizational structure to their relations with audiences, advertisers, industry (in general), stations, actors, directors, unions, content creators, and NBC's legal, fiscal, and political dimensions. The goal was to collect representative documentation about the institution. The result, from the perspective of researchers, is a wealth of primary evidence that can be used for any number of studies (and have been used, as demonstrated by the edited collection, *NBC: America's Network*). In respect to television history, the NBC records offers one of the most comprehensive views into histories of television production, programming, audiences, technology, and more. Still, the Society sought out NBC not by virtue of an explicit interest in television, but via the institutional collecting rationale.

By requesting the organizational records that documented NBC's structure and executives offices, the MCHC received the files from offices related specifically to television as well as those tangentially related such as engineering and legal departments. For instance, this included the executive files from programming, advertising, and publicity departments that documented the how television shows were produced, advertising rates, sponsor relations, audience ratings, regulatory battles with the FCC, just

to name a few. One concrete example of a deliberate interest in chronicling television was Kaiser's interest in acquiring all of Pat Weaver's files as well as those of his subordinates. Weaver was President of NBC and renowned for his programmatic decisions. Kaiser noted that any files associated with Weaver, including television program files, "warrant keeping."¹²⁰ Unlike many of the executive files, Pat Weaver's files were nearly complete, spanning his entire tenure at NBC. This particular acquisition was made possible with an agreement that his records would be sealed for ten years.¹²¹ Along with other executive and departmental files, the MCHC amassed a substantial collection of records pertaining to television programs. The NBC collection is especially rich with records about entertainment television and programs that might not typically fall under privileged categories (e.g. public affairs). In this regard, the NBC collection contains a breath of programming types. Thus, there are records of programs that were *not* selected based on subjective criteria of quality or historical worthiness. Rather, the archivists selected the NBC department or set of executive files, which invariably included all sorts of programs that might not otherwise been selected if the archivist requested particular program types.

Conversely, the selection of scripts had a greater degree of subjective selection, albeit still combined with an interest in representative sampling methods derived from social science methods. For the record, television scripts were restricted for ten years, meaning no one could use the scripts until a decade after acquisition.¹²² Even so,

¹²⁰ Kaiser, "Files Selected from NBC Records on March, 1965 Trip."

¹²¹ Ruth Preston to Barbara Kaiser, June 11, 1965, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1963-1964-1965, WHS.

¹²² "Resume of the NBC Operation."

archivists and faculty advisers applied subjective judgments. On one level, the selection of programs relied on the expertise of speech department professors, whose interest in script selection tethered to instructional purposes. While many of the programs selected fell within the conventional categories of news, public affairs, actuality (recording of events as they happen), and educational programs, there were some exceptions. For example, a number of soap opera scripts were flagged for preservation, which might not be a “popular collection so far as the Society is concerned... [but] there is a basis here for some interesting research for sociologists, dramatists” and others.¹²³

More often than not, though, the scripts that the archivists tended to select were those that reflected either news interest or instructional interest (such as teaching dramatic television writing). For instance, scripts from the *Trail of Pontius Pilate*, *Salute to Eisenhower*, *Geography for Decision*, *Highlights of Operate History*, *Goodyear Playhouse*, and *People are Funny* (one of the few comedy programs selected for retention), were selected by one of the instructors of radio and television writing. These were chosen over programs representing a broader swath of programming, such as *All Star Revue*, *Colgate Comedy Hour*, *Bob Hope Show*, *Academy Awards*, and *The Ernie Kovacs Show*.¹²⁴ On another level, Kaiser would ask Preston for a representative sampling of scripts, such as her request for *The Today Show* scripts, specifically a “sampling of one full week of scripts in three different month.”¹²⁵ Towards the end of

¹²³ “Save Boxes of Scripts as Follows,” Memorandum, c 1959, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1959-1960, Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹²⁴ Ruth Preston to Barbara Kaiser, “Re: Television Scripts Ready for NBC Disposal,” August 22, 1961, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1961-1962, Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹²⁵ Ruth Preston to Barbara Kaiser, March 26, 1963, MCHC Files MA-PE, Box 4, NBC File 1963-1964-1965, WHS.

1960s, though, Kaiser was selecting fewer scripts for preservation; with no explanation, Kaiser opted to not take any network scripts from 1968.¹²⁶ If scripts were selected into the 1970s, they tended to be news scripts as well as recordings of news programs such as *Chet Huntley Report* and *Meet the Press*.¹²⁷ Overall, it was evident that NBC was systematically destroying television scripts and even the recorded programs, with the MCHC only selectively taking a few scripts and recordings at a time. Additionally, as discussed in the next chapter, there was another archiving effort within the Society that focused more on the creative side of television. As such, the MCHC acquired television related materials under the logic to preserve documentation of the industrial process from the top-down (as in, the acquisition of various NBC executive files) rather than approaching individual television writers and producers for their records about television production.¹²⁸

By archiving a mass communications institution (the broadcast network), the MCHC was still able to acquire materials for many entry points into television historiography. This is especially the case with entertainment related television. In the NBC archives, for example, one can locate files about various situation comedies, soap operas, serial dramas, children's programs, and all sorts of programs that might otherwise had never been a part of the archive. Chronicling the industrial processes associated with television was a particularly strong mechanism for documenting television history.

¹²⁶ Kaiser, "Notes on NBC Materials Requested During Trip 9/21/70-10/2/70."

¹²⁷ See the folders, NBC 1968-69-70-71 and NBC '72.

¹²⁸ There were exceptions. Most notably, the MCHC contacted Irna Philips in 1966, inviting her to establish a collection pertaining to her "long career in broadcast drama." See Janice O'Connell to Irna Phillips, Oct 24, 1966. Collections Correspondence, 1948-2001, Accession 1993/004, Box 6, Library-Archives Division, WHS.

Segueing into the next discourse, privileging the institution was part of the larger discourse that melded together the democratic functioning of society with capitalist enterprise of the commercial network.¹²⁹ The television network was the premier melding of the two. An emphasis on collecting the papers of media-related institutions inevitably included the many dimensions of television that served a public good function. As evident in the selection of NBC materials, priority was placed on policy materials, public affairs, FCC logs, and other sorts of materials that demonstrated the network's fulfillment of public service. The key here is that television was included in the archive via its integration into institutional functions.

The Fourth Estate and the Public Good

Television was an extension of the Fourth Estate of the press; it was another medium to inform the public, shape political discourse, and promote democratic ideals. The MCHC had quite the reputation by the end of the 1960s. As one newspaper article remarked, "The news that TV newscaster David Brinkley passed up \$20,000 for his 1968 correspondence, preferring [the MCHC], was a reminder of the prestige the society's mass communications history center has attained."¹³⁰ Since the center's inception, the archivists tended to speak about broadcasting in terms of news and journalists. Specifically, they were referring to the developments in news analysis and commentating. For instance, such sentiments were persistent topics in the working papers for the conference. This was especially evident in the section about suggested areas for research,

¹²⁹ For example, see Anna McCarthy, *The Citizen Machine: Governing by Television in 1950s America* (New York: New Press, 2010).

¹³⁰ "Big Names in Press, TV Send Files to History Center," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 22, 1969, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

such as histories of equal time provisions in broadcasting, coverage of political events and campaign, the social values of news commentators, objectivity in broadcasting, and techniques in persuasion.¹³¹

In this respect, the MCHC collected both manuscript materials from broadcast journalists and privileged television broadcast records from NBC and Wisconsin television stations. The donations from the journalists included such television-related items as scripts, correspondence with the networks as well as fans, and notations regarding how to convey the news for the television screen.¹³² They were also interested in news content that aired on television. News film material, which included film, kinescope, and videotapes, presented unique challenges in handling and storage. Even so, State Archivist Gerald Ham was “convinced that materials such as these are of prime importance and that archival depositories must make every effort to preserve such item.”¹³³ Towards the end of the 1960s, the MCHC was also selecting more television news content from NBC’s discarded scripts and recordings.

The notion that television entered the archive via its inscription in the Fourth Estate functions of broadcasting is to be expected of a historical society. The Society was already entrusted with the selection and preservation of newspapers. As Fishel and others pointed out at the conference, it was well within the purview of the historical society as well as the academic archive to acquire broadcast news records.¹³⁴ A broader view of the

¹³¹ “Working Papers,” 23–28.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 46.

¹³³ Gerald Ham to Richard Lytle, December 02, 1966, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Archival Correspondence - Gen. 1950-1969, WHS.

¹³⁴ Fishel, “MCHC Conference Summary.”

public good and television also encapsulates some of the MCHC's other prominent collections. Most notably, television related materials also entered the archive in the personal manuscript collections of FCC commissioners, especially Newton Minow. Minow's papers were heralded as a tremendous resource regarding Minow's time at the FCC, which was characterized by his conviction about the public interest and the observation that the television networks were failing at their obligations to society.¹³⁵ In his papers, and those of other FCC commissioners, one can locate histories of television's regulation, spectrum allotment, license processes, and especially the interaction between government and the television industry.¹³⁶ In sum, a major way in which television entered the archive were the materials that documented either television as news medium or the pursuit of realizing television's capacity as a democratic public good.

Education and More Public Good

Similar to the discourses about news and the public good, the Center homed in on educational broadcasting. On one level, this was not a far stretch given that the University of Wisconsin was known for its experimentations in educational television with WHA-TV. Another easy connection was the pursuit of chronicling organizations and their various manifestations of public good discourse as it intersected with mass communications. In this regard, records of *reactions* to television were acquired as well as proactive attempts to catalyze television's educational potential. For example, these engagements with televisions are found in the National Association of Educational

¹³⁵ SHSW, "Press Release: Newton Minow," May 1964, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Press Releases 1964, WHS.

¹³⁶ See the finding aid for the Newton N. Minow Papers, 1954-1965 at <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/wiarchives.uw-whs-us0065af>.

Broadcasters Records (first acquired 1965 with later additions) and the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television Papers (acquired 1969).

The major acquisition in this area was the National Educational Television (NET) archive. The press release announcing the acquisition quoted Fishel's assertion, "this collection will constitute one of the largest and most important sets of records in the MCHC."¹³⁷ The administrative records about this acquisition detail an insightful range of issues pertaining to the acquisition of audio-visual and paper materials, complications with technology and the need for expertise to administer film and videotape archives, and the legal dimensions in securing the rights for programs produced or distributed by the NET. Chief among the reasons to acquire the NET collection was the immediate need to preserve the efforts of an educational production and distribution network.¹³⁸ Moreover, the focus was on preserving the television programs. In a proposal to NET that pitched the Society as the ideal repository for retired television programs, the stress was on fulfilling the Carnegie Commission and Ford Foundation's recommendations that "archives of public television" were valuable public resources requiring immediate action.¹³⁹

Kaiser went so far as to outline selection criteria that included the acquisition of pre-production materials, outtakes (selectively), and release prints of *all* NET produced

¹³⁷ SHSW, "Press Release: National Educational Television," February 1967, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Press Releases 1964-, WHS.

¹³⁸ Barbara Kaiser, "Proposal for Establishment of N.E.T. Film and Tape Archives," July 07, 1967, Administrative subject file of the State Archivist, 1942-2001, Box 3, NET, Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

and distributed (e.g. BBC-produced) programs.¹⁴⁰ Legal uncertainties about the transferal of rights as well as the technological and storage demands of such a collection seemed to prevent the successful acquisition of the television programs (though, all is not lost, most of the NET programs went to the Library of Congress). The acquisition of television products – the NET programs – was beyond the Society’s capacity. Instead, the MCHC focused on what they did best: the acquisition and management of voluminous paper based materials. This included files pertaining to development of educational television, audience and community interest, reports, surveys, conference reports, FCC applications, publicity, and more.¹⁴¹ This acquisition was particularly important in that it was one of the few MCHC efforts to systematically archive *specifically* television.

Like the NBC records, the MCHC strategically pursued NET in light of the institution’s overflowing records and thus the MCHC was able to provide a service in providing a lasting repository for non-current records. In the NET case, the vision was to acquire both institutional records and program content. The paper-based materials proved to be substantial enough of an archival task. This massive collection follows a similar sort of institutional logic as NBC in that records were divided into different divisions and levels of administration, thus offering a comprehensive and intersecting look into the operational dimensions of television. Aligned with the educational and public good framework, this collection also affords great opportunities to trace the perceptions of television’s values; especially how archivists and academics defined public television’s values in contrast to commercial television.

¹⁴⁰ Barbara Kaiser, “Field Report: N.E.T. Distribution Center,” March 05, 1967, Administrative subject file of the State Archivist, 1942-2001, Box 3, NET, WHS.

¹⁴¹ SHSW, “Press Release: National Educational Television.”

I offer these three discourses that justified television's inclusion in the archive for the sake of argument. Indeed, these were neither clearly defined and nor separate spheres. The overall point was to isolate some of the factors that enabled the academic archive to consider the merits of television within an archival setting. The prevailing interest in documenting mass communications was the key organizing principle for the Society's foray into archiving television. As such, certain frameworks were more adept to fitting with a mid-twentieth-century conception of mass communication. Specifically, this meant a focus on the institution (as a function within a democratic society as well as a capitalist society), on journalism, and a broad sense of media's capacity to foster a public good, such as education.

A Place in the Archive Via a Mass Communications Framework

In sum, television entered this archive via its inscription within mass communications. However, television was qualified within discourses that privileged certain aspects of television and mass communications more broadly. This included programming that was either journalistic or developed for the public good, the technological development of the medium, and the structural systems of modern mass media. This is not to elide the fact that the MCHC did collect some entertainment programming. For example, they were especially interested in the preservation of radio programs, such as the 1966 acquisition of Irna Phillips' papers containing her soap opera scripts. That said, the overall effort and the public perception of that effort most often pivoted on journalistic, institutional, or democratic rationales for television as archival. In

the face of television's multiplicity and transient, ephemeral output, archivists *had* to define television and troubleshoot ways to collect those materials.

This case study illustrated how the institutional structure of the academic archive dealt with the archivability of television and mass media. The Society was rooted in the archival science that governed its institutional practices and professionalized archival tasks. The archivists were trained in the evaluation of materials based on criteria of uniqueness, comprehensiveness, representativeness, and anticipating future uses. The visual archivist, Paul Vanderbilt, further contributed to the archival process by ascribing criteria of aesthetic representations of the time and a "thick" sense of quality (to borrow from Clifford Geertz's thick description). These structures factored into the formation of the MCHC. Despite television's relatively short history, the archivists drew on their training to evaluate television and mass media on the grounds of its historical utility. They recognized the potential future interest in the contemporary moment, which was dominated by media. They were aware of their role to *stimulate* research in areas where historians and scholars might not have otherwise considered.

The Society engaged with the epistemological questions and the formation of disciplinary knowledge. The archivists confronted their ambiguous understanding mass communications as well as conventional modes of historical study and archival collecting. Yet, in exploring definitions of mass communications, the temptation was still to define television within pre-existing or more conventional territories that archivists and historians were used to such as institutional and political histories. The remarkable aspect of their exploration was evident in their attempts to expand those conventional territories. For example, correspondence was a typical type of archival material. However, fan mail

was an unusual sort of correspondence that presented challenges given its volume and uncertainty as to how researchers could use fan mail. Records of the broadcast network might somewhat resemble conventional business, but also drew in new amalgamations of administrative, technical, regulatory, programmatic, legal, commercial, and other dimensions that magnified the modern business of media. The Society and their network of counselors demonstrated tremendous foresight to determine what documents of the present might be of use for the future as well as how to organize those documents for maximum use. Such tasks were challenging, as the conventional modes of history and archival management collided with modern industries, technologies, and shifts in what constituted as primary sources.

In light of mass media as so integral to American society and still so new, the Society archivists recognized that “it is not a traditional field of interest to the historian.” Even so, aware of their roles in knowledge construction, the archivists knew that “the historian of the future may be just as interested in the history of radio or of television...and the respective impact of each on social, economic, and political life of this century.”¹⁴² Television, and to a larger degree, mass communications, might not have been comfortable or appropriate zones for historical inquiry in the current moment. There was no “demanded need” for such material, since there was little imperative to study such materials; the archivists recognized their intellectual responsibility to generate need and stimulate the historical imagination.¹⁴³

¹⁴² “Working Papers,” 17.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

The key organizing principle for the Society's collecting efforts was *mass communications*, what generally constituted mass communications, and how the archivists conceptualized television within that framework. Their understanding of mass communications was clearly informed by the academic disciplines, specifically the social science approach to media. The interest to archive the raw materials of mass communications, and specifically television, aligned with the types of materials historians and scholars typically used – paper documents. Thus, another organizing principle for the MCHC was the acquisition of collections that documented *processes*. The audio or audio-visual records certainly had some historical value, but proved to be too challenging for the Society's infrastructure. Products were ideal, such as the MCHC attempt to acquire the National Education Television film and tape archive, but were cumbersome to acquire, store, and replay for users. Processes of mass media were far easier to manage. Collecting documentation about the behind-the-scenes processes of a broadcast network or journalist was familiar territory for the Society archivists. Television, then, entered this archival space as part of the archivists' intent to collect the processes of mass communications.

The MCHC codified television as a broadcast mass medium, which marked certain aspects of television as worthy of an archival presence. This was in contrast to the case study in the next chapter. Just like the MCHC, the Wisconsin Center for Theater Research relied on the institutional structure of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, but formed in opposition to the mass communications archive. Television entered both research centers, but did so under different rationales. Whereas the MCHC inscribed television within a mass communications framework, the WCTR organized their mission and collecting around the notion of the performing arts. Such a construct valued parts of

television, or rather individuals working in the television medium but still under the umbrella of the performing arts. Just as the MCHC developed their collecting scope in reaction to academic disciplinary structures, so too did the WCTR. In the next chapter, I examine how this archive developed alongside the Society's MCHC. More so than the MCHC, the WCTR case study illuminates television's legitimation in popular and academic contexts.

CHAPTER VI

THE DISCURSIVE FORMATION OF TELEVISION'S ARCHIVAL VALUE BETWEEN MASS COMMUNICATIONS AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research further illustrates how the academic archive serves as a site of legitimation. The location of television in an academic archive signaled that at least some of television was valid as historical material, culturally significant, and worthy of study. Like the Mass Communications History Center in the previous chapter, the WCTR facilitated an archival space for television. However, television's inclusion was contingent on several factors. One was how the people in charge of collecting defined television, or rather, solicited donations that tangentially included television. Specifically, the WCTR formed as an archive of theater and the performing arts. Television's material traces entered the MCHC when it aligned with definitions of mass communications. In this chapter, I outline how television's material traces entered the WCTR when television aligned with theater or considered on its own merits. Another factor was the institutional structure in which the WCTR operated; academics from the university administered the WCTR, but they relied on the Society archivists and infrastructure for the bulk of the archival process. Despite the operational tensions and the fluctuations in defining television, television entered the academic archive. By virtue of its location in an archive associated with the academy, television's status as a legitimate area of study and as valuable historical material crystallized.

In the WCTR's first decade, television shifted from an addendum to the theater to worth pursuing (but still somewhat limited to a performing arts discourse) to addendum

to film and back to worthwhile endeavor in light of emerging critical interests in television. The inclusion of television in the archive, particularly the acquisition of materials related to a range of programming and its production can be mapped out along the broadening perspectives and appreciation for television in general in the 1970s. We can trace a correlation between the WCTR's efforts to pursue television-related collections, attitudes towards television as a medium of popular culture and sociological significance, and the ascent of television studies in the academy. As perceptions about television in academia changed, so too did the expansion of the WCTR's mission.

Before outlining the chapter ahead, I'd like to begin with an excerpt from a letter written by a soon-to-be donor to the WCTR. This letter encapsulates perceptions about television's (and film's) historical value. In late 1962, two years into the WCTR's formation, the director wrote many letters to people working in theater, film, and as of recently, television. One such letter was sent to Phillip H. Reisman, a screenwriter for films and television, notably dramas and documentaries like *You Are There* and *Project XX*. He replied to the WCTR:

I am greatly flattered by your invitation to submit archival material...As a professional writer, much used to relying on library and reference collections, I have long deplored the fact that my own industry, (a significant self-descriptive), never considered itself seriously responsible for providing a repository for its own history. The Motion Picture Academy belatedly considers a Hollywood Museum, but this will be wax dummies... for the amusement of tourists...and the Museum of Modern Art in New York has embalmed celluloid for the cultists. It seems appropriate that in mid-America, safely between two coasts, there might be a place where scholars can discover what motion pictures and television really were.¹

¹ Philip Reisman to David Knauf, January 11, 1963, Administrative subject file of the State Archivist (1990/180), Box 3, Mass Communications History Center, WCFTR.

Movies had been around for a long time, television far newer. Still, neither industry (or rather, the entertainment industry) was capable of securing their history. Alternatively, perhaps the entertainment industry was not interested in preserving a broad swath of their history. Reisman insinuated that when left to the museum world, such history was reserved for the privileged few (the “cultists”). I gather that when Reisman received the invitation letter, he must have been delighted that an archive existed for the benefit of scholars and historical understanding. He expressed concern about “how often waste paper has been turned over to the janitor instead of the archivist,” including the discarded remnants of his father’s career in the film industry, which were weeded out “without any training in what was of research value.”² The WCTR much appreciated his historical consciousness, as well as his substantial donation documenting early film and especially television history. Alas, Reisman was an exception; few donors (and people contacted in the hopes that they would donate) expressed the same magnitude of concern. Still, his sentiments illustrate the emerging interest in archiving the entertainment industry, which meant preserving the documentary traces as well as moving images. As such, this chapter traces how television’s material traces – both in the form of products (scripts, films, and tapes) and process – entered the academic archive.

Introducing the Spin-Off: The Performing Arts Splits from Mass Communications

To use the language of television, the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research (WCTR) was a spin-off center from Mass Communications History Center (MCHC). At that, it was a complicated spin-off. The MCHC was purely within the realm of the State

² Ibid., 1–2.

Historical Society (SHSW). The WCTR was less so; most of its funding came from various units within the University of Wisconsin. Imagine a television show that was produced by the network's in house studio, but later aired on another network while still using the resources of the initial network studio. There were bound to be power struggles and conflicts over space, labor, and funding, which directly or indirectly affected the archival process of acquiring collections.

The formation and development of the WCTR demonstrated another approach to conceptualizing television as worthy of inclusion in archival spaces. The spin-off from MCHC signaled diverging interests in establishing an archive, even though the WCTR's physical location for storing and accessing archival material was the same as the MCHC – the historical society located on the UW-Madison campus. The examination of this center reflects how “new” media challenged the archiving institution to broaden what constitutes archival material (or in history terms as primary evidence) and tested the limits of institutional resources for space, funding, and legitimating its newest acquisitions.

While television was never of central concern in the initial stages of this new archiving effort, television's inclusion was unavoidable given the close connections between theater, film, and television. Today, television makes up a considerable part of the Center's holdings. But there is no “television” represented in the center's name. Film was a later edition to the title, added to reflect the growing scope of theater *and* film in the center's holdings (the WCTR became the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research in the mid 1970s). What made television such an inevitable part of the center's scope? Much like the Society archivists grappling with the amorphous mass

communications field, the WCTR directors and assistant directors could not isolate television from the interlocking, networked ecosystem of mass communications *and* performing arts. Demarcating the boundaries of theater and cinema proved difficult, since many playwrights, actors, directors, producers, composers, and behind-the-scenes workers spilled into other areas like cinema and television.

The Theatrical Tradition

The new archiving effort defined a purpose to archive the modern performing arts. Conceptualizing television as meriting a place in the archive required inscribing certain segments of television within discourses specific to the performing arts, such as quality and authorship. The performing arts construct favored theater and cinema as part of the legitimate arts, less so television. How could the WCTR simultaneously distance themselves from television and yet solicit the donations of individuals whose sole or primary work was with television? In researching the contemporary development of television curriculum, an article by the head of NYU's Department of Television, Motion Pictures and Radio sheds some light on this matter. Richard Goggin reflected on a useful notion: the theatrical tradition. Such a tradition embraced "dramatic structure" and plot, mastering the elements of storytelling such as exposition, conflict, narrative arc, and surprise, while skillful actors performed on a stage.³ Although he was lamenting a general departure from the theatrical tradition within film and television curriculum of the mid 1960s, Goggin exposes a mode of thinking regarding the designation of the performing or dramatic arts and its relation to television. The WCTR's emphasis on theater and film could also be understood as a commitment to what theater connotes –

³ Richard J. Goggin, "The Theatrical Tradition and Cinema and Television Training In American Universities," *Journal of the University Film Producers Association* 16, no. 3 (January 1, 1964): 4.

narrative, dramatic structure, actors, stage production, and so on. This notion helps illuminate how the WCTR could easily justify the pursuit of some television materials (or rather, individuals working in television) within their collecting mission. Thus, they had solid rationale to approach television playwrights for their achievements in the theatrical tradition and mastery of its familiar elements within a new medium. Television was another stage, another challenge in staging a production. It was the remarkability of the theatrical tradition to adapt to television and exploit the new medium's characteristics and constraints that allowed television materials to enter the WCTR archive. Consider, for example, how a famed television producer explained the theatrical tradition as it was mediated on television. Fred Coe once said that the merger of the theatrical tradition on television was "the creation of a new performing arts concept... The emphasis was on fine writing, not stars or elaborate production values."⁴ The exciting aspect of television was its potential to forge a new branch of the performing arts.

An examination of television in the WCTR helps to illuminate academic and archival valuations of television as worthy of study. This chapter examines the institutional structures that enabled the formation of the WCTR, the refinement (but really, the fluctuation) of justifying television's inclusion in the WCTR's collecting mission, and how the WCTR directly and indirectly acquired so much of television's material traces. First, I examine how the WCTR formed and staked its claim to theater and cinema. Next, I highlight the tensions arising from WCTR's close relationship with the Society and the MCHC as well as the demarcation between the performing arts and broadcasting (and by extension, mass communications). Following the analysis of the

⁴ Fred Coe, "New York Camera 50: A Proposed Television Series," n.d., Office Files (unprocessed), Fred Coe Case File, WCFTR.

WCTR at the institutional level is a discussion about how the WCTR justified and approached television. This entails locating television within the WCTR's collecting efforts, pointing out the ways in which television was discursively constructed as fitting into the WCTR, despite a repudiation of television as broadcasting. Television as a priority, or as foregrounded collecting effort, came in four waves. Initially, the emphasis was on the theatrical tradition. Then, the WCTR pursued an opportunity to engage in the preservation of television as it related to distinguished creative products (as in, notable programs) and its processes of production. Television tended to take a back seat to film in the late 1960s, but still entered the archive via connections with potential donors established in the past and as part of the massive United Artists acquisition. As attitudes regarding television changed in the 1970s, the WCTR again pursued television-related collections with an expanded conception of television's merit in the archive.

Institutional Structures and Obstacles in Constructing a “New” Archive

If there is one essential takeaway from the complex histories of the MCHC and the WCTR, it is the project of distinction and the stakes in defining categories and organizational structures. Discussed in this section are the perceptual differences within the MCHC that spurred the construction of a new archive. The category of “mass communications” was not suitable for areas such as theater and cinema. Faculty involved in these areas advocated for collecting efforts that would be specific to their instructional and research needs. The WCTR formed in the wake of tensions between the definition of mass communications and performing arts. Distinctions were important because there were differing goals and visions associated with acquiring the “raw materials” of broadcasting and the performing arts. By drawing the boundaries of one area or another,

archivists defined collecting policies and allocated resources for acquisition. As this section outlines, the WCTR was still structurally bound to the Society and tangentially related to the MCHC on a conceptual grounds that both research centers focus on media.

Ideas for the Spin-Off

Participants at the Mass Communications History Conference agreed that theater and cinema were beyond the purview of an archive devoted to mass communications history. A couple of faculty members on the MCHC Advisory Committee agreed. Cinema was included as a collecting area when the MCHC first began because of the nicely timed acquisition of the Aitken Brothers papers. Their records of early cinema and the move to the sound era (notably, the production files for *Birth of a Nation*) came to the archive most likely due to the Aitken brothers' loyalty to their state history, rather than an MCHC agenda to pursue cinema. Theater was also included in the early brochure explaining the new history center. But that was connected to the active involvement of a speech department faculty member, whose specialty was in theater and was a faculty representative on the MCHC advisory committee.

Robert Hethmon was a vocal advocate for assembling materials associated with theater and its history. Likewise, Fred Haberman, the speech department chair and a faculty advisor to the MCHC, agreed with Hethmon that Wisconsin ought to build a premier research center for the study and history of theater. The MCHC had other faculty members who advocated on behalf of their specialization, as was especially the case with public relations. Whereas public relations was an easy sell as a constituent within mass communications, theater was not. For the sake of argument, at least theater and public relations had advocates. Television lacked such advocates, despite faculty on campus

involved in television research and educational broadcasting. Hence, what mattered most in these archival formations were advocates for a particular collecting area and mindsets oriented towards conceptualizing the raw materials for that goal. As such, Hethmon and Haberman tried to steer the MCHC towards theater. It was evident that theater did not quite fit into the mass communications framework.

About a year into the MCHC's operation, Haberman recommended to the MCHC advisory committee to pursue a theater *separately*. The minutes reflected that his reasoning

...was based on the following: the theatre is a more specialized area than the other communications media; it is somewhat separate from the other fields, might possibly have more appeal and bring in more collections; present limitations of time and staff have left the theatre collections neglected.⁵

From this point on, there was a clear impetus to pursue a separate specialized collecting area. Haberman remained active in the MCHC, as well as working on a parallel interdisciplinary mass communications research center. Meanwhile, he and Hethmon wrote a proposal outlining a research center and archive specializing in theater. They offered a number of purposes that stemmed from two primary goals: archival and educational. The proposed center would cooperate with the university and historical society libraries, speech department, and professional societies.⁶ By the end of 1960, they got their wish, the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research.

The WCTR formed for two main reasons: theater was not viewed as mass communications and there were two very vocal and active speech department professors

⁵ "Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee."

⁶ Fred Haberman and Robert Hethmon, "Proposal for a Research Center in Theatre and Cinema at the University of Wisconsin," 1960, Administrative Subject Files, Box 3, Field Reports and Policies, WHS.

dedicated to carrying out a vision of a theater research center. The new center was described as “an agency of the University of Wisconsin and the Mass Communications History Center of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin” with the resources of the university, the Society’s newspaper files, and “the unique collections of the [MCHC] in the allied fields of radio and television.”⁷ Hethmon, who was also the first WCTR director, crafted the purpose around theater *and* cinema. A wise move considering two factors. The first factor involved the New York Public Library (NYPL) and other east coast (and thus more logically located) archival repositories had been collecting theater already. Expanding into cinema was a move to distinguish the WCTR from existing archives. Relatedly, another factor was the overlap between theater and cinema. Demarcating the boundaries of theater proved difficult, since many playwrights, actors, directors, producers, composers, and behind-the-scenes workers spilled into other areas like cinema and television. Such a policy was evident by the NYPL broad theatrical archive, which included radio and television.

At this juncture, television was far from the WCTR horizon. Then again, why should television be part of a project that distinguished itself as separate from the “allied fields of radio and television?”⁸ Perhaps it was still beyond the foresight of Hethmon and his invested colleagues to consider that television had considerable overlap with film and/or theater, possibly more so than with radio (and thus, MCHC’s purview to collect television as broadcasting). When Hethmon and subsequent WCTR directors did consider television, it required conceptualizing television within the performing arts, syncing *parts*

⁷ Robert Hethmon, “The Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research: Summary of General Policy,” c 1960, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1960, WHS.

⁸ Ibid.

of television with discourses of quality and authorship typically associated with theater. In other words, the WCTR leaders valued the theatrical tradition as presented on television rather than television as a distinct medium with its own specificity. What this points to were the reliance on ontologies in both academic and archival settings. The archival determinators made distinctions early on between television and motion pictures/theater. These differences were implicitly carried out, as theater was spun-off into its own entity.

Navigating Binary Boundaries

Television was caught between the dichotomy of mass communications and performing or dramatic arts. Seldom envisioned as its own terrain, television was dissected into these two seemingly separate realms. Especially in the archival setting, television already was such uncharted territory given its newness, its scale and volume, and defiance of conventional manuscript materials (as evidenced by the Mass Communications History Center's conference addressed in the previous chapter). Television *had* to be dissected by archivists. This was not unique, as we saw with the MoMA case study, which had debated how television fit into its cultural institution. Was television something to include in the Film Library as exemplar of art or as record of culture? Could this new mass medium be used to transmit instruction about art and culture, and if so, would that be defined as commercial or educational? If exhibited, are programs to be selected as exemplars of the medium or of the broader visual arts? Whereas the people working with television at the MoMA tended to struggle more with *integrating* television as mass communication medium and as performing arts medium, this case study demonstrates the struggle to delineate between the two. Broadcasting was

mass communication, but live programs and films broadcast on the air were not the performing arts. Theater could air on television and films simultaneously experienced by the masses, but these were not mass communications. Given the era, when television was perceived of as quite a wasteland, television was dissected into medium and content, with only select (read: quality) content as falling within the performing arts paradigm.

Studying and archiving the development and management of the medium was better left to the mass communications side of the binary. Specifically, archivists, social scientist, and historians were positioned to further dissect content into categories that they were comfortable with, such as the case with news or persuasion.

For its part, the MCHC had already worked to codify television within the realm of broadcasting. Television was a central feature to the broadcasting industry and commercial dimensions of mass communications, as evidenced by the NBC acquisition and justifications for advertising and public relations as mass communications given their investments in television. Television was a hyphenate within the amorphous mass communications ecosystem: it was often hyphenated with radio or subsumed into the broadcasting-press label to indicate the prioritized dimensions of television. As a point of comparison, the MCHC hyphenated the motion pictures label with theater when identifying members of their National Advisory Council.⁹ So when the WCTR formed, television already belonged within the MCHC's scope. However, as noted in the pervious chapter regarding the MCHC's qualifications about television as part of its collecting mission, the MCHC left a great deal of television still untapped, namely television from a creative point-of-view.

⁹ "Status Report National Advisory Council," December 10, 1959, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), MCHC History, WHS.

By defining the bounds of mass communications as (mostly) encompassing tangible collecting areas such as journalism, business, and pioneering efforts, television was likewise constrained to these areas. In other words, the archive acquired television materials as they related to the press, advertising, the television industry, technological experimentations, and so on. The performing arts also included the collecting areas of business and pioneering efforts as applied to the traditional understanding of the performing arts – theater and now cinema (as opposed to “motion pictures,” which perhaps carried the connotation of mass media). Granted, an archive must draw boundaries in order to guide selection and stave off unwieldy collecting practices. While it is difficult to argue against the merits of these areas, it is important to note the absences. It was the absence of entertainment from the boundaries of broadcasting (within mass communication) and the absence of television from the boundaries of the performing arts that created the binary. Especially in the case of the WCTR, television was largely absent from their initial proposals, publicity materials, and contact with donors.

There are two main points to consider in regards to how this binary crystallized between mass communications and the performing arts with the formation of the MCHC and the WCTR. The operative word here is formation – this binary’s power was weakened by the end of the 1960s. First, as both centers began, they operationally required the distinction. Drawing a boundary around one area, thereby excluding other areas, was a necessary component to professional archival practice so as not to overwhelm the collecting process. This made the archival process more manageable while also causing tensions between the two in cases where there was overlap as well as competition for resources. Likewise, such a distinction was necessary for the purposes of

soliciting donations. Individuals in the “field,” meaning the writers, directors, and other creative laborers working in theater, also maintained a binary understanding of broadcasting and the performing arts. For instance, Hethmon’s first field trip included an interview with a woman who was “afraid of a connection with an organization which calls itself The Mass Communications History Center which she has regarded as a collection dealing with individuals who write on salary, that is, people who are, in her eyes, hacks.”¹⁰ The implication was that people who wrote for salary, namely for television, were not artists. The woman expressed skepticism about an archive’s (especially as state agency) ability to be attentive to the historical significance of the performing arts, since the archivists were not trained to evaluate works of art but rather the formulaic processes of mass communications.

Second, such a binary set a path for an ontological structure within the archival process with epistemological consequences for television history as well as the broader social and cultural history. By defining mass communications and the modern performing arts in the ways that they did, the MCHC and the WCTR also defined criteria of selection. The presence or absence of television in these definitions were linked to the materials collected. This was also the case with qualifying certain aspects of television as fitting into these definitions and associated discourses of valuation. Television’s archival presence was limited by its designation. On both accounts, television was beholden to a binary that it did not easily fit. The following further explores the implications as well as complications that stemmed from the binary between the MCHC and the WCTR, which

¹⁰ Robert Hethmon, “Field Trip Report,” April 1960, WHS.

was reflective of how television entered the archive as mass communications or as performing arts or not at all.

Structural Limitations on the Archiving Effort

The problems with storage, funding, and personnel to process incoming materials were certainly not unique to this archive. However, the arrangement between the WCTR and the Society seemed unusual in that one entity did the collecting while the other took on the more onerous responsibilities to process, inventory, and provide access to collections. Such tensions mattered due to the impact on the archival process. To further parse out the complexities in the institutional structures that supported the WCTR, the following section discusses the material dimensions of finances, space, and decision making that impacted the WCTR's capacity to pursue its mission. For example, since the WCTR relied on the Society's archivists and staff to process and catalog collections, "understandably the SHSW places a lower priority on the [WCTR's] business than it does on its own."¹¹ In effect, the WCTR collecting efforts were constrained by the financial, labor, and space dimensions of the archiving institution. While not directly related to the project of archiving television, these material constraints helped shape decisions that would later on influence the acquisition of television related material.

Funding the WCTR

Financially, the WCTR and the MCHC were tied together in cooperative funding. The WCTR budgets were complex tables denoting funding sources, divided between the Society and various operational units within the university such as the Graduate School, Central Administration, and the College of Letters and Sciences (where the Speech

¹¹ Balio, "WCFTR Director's Report," 7.

Department was housed). For example, the 1962 budget indicated that twenty-five percent of the MCHC Director's time was allotted to the WCTR and paid for by the Society. The Society also provided funding for shipping materials and processing collections.¹² Financial support from the Graduate School via the Research Committee was especially crucial and established the grounds for a cooperative arrangement. Haberman explained to the Graduate School dean that funding for processing collections, especially the engrossing NBC materials, was much needed to help out the Society so that researchers could access materials (which was of clear value to the scholarly community). The arrangement was as follows: "If we [the WCTR] can supply the hourly help, the Society will provide space, equipment, materials, active supervision, shelving, and in short, everything necessary to make the materials available to researchers."¹³ This was an implicit agreement, not legally defined.¹⁴

Later WCTR directors continued to ask the university, specifically the Speech Department, for financial support as the WCTR collections continued to grow yet the Society was short on people to process and catalog incoming collections. For example, one director requested funds to hire an additional librarian for the Society to help correct the shortage as well as inadequacies of the current system (but at no "fault of the Society personnel"). He was fully aware of the disproportionate demands that the WCTR collections "placed upon [the Society staff] in addition to their regular work... they

¹² "Budget for WCTR 1962-1963," July 1962, Administrative Subject Files (1995/003), Box 3, WCFTR Field Reports and Policies, WHS.

¹³ Fred Haberman to Willard, January 1961, Office Files (unprocessed), Gen Corrs 1960-1961, WCFTR.

¹⁴ Balio, "WCFTR Director's Report."

simply do not have the time to devote special attention to our materials.”¹⁵ The request appeared to be unmet, with the school continuing to provide funds for a director, printing of brochures, and other minor activities.

The implicit agreement between the WCTR and the Society was no doubt cumbersome and unbalanced. A year into the WCTR’s operation, the Society questioned the feasibility of the new research center, specifically since processing theater collections was taking up a disproportionate amount of archivists’ time and the budget.¹⁶ The archival process required criteria for selection; that was a major component when the Society debated the collecting scope and criteria for the MCHC. Collecting theater was not an objectionable endeavor for an archive; but it was an untamed endeavor. An untamed archival effort can wreak havoc on the greater archive. This was especially true regarding the impact on the MCHC. Labor, in the way of manuscript librarians and graduate students hired to help process collections, was consumed by the influx of theater collections, at the expense of the MCHC and even other Society collecting fields (such as labor and Wisconsin history). Indeed, one archivist scoffed

that SHSW has been pushed into a Theatre project, with which we are ill prepared to cope, except at the sacrifices of other established and presumably vital interest... Theater had been virtually eliminated purposely from Mass Communications. Now Theater has a toe in the door – and threatens to break down the door and overwhelm us!¹⁷

¹⁵ David Knauf to Fred Haberman, February 13, 1964, Office Files (unprocessed), Gen Corrs 1963-1964, WCFTR.

¹⁶ Les Fishel to Fred Haberman, September 18, 1961, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1961, WHS.

¹⁷ JLH to BK, April 26, 1961.

Additionally, money allotted for acquiring MCHC-related donations (specifically, money for shipment) was nearly consumed by the WCTR.¹⁸ All this to say that even when the concept, or the desire, to archive something is present, this does not escape the fact an archiving institution must balance out all of its collecting commitments, priorities, and resources. With the WCTR spin-off, the MCHC and the Society felt the strain of Hethmon's over-active collecting efforts, especially given his unwillingness to cooperate with Society guidelines.

Tense Cooperation

Ideally, the envisioned relationship between the University-supported WCTR and the Society was one of cooperation and support.¹⁹ Having two centers (WCTR and MCHC) dedicated to building archival collections meant better chances for comprehensive collecting. For instance, since the WCTR (and the speech department) “assumed the major responsibility for collecting unpublished and published primary materials.... This arrangement enabled the MCHC to concentrate on broadcasting” and its other areas.²⁰ Combining the resources and name-recognition of the Society and the University of Wisconsin also meant better chances at securing donations. As the WCTR formed, there were some benefits to splitting up the work of seeking out donations. However, the leadership of the WCTR treaded the patience of the Society staff.

¹⁸ Les Fishel to Fred Haberman, May 31, 1961, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1961, WHS.

¹⁹ Haberman and Hethmon, “Proposal for Research Center.”

²⁰ Barbara Furstenberg, “WCTR,” *U.W. Library News*, March 1968, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1967-1968, WHS.

One display of this relationship was in the field trips. As one of the first stages in the archival process, the field trip functions as an in-person pitch to potential donors as well as maintaining relationships with existing donors. The fields trips were an institutionalized activity within the Society and the MCHC, and therefore a logical part of the WCTR process to seek out donations. There was an understanding that the WCTR field trips would scout out donations for the MCHC. Likewise, theater and cinema contacts made by the MCHC's field trips were shared with the WCTR, so that they could pursue those leads.²¹ Structurally, when the WCTR director and/or assistant director went on a field trip (which was funded by the University, not the Society), they had to submit reports to the Society. This step was a crucial link for coordinating collecting efforts so that both centers could efficiently pursue leads. Despite the acknowledged need to cooperate, the two entities had some battles, from something seemingly benign like the name of the center to the more contentious issue of space and imbalanced use of resources.

Establishing contact with potential donors was grounds for some disagreement. Fishel and Kaiser (the Society Director and MCHC Director) cautioned Hethmon to be very clear about the new center's relationship with the Society and the university. Since the WCTR's material conditions were predicated on the Society and drew on MCHC's resources and accumulating clout, Hethmon was urged to be transparent in his pitches to donors. While potential theater donors did not see themselves as "mass communication,"

²¹ Fred Haberman and Robert Hethmon, "Statement of Purpose," 1960, 3, Administrative Subject Files (1995/003), Box 3, WCTFR Field Reports and Policies, WHS.

Hethmon nevertheless had to stress the connections to the MCHC.²² From the very beginning, the WCTR had to play a game of semantics similar to the MCHC in defining mass communications. Whereas the MCHC was unsure about what constituted mass communications for the purposes of guiding selection, Hethmon was certain about what constituted theater but hesitant about everything else. He heavily relied on the expertise of Fishel and Kaiser to help in managing the acquisition process, everything from the precise wording in the deed of gift to processing and cataloging the newly donated collections.²³ Hethmon was obliged to them as the archivists in charge, with his role effectively as the contact person for donors. In sum, the WCTR was wholly dependent on the financial and operational decisions made by the Society.

It was a reoccurring theme for the first WCTR director to test the patience and cooperation of the host institution, the Society. Hethmon incited some resentment from the Society archivists when he drafted a statement of policy without consulting them. He had an “all-inclusive list” of materials collected, including materials not typically collected such as press clippings, portraits, and architectural sketches and scenery.²⁴ At the start, Hethmon was told by the Society director that a priority must be set for materials, focusing on only original material such as correspondence, personal reminiscences recorded on tape, manuscripts, shooting scripts, among other more conventional types of materials. All others were questionable (such as scrapbooks,

²² Les Fishel to Robert Hethmon, August 29, 1960, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1960, WHS.

²³ Barbara Kaiser to Robert Hethmon, November 10, 1960, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1960, WHS.

²⁴ Hethmon, “WCTR Summary of General Policy.”

programs and playbills, which eventually the Society accepted as unique materials with research value) and not acceptable (such as costume designs and clippings).²⁵ These were duplicable and voluminous materials, and so Hethmon was told to omit any reference to such material.²⁶ As such, materials that did not meet the criteria of selection were not worth scarce institutional resources. For instance, when presented with the opportunity to acquire kinescopes of a television series (such as a series called *American Musical Theatre*), Kaiser said that they did not have storage space. Furthermore, she implied that the kinescopes would be of low quality and not useful, thus not in the MCHC's purview.²⁷

Hethmon further encroached on the archival process by overcommitting and misrepresenting the autonomy of the WCTR. He suggested that donors could deposit current records, overselling the abilities of the Society to service the donor. Kaiser speculated that such an arrangement "could conceivably involve a great deal of time with theatre materials since much of the material is in the period from 1950-1960. Commits us to a great deal of service in a limited time. If we are to live up to it, regular and continuing theatre processors are necessary."²⁸ Business and organizational records of theatrical organizations might have been desirable, but could not possibly be a priority

²⁵ Fishel to Hethmon, Oct 13, 1960.

²⁶ Barbara Kaiser to Robert Hethmon, November 10, 1960, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1960, WHS.

²⁷ "Note for File: Possibility of Obtaining Kinescopes," Memo, July 05, 1961, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1961, WHS.

²⁸ BK to LHF, May 17, 1962, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1962, WHS.

due to strained resources.²⁹ Hethmon further indicated to donors that archivists would dutifully maintain the donor's original organization of paperwork. Kaiser and her colleagues noted that this was far from advisable, with the archivists organizing collections "depend[ing] upon the types of manuscripts comprising the collection and the state of the organization which the collection was when we receive it."³⁰ Ultimately, Hethmon had overcommitted the Society. He pitched the WCTR as though it were a solitary archive. A pattern of grievance and strife over the unbalanced relationship continued, with implications on the prioritization of what the WCTR could collect.

One Society archivist commented in an internal memo to Kaiser that "I am getting sick and tired of the WCTR. We spend untold hours of our staff time on their shipping problems, appraisal matters, and processing of their collections."³¹ Perhaps even more telling regarding the imbalances and strains is a memo titled "How to Avoid Internecine Warfare" written in April 1973. Well into the WCTR's tenure, tensions persisted concerning division of labor and effective communication. Suggestions to improve relations were rooted in establishing a clearer process, beginning with "WCTR field people keep us [the Society] up-to-date on info that pertains to processing," checking with the Society "before making promises to donors," then the Society processes collections and creates inventories, with WCTR reviewing the inventories

²⁹ Les Fisehl to Lou Kaplan, July 09, 1962, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1962, WHS.

³⁰ JLH to LHF, May 18, 1962, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1962, WHS.

³¹ Janice O'Connell to Barbara Kaiser, "Call from Tino," July 29, 1969, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1969-1970-1971, WHS.

before finalized.³² Even as the WCTR became a distinct and prestigious entity, tense cooperation persisted in the face of undefined roles and scarce resources.³³

In sum, the WCTR featured a complex institutional structure, one that traversed the University and the Society. The archiving effort was a unique cooperation between proactive academics seeking to legitimate the study of the performing arts and professional archivists working to effectively manage a larger organization. The goal in outlining the physical and conceptual constraints between the WCTR and the Society was to argue that there were many factors involved in the archiving process. It is tempting to assume that individual selection bias (e.g. taste hierarchies) were the main determinators in archiving television's material traces. On the contrary, the institutional structures, especially in the case of the WCTR, figured heavily into the acquisition and organization of archival material.

The next section traces how television entered the archive via the WCTR collecting efforts during their first decade of operation. Vigorous efforts to seek out donations from distinguished individuals and organizations active in theater and cinema necessarily included people active in television. The WCTR sought out all sorts of documentation and moving image materials. With little exception, they sought out comprehensive collections that included correspondence, legal papers, business records, scripts/manuscripts, photographs, films – anything that was saved and might provide

³² “How to Avoid Internecine Warfare, Memorandum,” April 23, 1973, Administrative Subject Files (1995/003), Box 3, WCTFR Correspondence/Misc., WHS.

³³ The pattern of strained cooperation continued well into the late 1980s, especially as it related to television. For example, the WCFTR acquired a large collection from a soap opera writer with materials arriving at the Society unannounced. This prompted concern about shared storage and moving image vault space as well as resources to inventory the collection. See Thomsgard to Crafton, July 19, 1989, Administrative Subject Files (1995/003), Box 3, WCTFR Corrsp. Misc., WHS.

insights. The world of television could not be ignored, but it could be half-heartedly or emphatically pursued. As WCTR directors changed and priorities shifted, so to did the focus on television as meriting a place in the archives.

Locating Television within the Performing Arts in the 1960s

Whereas the previous section focused mostly on the infrastructural dimensions in the formation of the WCTR, the following section highlights how the WCTR proceeded with constructing the archive's contents. The academics in charge of the WCTR worked to define the scope of the performing arts. Given the fluidity of creative labor, such as a playwright authoring teleplays, the performing arts included television. But this was not necessarily a natural progression and was largely dependent on the person in charge of seeking out donations and defining the WCTR's mission.

The first round of suggestions for building the Center's collections featured thirty-nine individuals flagged as possible donors. Most of the individuals represented the singular theatrical field - they were notable for careers in theater such as directors, producers, actors, playwrights, and set designers. A handful of them also had roles in motion pictures. Only one person was a writer for theater *and* television, Cy Howard, who already had UW connections as an alumnus. One other individual was listed as a radio and television actor for *The Great Gildersleeve*, also with a UW connection.³⁴ The WCTR squarely focused in theater, with a budding interest in cinema. These suggestions suitably reflected the sentiments from the Center's founding document: “[The name, Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research] does not exclude the possibility of research in

³⁴ “Preliminary Suggestions: Sources for Theatre Collection,” c 1960, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1960, WHS.

any area of theatre, including cinema, ballet, and opera, whether creative, critical, or historical.”³⁵ The founding documents never mentioned television as part of the theatre-cinema orbit, but rather as the “allied fields.”³⁶ Even more indicative of the conscientious effort to separate television from the theater-cinema sphere was Hethmon’s description of the WCTR and its significance on campus. In a letter to the university’s office of business and finance, Hethmon explained that their collecting and research scope was

limited to American theatre and cinema...systematically collecting the papers, manuscripts, records, and the correspondence of distinguished individuals who have worked in the American theatre and cinema in the designated period [WWI to present]. Many of the individuals in question have also worked in radio and television, and their work in these fields is of direct interest to the Mass Communications History Center. These manuscript materials form the basis for critical, historical, economic, and biographical research in contemporary American theatre and cinema.³⁷

Although Hethmon acknowledged the fluidity of creative labor across different stages and screens, he reiterated the dichotomy between the performing arts and television (as well as radio). An individual’s work with radio and television was an addendum to a career in theater and/or cinema. As such, this portion of one’s career was of benefit for the MCHC. This statement was a demonstration of cooperation between the two archiving efforts as well as further validation regarding the WCTR’s contribution to building scholarly resources for the Society and the university. Aside from the pretext for the WCTR’s formation required such cooperation, the archival task was also more efficient when the WCTR pursued leads that benefited the MCHC and vice versa. It

³⁵ Haberman and Hethmon, “Proposal for Research Center.”

³⁶ Hethmon, “WCTR Summary of General Policy.”

³⁷ Robert Hethmon to Joseph Holt, December 28, 1961, Office Files (unprocessed), Gen Corrs 1961-1965, WCFTR.

would be counter-productive for Hethmon to ignore a potential donor who had more stakes in television than in theater. Conversely, Hethmon still deliberately placed television outside of his sphere, thus setting the tone for his successors regarding television and its relation to the WCTR's collecting efforts.

The Utility in Collecting Television

In the interest of developing a premiere archive and research center for theater, Hethmon carefully defined television's utility in the circumstance of aiding Mass Communications History Center and tangentially supporting the theater and cinema collections. Given the context of the early 1960s, perceptions of television were not wholly favorable. The goal of the center was not to celebrate television's capacity for the theatrical tradition, but rather to celebrate theater and film. Hethmon framed the WCTR's interest in television as a service to the MCHC. Collections acquired by the WCTR might include work stemming from television and/or radio, but these were bonus materials or excess documentation that benefited the MCHC.

Television was difficult to ignore. In seeking out notable playwrights, film and stage directors, producers, and so on, the WCTR staff also met with people who were integral to the development of a television industry and programming that molded the specificity of the new medium.³⁸ What made some television-related collections more lucrative to pursue or logically fitting the WCTR's scope or the MCHC? Suffice to say, television entered the archive via the WCTR's emphasis on theater, drama, and cinema, which can be collectively identified as the theatrical tradition and the performing arts. The field trip reports filed by the first four directors – Hethmon, Helen Manfull (a

³⁸ Field Trip Reports, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

temporary, acting director a few months), David Knauf, and Albert Weiner, as well as WCTR assistant directors, Mary Ann Jensen and then Kay Johnson, included numerous meetings with people involved in television to varying degrees. However, their pursuance of the television-related collections fluctuated based on their conceptions of television and its merits within a performing arts archive were limited.

The WCTR field trip reports illustrated the overall uncertainty about which aspects of television were suited for the WCTR's efforts. Theater and cinema were clearly defined collecting areas for the WCTR, just as journalism, business, and media's democratic functions were clearly defined collecting areas for the MCHC. However, television was malleable as an industry and as a creative endeavor, and thusly an uncertain terrain during the WCTR field trips. For example, one report indicated that the papers of the Writers Guild of America were of interest to both the MCHC and the WCTR, but the people suggested by the WGA executive director were better for the MCHC (with no explanation of who or why).³⁹

The encounter with Henry Jaffe, "the largest independent TV producer in the world" poses a conundrum in terms of the WCTR's conceptions of television and its utility for the performing arts archive. The field trip report indicates that the WCTR made an explicit distinction between creative output and behind-the-scenes television production. Jaffe had an impressive array of productions, including documentation regarding revered live anthology productions. He was agreeable and receptive to donating anything from his "warehouses full of material." Despite Jaffe's repertoire for productions that overlapped with the theater, Albert Weiner (the WCTR director in 1965)

³⁹ Robert Hethmon, "Field Report 2," 1962, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

saw little value in pursuing Jaffe for the WCTR. Weiner, however, was excited that Jaffe “promised to introduce me to his many theatrical friends.” He further noted “this is clearly a Mass Communications Center matter, and I shall turn Mr. Jaffe over to Mrs. Kaiser.”⁴⁰ This seemed like an odd move. Clearly Jaffe’s collection contained a wealth of material traces of benefit to the WCTR and the study of theater *and* television.

What made Jaffe a clear fit for the MCHC? At this point, the WCTR had established connections with other major television producers such as David Davidson and David Susskind, who promised their donations to the WCTR. Still, Albert Weiner as the current WCTR director was vigilant to maintain the dichotomy between producing television programs and writing for television. This mirrored the conceptions of television as broadcasting (or mass communications) and television as the performing arts. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the Society archivists advised Weiner to pursue a particular spectrum of television, leaving the industrial dimensions of television to the MCHC. Regardless, Jaffe’s collection was never pursued and it is unclear whether his papers were deposited at any archival institution. For the purposes of this project, however, the failure to pursue Jaffe at an opportune moment demonstrated the WCTR’s contradictory relations with television as worthy within their archiving efforts.

While the first WCTR director almost exclusively met with people in the theater world, the field reports suggest that later directors and assistant director approached a greater range of television-related people. As previously indicated, the WCTR staff marked a number of potential donors under the MCHC’s pursuits, while allowing other potential donors to be forgotten. In a number of cases, some potential donors were

⁴⁰ Albert Weiner, “Field Report 21,” April 09, 1965, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

forgotten for awhile and picked up later when the context of collecting television was more favorable, particularly in the later part of the 1960s. Ultimately, though, the field trip reports serve as a reminder that the WCTR actively pursued contacts in theater and film; some of who had a stake in television (for example, Alfred Hitchcock). For the most part, people with a role in television were less common than people with careers in theater and/or film.

The following delves into specific donor cases, highlighting the varied interactions between the WCTR and desired donors. First, I draw on the donor cases that mostly fit the conception of television's golden age, which was a "natural" fit for an archive pursuing playwrights who also had careers (and sometimes more prestigious careers) in television. Next, I focus on the WCTR's expansive view of television's significance, thereby demarcating a broader rationalization for television in the archive. In the former, a designation of a particular vision of quality affords for opportunities to seek out television-related collections. In the latter, a more accommodating conception of quality enabled a broader collecting effort, with the WCTR reaching out to more people but not necessarily successfully securing donations for a variety reasons. While a cursory look at the collections acquired in the 1960s and 1970s might suggest a narrow conceptualization of television's worth in the archive, evidence suggests broader efforts. Explicit and implicit opportunities to archive television resulted in a broader archive than initially envisioned by Hethmon in 1960, where television was not even on the radar.

The Golden Age Distinction as a Rationale to Pursue Television

The golden age construct affords the opportunity to segment and mythologize a past era. For television, the "Golden Age" refers to "the medium's first decade, from

1948-1958, when (or so the myth goes) program forms and norms were not yet entrenched, and the level of ingenuity and sheer talent on display was unparalleled.”⁴¹ The live drama anthology was at the heart of this myth. The programs included *Philco Television Playhouse*, *Studio One*, *Playhouse 90*, and many other programs with titles indicating a connection to the theatrical tradition. Such programs “gave the new medium respectability and prestige,” especially when stage plays and movies were adapted from the television scripts as a “new body of literature.”⁴² As discussed in the literature review, television scholars have critiqued the label as elevating a particular canon of television programming (namely, the live drama and aesthetically-superior programming) and retroactively constructing a cultural heritage that signified a nostalgic, simpler post-war America.⁴³ Syndication, retrospectives and documentaries, a channel dedicated to “tv heritage” (TV Land), and museums have all contributed to reifying a particular conception of television history as a “Golden Age.” To that, we can add the process of soliciting and acquiring donations for an archive, thereby forming the corpus of work marked as historically and culturally significant.

Kompare notes “the myth began almost as soon as the era it encompassed had ended. But it blossomed in the seventies” when biographies were published and 1950s

⁴¹ Derek Kompare, *Rerun nation : how repeats invented American television* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 107.

⁴² Les Brown, *The New York times encyclopedia of television* (New York: Times Books, 1977), 173.

⁴³ William Boddy, *Fifties television: the industry and its critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Kompare, *Rerun nation*; Susan Murray, *Hitch your antenna to the stars: early television and broadcast stardom* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Lynn Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation,” in *A companion to television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 67–102.

programming was recast as markers of narrative and artistic achievement.⁴⁴ The observation that the myth began as soon as the era ended is evidenced by the WCTR's collecting efforts in the early 1960s and into the 1970s.

During Hethmon's tenure as the first director, he sought out donations almost exclusively from people in the theater world.⁴⁵ Among the list of the Center's first round of committed donors, only Paddy Chayefsky had a substantial stake in television.⁴⁶ Hethmon first approached Chayefsky in October 1960. By this point, Chayefsky was an award winning playwright and screenwriter, having gained particular notoriety when his television drama (*Marty*) was adapted for the screen and won multiple academy awards. He is generally known as one of the most renowned with the golden age designation. Chayefsky's career in television was no doubt significant, but that was not what Hethmon was after. He pursued Chayefsky for his theater career, considering his television scripts as theatrical achievements. Beginning in 1960, Hethmon corresponded with Chayefsky and his secretary about collecting whatever documents he had held onto over the years. The donation was officially made in 1962, with a second accession and a formal deed of gift to the university in 1969.⁴⁷

Hethmon did not pursue many people in television. He met with about one hundred individuals during his two years and only a handful had a stake in television. Not

⁴⁴ Kompare, *Rerun nation*, 108.

⁴⁵ Field Trip Reports, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

⁴⁶ "Donors to WCTR," April 1960, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

⁴⁷ The way that Hethmon gained contact with Chayefsky is an illustration of the cooperative spirit between the WCTR and the MCHC. Frederic March was an actor who donated his papers to the MCHC in 1958 because of his alumni status. The MCHC was more interested in amassing collections in 1958 than refining what was meant by mass communications. Presumably, had March waited to donate his materials until the 1960s, his papers would have gone to the WCTR.

surprisingly, each individual he approached was known as a playwright (without distinction as a television writer), upholding the conception of television as presentation medium for the theater (rather than its own unique medium). For example, Robert Alan Aurthur, who wrote for live drama anthologies such as *Studio One*, *Goodyear Television Playhouse*, and *Producers' Showcase*, agreed to donate his papers in 1961, but never did.⁴⁸ Several episodes of *Goodyear Television Playhouse* written by Aurthur are available, however, in the David Susskind papers (to be discussed in the subsequent section). Hethmon was able to secure a commitment from Joseph Stein, “a playwright, and also writer for radio and television and movies.”⁴⁹ A look through the inventory for Stein’s donation indicates that Hethmon’s description was a bit of an understatement. He may have approached Stein for the playwright title, but Stein was an accomplished writer for television. Specifically, he was a comedy writer, which was a segment of television programming yet represented in the archive. His donation included selected scripts, financial records, and other sorts of documentation for comedic programs such as *The Ed Wynn Show*, *Your Show of Shows*, and *All Star Revue*. Of course, the donation also included records for his theatrical and motion picture productions. Still, this case demonstrates one of the key lessons in the archiving of television – that much of the television documentation that we do have stems from a desire to collect other things. Hethmon’s focus on theater enabled a few television-related materials to enter on the

⁴⁸ “Field Report 5,” July 23, 1961, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

⁴⁹ “Field Report 6,” September 25, 1961, 6, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

coattails of a performing arts focus. This was especially true for a collection that featured comedic television writing, as opposed to the more typical dramatic scripts.⁵⁰

If television did appear on the WCTR radar, it was discursively woven into the theatrical tradition and supportive for the emerging Golden Age era distinction. In the first few years of the WCTR's collecting, we can start to trace how their mission to collect theater history branched out into television. The transition from a focus on the theatrical tradition to a broader conception of television and its merits is demonstrated by the shifts in language used to justify why certain individuals' careers belonged in the archive.

“Your Career in Our Theatre”

The language used in the pitch letters was a manifestation of the circulating perceptions about television and its location in a theater archive. By referring to a writer's, director's, or producer's work in television as a career in theater demonstrated how the WCTR drew on the golden age conception of the live television drama. The following is a representative example from many of the letters sent by the WCTR to potential donors:

The Center is engaged in preserving for the use of future scholars and historians of the American Theatre significant materials serving to illustrate the history of contemporary theater and to record the contributions to it of distinguished individuals. It is my feeling that a Fred Coe Collection would serve as permanent and fitting record of your career in our theatre.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Perhaps a conceptual leap, there was further evidence to suggest that Hethmon was not mindful about television comedy, even if there was a connection to theatrical tradition. He approached Alan Bunce in 1961, who had both a career as a stage actor and as the leading role on the television program, *Ethel and Albert*. Hethmon expressed some interest in Bunce's career, but mostly was after his father-in-law's materials from his career in theater

⁵¹ Robert Hethmon to Fred Coe, December 13, 1961, Office Files (unprocessed), Fred Coe Case File, WCFTR.

This was the pitch to Fred Coe, who was approached in 1961 to establish a collection regarding his “career in our theatre.” Coe by this time was highly regarded for his role as a television producer and intimately tied with golden age live productions such as *Studio One*, *Philco Television Playhouse*, and *Producer’s Showcase* (and one comedy program, *Mr. Peepers*). In highlighting the Fred Coe collection, the WCFTR website explains Coe as “unquestionably one of the most important figures in 1950s American television.”⁵² Yet, it is doubtful that his notoriety in the television industry was cause for Hethmon to approach Coe. At the time Hethmon solicited Coe, Coe was working more in theater. There was no indication that Coe responded to Hethmon’s request. It was not until 1969 that the WCTR approached Coe again.

The WCTR sent out similar letters to others actively involved in television, but who were presently involved in theater. Loring Mandel, an individual who had a career spanning radio, television, movies, and theater (and was a UW-Madison alumnus, which helped), received such a letter in 1961. Mandel had writing credits for a number of the Golden Age shows such as *Armstrong Circle Theatre* and *Playhouse 90*, as well as an assortment of dramatized documentaries and other programs. Hethmon lost contact, though, and a later WCTR director picked up correspondence. David Davidson, who was a producer associated with many notable Golden Age dramas but had little role in the theater world, also received such a letter. Helen Manfull, as acting director (a stop-gap director awaiting the official appointment of the next director, David Knauf, after Hethmon was let go presumably for his emphatic collecting for theater materials beyond

⁵² Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, “Fred Coe: Producer Extraordinaire,” *Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research*, accessed February 10, 2013, <http://www.wcftr.commarts.wisc.edu/collections/featured/goldenagetv/coe/>.

the Society's ability) continued to use Hethmon's language in soliciting donations, as she did when writing the first letter to Davidson. She solicited Davidson on advice of a UW professor, Jerry McNeely, who taught television writing and was a friend. The WCTR also solicited him for his connection to the Writers Guild of America – East, an organization formed to represent radio and television writers (as opposed to playwrights, who were represented by another union). Regardless of the reason for approaching Davidson, the connection was fortuitous. Davidson was instantly interested in the WCTR's efforts, even if the form letter stressed the preservation of theater materials. Within months of meeting Manfull, he sent the first round of his donation, which included "texts of twelve of my television plays, together with various notes and newspaper clippings."⁵³ Davidson's donation did not include anything related to the "traditional" theater stage that the WCTR previously collected. Whereas Chayefsky and Gore Vidal (who penned a few televisions scripts and donated his materials in the 1960s) had materials that spanned forms and media, Davidson appeared to have been one of the first people approached with a career solely in television. His donation served as a bridge, taking a step away from the collection of television as addendums to theater-related manuscript collections.

The "T" Might as Well Stand for Television: David Davidson and the WCTR's New Collecting Focus

Davidson was approached for his "career in our theater," but he proved to be an especially fruitful connection in forging a deeper path into television. He referred to his involvement not only as a "service to [the WCTR] in helping to a pioneer a television

⁵³ David Davidson to Helen Manful, October 12, 1962, Office Files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

research center” but among his hobbies (gardening and antique hunting, “somehow seems related to both”).⁵⁴ His involvement with the WCTR occurred in a parallel manner to Kaltenborn’s active involvement with shaping the MCHC’s collecting scope. Much like how Kaltenborn helped to facilitate a goal to collect the broadcast press, Davidson steered the WCTR towards television, albeit still limited to dramatic television. Further, this case reiterates the importance of individuals who are vocal and take a proactive role in forming archives. Hethmon was vocal with an intent focus on theater, working to form an archive to further the academic legitimacy of theater. His successors, however, demonstrated an interest in a broader conception of theater and the performing arts. Following Manfull’s brief stint as acting director (she stayed on as assistant director), David Knauf started his tenure around October 1962 with an open mind towards television, which was especially helped by Davidson’s enthusiasm for locating leads and speaking with his colleagues about the WCTR.

Davidson was thanked for his donation, particularly as a source for television. More importantly, though, he had two contributions that were just as invaluable as his own donation. His first contribution was through his contacts. Lots of contacts, mostly all in the television industry (although, he also had strong ties to the film, and helped out there). These contacts represented a holistic view of dramatic writing, which included both drama and comedy⁵⁵. Knauf was grateful, noting that all of Davidson’s contacts were receptive to the WCTR and even provided additional leads. Moreover, Knauf wrote to Davidson, “you’ve spurred us on in the unexploited research area of television

⁵⁴ David Davidson to David Knauf, March 28, 1963, Office F files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

⁵⁵ David Davidson’s Referrals document, located in his donor file, lists 39 contacts by 1970.

provides, and we're into it now with a vengeance!"⁵⁶ This leads to the second contribution, whereby Davidson articulated the purpose of such a collecting effort. Or rather, he implicitly framed the discursive construction of television as worthy archiving. In reply to Knauf's previous comment, Davidson wrote

Your letter opens a new vista for the entire project. You could limit it, if you wish, to the works of television's most distinguished writers. On the other hand, by broadening the concept to accept also the works of regular journeymen TV playwrights, you could in a short time accumulate the vast body of scripts representing all the shows and all the tendencies in TV drama since it really first got going about 1948. That is, Wisconsin would then be in a unique position of a repository of a total history of TV playwriting, expanding even from drama into the fields of comedy and the documentary. My feeling is that such a collection would be precious for future historians and analysts of television, as well as for the young writer who wants to study the various forms and artists in the fields.⁵⁷

From these conceptions, a newly-defined area of specialized collecting emerged. A project to collect the raw materials of theater expanded to include television within its bounds. Davidson expressed concern about the hierarchies within the dramatic form. While his conception of a television archive focused on television playwriting, he was not aloof to the significance of comedy and documentary. Such a statement demonstrated the foresight that future historians would have an interest in this material. Knauf was in agreement, picking up on documentary for possible expansion and noting an interest in also pursuing production and business records. He even joked "at the rate we're going,

⁵⁶ David Knauf to David Davidson, March 19, 1963, Office Files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

⁵⁷ Davidson to Knauf, March 19, 1963.

we'll be calling ourselves the Wisconsin Center for Television Research, and we'll be putting David Davidson on the payroll!"⁵⁸

The WCTR was starting to encroach on the conception of television as it was collected by the MCHC. That is, the WCTR approached television as an industry and sought out documentation about the business side of television production. However, a sense of cooperation was not lost. Knauf wrote to Davidson that the MCHC, "of which the Theatre Research Center is an integral part, is the official repository for NBC. We've received many scripts from them that might very well dictate new channels of thoughts in our collecting scheme."⁵⁹ Such a sentiment demonstrated that Knauf was taking television seriously as well as the principles of the archive process by identifying the existing strengths housed with the Society as leads for new directions. Nevertheless, the WCTR discursively constructed television as the performing arts (or entertainment). Overall, mention of the Society and the MCHC tended to be mostly absent from correspondence with donors, failing to connect that donors' papers will reside in close quarters with the complementary collections located within a mass communications framework, such as network files, television station files, and manuscript collections of advertising men and journalists.

The Entertainment Industry and Performing Arts Labels

The first round of pitch letters stated the WCTR's purpose as "engaged in preserving for the use of future scholars and historians of the American theatre significant

⁵⁸ David Knauf to David Davidson, March 26, 1963, Office Files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

⁵⁹ David Knauf to David Davidson, April 09, 1963, Office Files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

materials serving to illustrate the history of contemporary theatre and to record the contributions to it of distinguished individuals.” This pitch was amended to include “and cinema” when targeting specific people.⁶⁰ With the change in leadership also came changes in the pitch letters to donors. Such a move reflected shifts in priorities; namely, the priority to document television from the standpoint of the creator (as in, writer) and the producer. The new pitch letter had two significant changes that signaled this shift in priorities as well as a deeper sense of the archival purpose. The first change was an early-stated acknowledgement of television. This was followed by an articulated sense of preserving materials with historical value. For example, the following was the pitch to Rod Serling:

The Center is attempting to assemble and preserve the papers and manuscripts of distinguished contributors to the American Theatre in order to prevent the loss, through circumstance, of irreplaceable materials of great interest to future scholars, biographers, and historians of stage, cinema, and television. We would be honored to have among the permanent collections of the Center one representing your life and your significant contribution to television drama.⁶¹

The new pitch letter not only acknowledged television as the individual’s career (as opposed to theater), but also was conceptualized as valuable for historical inquiry and scholarship alongside theater and cinema. Albeit, vaguely defined; the articulation of value became clearer towards the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s. A follow up letter to Serling further clarified that his collection would be in the company of Chaeyfsky, Gore Vidal, and Davidson, an addition to the “invaluable holding in this area of television

⁶⁰ Helen Manful to David Davidson, August 13, 1962, Office Files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

⁶¹ David Knauf to Rod Serling, October 05, 1962, Office Files (unprocessed), Rod Serling Case File, WCFTR.

drama.”⁶² Similar letters were sent out to numerous people with variations in the language that reflected a recognition of an individual’s career. In this period of expansion to television (1963-1964), the WCTR reached out to individuals with distinguished careers as writers and producers (as well as careers in film and theater). For example, letters were sent to the following individuals who were still somewhat associated with the theatrical tradition and the writers of the dramatic form: Alfred Hitchcock (“significant contribution to film and television”), Philip Reisman (“your career in the performing arts”), Reginald Rose (“your career as a television writer”), and Gene Roddenberry (“your interesting and varied activities in the entertainment industry”).⁶³

The variation in language indicated a more personalized touch than Hethmon’s blanket approach to soliciting donations with only theater in mind. This also demonstrated the conceptual fluidity of television. Television was regarded as an industry, although qualified in terms of entertainment and creativity as a point of distinction away from mass communications industries. By drawing on the discourse associated with theater – the performing arts and connotations of high culture – the WCTR crystalized the importance of the author. Pursuing the work of an individual author tends to be conventional approach in the archive, similar to pursuing the donation of individual journalists as a prism for the larger industry. To seek out the collection of an individual television writer was not that far removed from acquiring the papers of a novelist. In contrast to the MCHC and their effort to archive television as an industry, the WCTR

⁶² David Knauf to Rod Serling, Dec 4, 1962, Office Files (unprocessed), Rod Serling Case File, WCFTR.

⁶³ Knauf to Hitchcock, Oct 5, 1962; Knauf to Reisman, Dec 1962; Knauf to Rose, April 25, 1963; Knauf to Roddenberry, Oct 11, 1963; Each letter located in respective donor files, Office Files (unprocessed), WCFTR.

archival effort occurred in an opposite direction, archiving the works of individual authors with distinguished careers in television.

Archiving television as a constituent part of the entertainment industry or the performing arts, however, was not limited to the dramatic form or the author. The expansion from the dramatic form was particularly surprising. As noted earlier, Davidson was instrumental in envisioning the imperative to archive television and the WCTR's capacity to do so. He offered leads on both accounts, suggesting names of comedy writers, documentarians, and producers. For example, he recommended Max Wilk, "a top comedy writer and should be ready to recruit for you many of his brothers in that field."⁶⁴ Davidson also noted that *I Love Lucy* represented the best of television comedy; thus Knauf wrote to Lucille Ball for her contribution to the entertainment industry, especially via the Desilu Studios (the WCTR kept trying to secure a donation, but to no avail). Knauf also extended an invitation to Carl Reiner, likewise stressing his contribution to the entertainment industry.⁶⁵ Overall, it was clear that the WCTR made attempts to acquire collections that were not necessarily rooted in a high-culture hierarchy.

On the producer front, he introduced the WCTR to David Susskind, whose collection proved to be one of the most substantial contributions to documenting television production. The letter to Susskind stated the following justification for his contribution:

As an adjunct to our manuscript collections relating to the legitimate stage, we are attempting to gather together a complete body of research material

⁶⁴ Davidson to Knauf, April 28, 1963. Max Wilk's papers were not acquired and unknown if pursued, but his papers are now at Yale.

⁶⁵ David Knauf to Lucille Ball, Dec 3, 1963, Lucille Ball Case File; David Knauf to Carl Reiner, Sept 2, 1964, Car Reiner Case File; in Office Files (unprocessed), WCFTR.

of television drama and documentary from the earliest experimental days of the medium to the present time. We are hopeful that certain of the script files of Talent Associates may be made available to us for deposit in our archives. We are very interested as in well in material relating to your own career in film and television.⁶⁶

This marks one of the first articulations of an archival goal to collect television *as television*; not drama on television or the work of a particular author, which then extrapolated outwardly to the entertainment industry. The WCTR's interest in pursuing television seemed to be blurring the distinctions between the performing arts and mass communications, conflating one specialized collecting scope with another. The main point, however, was the active collection of television, whether via the WCTR's newly defined interest in the business side or via the MCHC's ongoing efforts to process the NBC papers and solicit additional collections associated with broadcasting. Perhaps one marker of distinction between the two was that of quality and authorship.

Quality "Products" and the People Who Made That Happen

About ten years into television's firm cultural and social hold, the *New York Times* television critic, Jack Gould, reflected on the status of the medium and its content. He wrote, "there is no reason why TV should have something of an inferiority complex toward qualitative works indigenous to the medium."⁶⁷ This sentiment was written in 1955, around the time that the MoMA was experimenting with television as a unique and specific medium, both as a medium to transmit programming about art and as an object potentially belonging in the cultural institution. It took about another ten years for an archive to make the concerted effort to likewise recognize the quality works that were

⁶⁶ Davidson to Knauf, April 30, 1963.

⁶⁷ Jack Gould, "TV: Twice-Told Tale: Repeat Performance of 'Patterns' Called Incentive for Others to Do Likewise," *New York Times*, February 11, 1955.

indigenous to the medium. For the sake of argument, consider television programming as the product of a confluence of creative endeavors, within the confines of industry practices and a new medium. The work that goes into producing the television product is the process. In the case of the MCHC, they were focused on collecting documentation about the processes of television within the larger context of mass communications. Such contexts included the network, trade organizations, pioneering efforts to develop the technology, the adaptation of the press, regulation, advertisers, and so on. The qualitative work *on* television was not a priority, but rather the institutional, industrial, technological, and functional aspects. This meant, the acquisition of materials related to how television functioned within social systems, such as effects of persuasion and tv as an instrument of democracy. As such, quality was not at the forefront as criteria of selection.

The WCTR, conversely, was focused on soliciting quality creative products and the processes that created such products. As evidenced by the above discussion, seeking out the materials for the study of theater, cinema, and then television, all share a common core. The author and the producer – people who can easily be identified as creating and fostering the quality product. The WCTR’s sense of purpose to preserve materials of the performing arts discursively made space for television within its scope, more so than the MCHC and its inscription of television as broadcasting and industry. Such a purpose meant drawing on notions of quality and authorship (or producership) as criteria of selection. For example, when explaining the Center’s television holdings, the emphasis was on “distinguished writers for television” as the entry point to preserve television (specifically, the drama).⁶⁸ The WCTR formed an archival space for television by

⁶⁸ Furstenberg, “WCTR.”

focusing on the works of distinguished writers. In collecting the creative product and the process of its creation, the WCTR also strengthened televisions' historical value: a donation by television writer and producer, E. Jack Neuman, was described as "provid[ing] insights into recent attitudes regarding television as a medium for the presentation of social issues," especially television executives.⁶⁹ Similarly, Reginald Rose, "one of the most successful and prolific writers of television's 'Golden Age,'" and his donation chronicling *The Defenders* was rich in demonstrating how a writer could "capitalize upon his ability to tackle sensitive issues and to produce commercially successful scripts based up on them."⁷⁰

The WCTR was fully engaged in the preservation of quality, as in those programs that were "indigenous" to the medium and distinguished with awards. Quality was most certainly the label applied to the live anthologies. However, evidence also points towards quality in other respects. For example, Knauf's quest to seek out the "best dramatic" programming included "drama, comedy, family situation, etc...." as well as "documentary series since the earliest days of TV."⁷¹ This included a oft-repeated canon of Golden Age dramas and documentary programs: *Studio One*, *Playhouse 90*, *Climax*, *You Are There*, *Armstrong Circle Theater*, *Producers' Showcase*, *Philco-Goodyear*, and *Kraft Theatre*.⁷² But this also included the programs acknowledged as quality and popular such as *I Love Lucy*, *Mr. Peepers*, *The Danny Kaye Show*, and *Bonanza* (as

⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁰ "WCTR Newsletter," June 1970, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1969-1970-1971, WHS.

⁷¹ Davidson to Knauf, Sept 6, 1963.

⁷² Davidson to Knauf, Oct 2, 1963.

evidenced by solicitation letters to Lucille Ball, Fred Coe, Mrs. Danny Kaye, and E. Jack Neuman in WCFTR correspondence files). The WCTR was even at the cusp of acquiring a soon-to-be famous and cult favorite television program, *Star Trek*, by virtue of contacting Gene Roddenberry as he was transitioning from the cold war era drama, *The Lieutenant*, to a new science fiction pilot.⁷³ Tried as they might, the acquisition never came to fruition at the WCTR. However, this is one example of archival selection not rooted in a Golden Age discourse or taste hierarchies. Instead, the emphasis was on two key factors: a broad notion of quality and/or popularity and the promise of a complete collection. On the latter point, the ideal archival collection is always to solicit donations that are comprehensive and complete. In the case of Roddenberry, for example, he had a quality product (*The Lieutenant*, noted also for its handling of social issues), but moreover, his potential collection was valuable in its extensiveness. His potential collection, like many others, was highly regarded for its documentation of a program's development, from inception to production to reception. The field trip report noted that such a collection at the WCTR would provide "a complete picture of how a complex TV series [*Star Trek*] grows."⁷⁴ At that point, the WCTR had no idea whether a show like *Star Trek* would be quality or popular, but they were aware of the quality in materials documenting the creative and industrial processes.

A sampling of the field reports and invitation letters (to establish a collection) suggests that quality was somewhat broader a notion than initially anticipated. In other words, quality did not necessarily mean the distinguished drama. Even the status of

⁷³ David Knauf to Gene Roddenberry, October 1963, Office Files (unprocessed), Gene Rondeberry Case File, WCFTR.

⁷⁴ Balio, "Report on Field Trip to LA."

award-winner (such as an Emmy or WGA award) was not a conditional factor in selection; although it certainly helped and was noted when appropriate, but there was no overwhelming mention of “award winner” among the WCTR’s documents of operation. Rather, the focus was archiving the processes behind the quality product. To do so required the identification of a clear author and/or producer (and the beginning of the hyphenate, writer-producer) and pursuing such individuals for their careers in the entertainment industries, performing arts, or whichever label used to encapsulate television. Television might have been a “bad object” but still had quality products in its midst.⁷⁵ As such, collecting the quality products of television was one approach.

Conversely, television also entered the archive when it was not the product sought, but rather in the shadows of other priorities. Similar to the ways in which the WCTR acquired television-related materials as part of more theater-oriented collections, a substantial amount of television programs and records accompanied a major film acquisition.

Television as Addendum to the Film Industry: The United Artist Acquisition

The Center had a major turning point with the donation of the United Artists (UA) collection in 1969. According to the WCTR director responsible for securing this massive donation, Tino Balio, this was the “largest single gift of film material ever presented to a research institution.”⁷⁶ The UA collection was perhaps the most significant acquisition for at least three reasons: cultural capital, a redirected focus, and the “bonus” television

⁷⁵ Julie D’Acci, “Cultural studies, television studies, and the crisis in the humanities,” in *Television after TV: essays on a medium in transition*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 418–444.

⁷⁶ UW News, “Press Release,” October 13, 1971, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, Gen Corr / Misc., WHS.

collections. Whereas the WCTR had been acquiring impressive collections in the past decade, this one was particularly strong for its cultural capital. This donation affirmed the WCTR's status as an important and legitimate archive.

The United Artists archive represented decades of film history, featuring not only scripts and films, but more importantly, corporate, legal, financial, and publicity records.⁷⁷ Scholars and students had access to the files of UA's founders (Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith) as well as Warner Film Library, RKO Film Library, and Monogram Film Library. A blossoming moment for film scholarship, the UA acquisition substantially supported scholarly and educational endeavors at the UW campus and beyond. Moreover, the WCTR also had a substantial and prestigious collection to add to their list of donors, which were listed in donor solicitation letters and promotional materials (along with other names such as Paddy Chayefsky and Michael Douglas). Given the exponential increase in film material, the Center sharpened its focus on film, most notably by defining a Film Archive (still housed within the Society) and hiring a Film Archivist.⁷⁸ The new position and newly defined place within the Society's reading room dealt with the UA films and other WCTR-held films, but also films held by the Society and the MCHC, such as newsfilm and home movies. This also eventually raised the question of identity, prompting a name change around 1975 to include Film in its title.

⁷⁷ "UA Collection Projection," May 13, 1970, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, Gen Corr / Misc., WHS.

⁷⁸ Steve Masar, "WCFTR Film Equipment Request," May 22, 1974, Administrative Subject Files (1995/003), Box 3, WCFTR Field Reports and Policies, WHS.

Lastly, but most relevant for this project, the UA collection included television. And this was not just a small collection of a few scripts or television films. The pivotal United Artists acquisition in 1969 included television productions: over 2,091 television films, with each film as an episode, representing 38 programs.⁷⁹ By comparison, there were 1,751 feature films. Additionally, the collection included over 12,000 negatives, filmed on either 16mm or 35mm, with anywhere from one to eight reels for a single episode. This was a rich possibility for outtakes and production research, assuming that the technology was available to play such material. Also donated were hundreds of scripts. The television component was the Ziv-TV collection, the “largest syndication company in the history of television and the leading programming force outside the networks during the 1950s.”⁸⁰ United Artists purchased Ziv in 1960, hoping to get into the television market. However, UA’s ownership of the television production and distribution company was fortunate from an archival standpoint. Hypothetically, the company’s founder might have donated his materials to an archive, thereby documenting the history of the independent syndicator. A more likely scenario, however, would be that no one thought to ask him for such records. As part of a larger company, specifically a film company targeted by the WCTR, we have such records (and the films) for our use.

The Serendipity of Acquiring Television

The UA acquisition was certainly not sought out for its television assets. The priorities of the WCTR and the director, Tino Balio, were oriented towards film, even

⁷⁹ Steve Masar to Field Services, “Re: UA Collection Film Accessions,” January 26, 1971, Accession Records, MCHC 1969 Accessions, WHS.

⁸⁰ Tino Balio, *United Artists: the company that changed the film industry* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 108.

more so than theater. Thus, television was an addendum to this film industry collection, a bonus component as a consequence of industry consolidation. The entire UA archive was enormous (a parallel endeavor to processing the NBC archive in terms of financial resources, personnel, and space) and priorities had to be set. The Ziv television materials were at the bottom of the list, after Warner legal files, UA stillbooks, and Warner starheads.⁸¹ Still, the Ziv collection within the UA archive provided a remarkable resource. The influx of television films and scripts (in addition to the host of other materials in the UA collection, such as Warner Brothers cartoons) dramatically contributed to the WCTR's television holdings. The film archive usage reports indicated that not just the communications department, but also history and other departments on campus used television films.⁸² The multidisciplinary application of television programs strengthened the legitimate use of television as a source for social and cultural history.

Ultimately, in seeking the complete archives of a film studio, the WCTR acquired a substantial holding of television material, both the products (the over 2000 television episodes) and the documentation. Prior to this acquisition in 1969, the WCTR had successfully acquired a number of television-related collections, but from the perspective of either a single writer (such as Rod Serling) or from a single producer (such as David Davidson and David Susskind). The Ziv collection, however, represented a diverse array of programming types, writers, and documentation from the perspective of the distributor, rather than the writer or producer. Furthermore, the Ziv collection fostered a firmer stake

⁸¹ Susan Davis, "Usage of the Films in the United Artists Collection, Fall Semester," 1970, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 3, WCTR 1969-1970-1971, WHS.

⁸² "Film Archive First Semester Report, Sept 15, 1971 – Jan 21, 1972," c 1972, Administrative Subject Files (1995/003), Box 3, WCFTR Field Reports and Policies, WHS.

in archiving television. In general, archives strive to acquire collections that support one another, forming strengths in particular areas for the benefit of the researcher while continually building on the quantity and clout of a specialized area to attract further donations. Throughout the 1960s, the WCTR slowly strengthened their stake in television. The UA acquisition, with the fortunate television addendum (especially actual television films), was one more step towards a more concerted effort to collect all facets of television.

As evidenced by the WCTR's collecting efforts from the mid-1960s into the 1970s, television was conceptualized as a product (the programming) and as an industry. It was a valued component to the theatrical tradition and creative endeavors falling under the performing arts umbrella. But also, there was an emerging appreciation for television as a lens into social, political, and economic histories, with programming as reflective of social issues and political strife (most notably, blacklisting and censorship in the conservative cold war era). Amidst the tension between the WCTR and the Society in terms of controlling what gets collected, television entered the archive despite the volumes and volumes of materials associated with its production and the complications brought on by the acquisition of films. Space was made for television as part of negotiating the resource allocation for the United Artists donation – a film archive along with a film archivist who would also handle the Society's moving image materials was part of that negotiation. Initially, space was made without making a distinction of quality or authorship. Prior to the Ziv / UA acquisition, television was sought out with more refined set of criteria that relied on such markers of distinction. The move from author to

producer was one shift in accessioning a broader array of television materials than might have been initially sought.

The Ziv collection signaled another shift, one that inadvertently brought on volumes of television films, thereby fueling the search for more television programs and documentation related to its production. Like the NBC archive in the MCHC, the Ziv collection also represented one avenue to archive television from an industrial point of view, with few criteria regarding quality and taste. Deliberate or not, the WCTR added to the television part of their archive, specifically archiving programs and the creative / industrial processes that were not anchored in discourses of quality and the performing arts. Moving into the 1970s, the WCTR still focused on the writer and producer (and the emerging writer-producer, such as Grant Tinker of MTM Enterprises). And they still focused on quality, especially as it intersected with popularity. Even more so than in the 1960s. The perceptions about television had shifted from the 1960s to the 1970s; there seemed to be a more forgiving view of television as a medium of popular culture, appraised for quality and more so its popularity. For example, consider Horace Newcomb's *TV: The Most Popular Art* published in 1974 as an indicator about the critical climate concerning television. By the time of the UA acquisition with the fortunate television addendum, the WCTR had quite a stake in television thanks to its interest in the performing arts. When viewed holistically, the efforts of both centers (MCHC and WCTR) covered a surprisingly representative sampling of television and documentation of creative and industrial processes, ranging from educational to journalistic to documentary to a spectrum of quality and long forgotten programs.

Momentum and Obstacles to Archive Television

Going into this project, I assumed that a major obstacle in archiving television was a lack of interest. That is, a lack of interest until the 1970s, at which point television studies ascended into the academy alongside a general critique of the canon and a critical appreciation for popular culture and cultural histories.⁸³ The impetus to archive television might have begun as preserving the theatrical tradition as it developed for television, but the archival effort soon embraced creators and producers representing various television programming forms (even if those individuals were also associated with theater and cinema). Around 1963, there seemed to be little judgment about whether an individual's achievements occurred on the television screen rather than on the stage or cinematic screen. Still, taste hierarchies and perceptions of television's overall value impeded an all-out effort to collect television, keeping mostly to the dramatic form or the career arc of a producer.

The achievement, at least from the perspective of tracing television's inclusion in the archival world, was when the WCTR articulated two points towards the end of the 1960s. One, it was clear that television was more visible in the WCTR's public and donor communication. Rather than a mission to collect theater and cinema, the WCTR's purpose was "to collect and preserve historical source materials pertaining to the development of all areas of the performing arts. Its collections, more than 110 in number, contain materials documenting aspects of the theater, film, television, and music in America since 1900."⁸⁴ Television was there. The caveat, however, was that the

⁸³ D'Acci, "Cultural studies, television studies, and the crisis in the humanities."

⁸⁴ Furstenberg, "WCTR."

television collections highlighted in places like newsletters and donor pitches were those that coincided with a performing arts discourse, privileging the drama and distinguished authorship. Thus, the very fact that the WCTR mentioned television as part of the mission signaled a level of legitimation previously unacknowledged. Two, a sense of historical and cultural value was increasingly placed on television. Earlier articulations of archival value, a term used to collectively refer to the historical and cultural dimensions of archival material valued for research purposes, were sparse or vague in the first few years of WCTR's operation. Toward the end of the 1960s, however, notations regarding television's potential contribution to historical and cultural understanding became more abundant. The direct relationship between this archival institution and scholarly activities (especially on campus, but also in general) further fostered a perceptual shift regarding television's worth as an academic and as an archival pursuit.

There was a firm foundation to move forward in seeking out more television, particularly as conceptions of television's overall value changed. The following section further traces the archiving of television within the WCTR's scope, pointing towards expanding justifications for television's inclusion the archive (not just quality, but also the popular). In asking why we have the materials that we do have in the archive (at Wisconsin in particular, but also a more generalizable), the preference of the person in charge of collecting is not the only culprit. Material constraints in an archive's ability to process and store collections is another culprit, as indicated earlier in this chapter and in the previous one. The major obstacle I am referring to, however, is beyond the archive's ability to fully control. The WCTR, along with many other archives, faced the economic matters and the conflation of financial benefits with long-term historical benefits. Thus,

the following section begins with a look at the removal of a major financial incentive to donate documentation of one's career in the creative industries – the Tax Act of 1969, which eliminated tax deductions for donating self-generated creative work. With the financial incentive gone, the WCTR had to be more deliberate and persuasive in forming their archive, especially television. This matter of economics and perceptions of financial gain were further compounded by the consolidation of the television industry in the 1970s. Despite the obstacles – economic, material resources available within the archive, and matters of taste – the WCTR actively pursued television, alongside its original allegiances to theater and film.

End of the “Golden Age of Collecting” – the Tax Act of 1969

For the WCTR, a golden age of collecting activities coincided with their efforts to acquire collections that might constitute television's golden age. Tino Balio referred to the 1960s as the Center's “golden age of collecting.”⁸⁵ Favorable tax codes enabled the WCTR (as well as the MCHC and any other collecting institution in the country) to make a strong pitch for financial incentives when writing solicitation letters to potential donors. Certainly altruistic acts to donate one's materials for the good of history were enhanced by financial incentives (and a boost to the ego that an academic institution cared about one's business letters and such). For example, Phillip Reisman (the film and television screenwriter) indicated that the tax deduction and his vanity were “both secondary consideration. That [his donation] might be useful is satisfactory enough.”⁸⁶ However, the Tax Act of 1969 altered the terms for donors and eligible tax write-offs, with no

⁸⁵ Interview with Tino Balio, Aug 2013, Madison, WI.

⁸⁶ Philip Reisman to David Knauf, January 11, 1963, Office Files (unprocessed), David Davidson Case File, WCFTR.

deductions for when individuals in the creative industries donate their materials to an archival institution.

The generous tax deduction was in place to “encourage the donating of materials of research value to educational institutions.”⁸⁷ Before the tax change, the tax write-off was relatively simple for an individual: an experienced appraiser assessed the contents of a donor’s collection (anything from scripts to correspondence to financial records to personal materials), the donor then claimed the appraised value on that year’s income tax return with the stipulation that “the value deducted for one year may not exceed thirty percent of the donors annual gross income.”⁸⁸ The tax reform in 1969, however, “eliminated a deduction for ‘self-created’ materials.”⁸⁹ A donor could still deed his or her gift to the university, but could not take a deduction for said gift. Although not an ideal situation, post-tax reform the WCTR suggested to donors to place their materials on deposit in the hopes that the law would change and then a formal donation with its associated tax benefits could be made at a later date. The difference was that when deeded to the university (or the Society), that institution physically owned the materials (but not the copyright or right to reproduction, exploitation, etc.). On deposit meant that the WCTR was just storing the material while making them available to students and scholars. This situation was far more precarious in terms of ownership and created a situation where the archive was in limbo as to what they could do with the materials (and

⁸⁷ Tino Balio to Fred Coe, April 01, 1969, Office Files (unprocessed), Fred Coe Case File, WCFTR.

⁸⁸ Tino Balio to Roddeberry, Nov 9, 1966, Office Files (unprocessed), Gene Roddenberry Case File, WCFTR.

⁸⁹ Kay Johnson to Hal Kanter, Dec 8, 1972, Office Files (unprocessed), Hal Kanter Case File, WCFTR.

especially problematic decades after the deposit, when administrators and archivists change and/or donors pass away).

The ramifications were considerable. First, archivists heightened collecting efforts leading up to the tax act, soliciting donations before the major financial incentive was removed.⁹⁰ At the WCTR, they reopened many long-neglected leads in the hopes of securing donations. For example, Robert Hethmon had approached Fred Coe in 1961 (under the pretext of theater) but never pursued him. Tino Balio approached Coe again in light of the tax changes. In Coe's case, he was less concerned with the tax deduction, and took his time finally establishing his collection in 1979.⁹¹ For others, though, the incentive to donate right before the tax deadline worked wonders in speeding up the process. So much so that the WCTR successfully acquired what would appear to be an MCHC collection; for example, Donald Hyatt donated materials relating to his documentary work for television, notably *Project XX* and *Victory at Sea*. Second, and similarly to the first, the archivists used the tax reform as friendly reminder for current donors to donate additions to their collections. For example, Paddy Chayefsky, Rod Serling, Reginald Rose, and a number of others added to their already established collections.

Third, there was the overall view that there would be consequences in the long run since the economic incentive was a major tipping point in favor of donation. As

⁹⁰ For example, this was the context in which Ed Kemp at the University of Oregon invited Peg Lynch to establish a collection. It is also worth noting that the WCTR had a few competitors at this point. Gene Gressley at the University of Wyoming was making a big push in the late 1960s to build up the entertainment collections at the American Heritage Center.

⁹¹ Tino Balio, "Field Trip Report," December 07, 1970, Office Files (unprocessed), Fred Coe Case File, WCFTR.

evidenced with the WCTR, there were some adjustments but hope was not lost. In reference to the WCTR's collecting efforts (particularly film), Assistant Director Kay Johnson optimistically noted some factors working in their favor:

Of primary importance, I am sure, is the proliferation of the writing of film history.... Filmmakers themselves have become historically conscious ... They want the records of their careers preserved, and one of the Center's strongest selling points is the excellent archival care that its collections receive at the State historical Society of Wisconsin. Secondly, the Center now speaks for itself. That is, with the acquisition ... of important collections like United Artists, filmmakers find that their own collections complement and are complemented by collections that we already hold... by now the Center has become known for its 'aggressive' collecting and people are impressed with it... In summary, then, I think the possibilities for collecting in film and, by implication, in television are wide open.⁹²

The financial argument was no longer as strong as before, but surely the WCTR was not cut off from any future possibilities. Indeed, they had accumulated enough clout and respect to propel them into the next decade. The collections acquired in the first decade of their existence featured an impressive array of big names that could be translated as cultural capital to secure more collections. Above all, there was an emerging historical consciousness and a growing recognition on the part of the industry. Increasingly, archives across the country were making space in their vaults for the entertainment industry, with the archives in Madison, Wisconsin among the leading institutions. The tax reform altered the grounds for all archives, removing the financial incentive to donate. The next step was to argue for the non-tangible benefits. Namely, the WCTR framed the abstract notions of archival and research value, rendered as benefiting curricular goals, future researchers, and an overall sense of contributing to the records of history.

⁹² Kay Johnson, "Los Angeles Field Trip," December 07, 1970, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Corrs., Box 3, Field Trips – 1962-1973, WHS.

Reconceptualizing Television's Value

In the earlier part of the WCTR's formation, there seemed to be a vague sense of television's future value. While not necessarily trained as the forward-looking archivists at the Society, those that led the WCTR were researchers and scholars by trade (as professors or professors-to-be). Thus, it was not far fetched that they envisioned that perhaps some day, the materials they were gathering today would be of great interest to future scholars and students. The archivists involved in the formation of the mass communication archive seemed overly prepared with foreseeing research value, beginning with questions about what might the raw materials be and addressing how to stimulate research. Not involved in the field, but aware of their integral task, the archivists made more explicit references to research value (although, still somewhat vague, but at least mentioned often). Conversely, for the WCTR, there was little mention of research value within the earlier documentation. If there were references to research value, these tended to be generic implications that the materials *will* be of interest to future researchers, students, and biographers.

Initially, archival value was expressed as supporting research and curriculum about television writing and directing, which can be phrased as educational or curricular value. There was precedent in the archival setting to collect the literary works of notable authors; to collect the plays written for television was not too far removed from conventional selection criteria. The confluence of changing perceptions towards television and the need to push the non-tangible reasons to donate contributed to clearer articulations regarding television's worth; a worth that was not just limited to instructional purposes or as part of the theatrical tradition.

Gradually, there were more references to topics of interest to critical scholarship and cultural history. Censorship was one such topic, which indicated the processes that went into producing a program. Similarly, censorship illustrated how networks reflected and mediated social values and issues, and in doing so, might have compromised creative visions. Thus, television carried great research value as a demonstration of tensions between the creator and the network and industry. For example, Reginald Rose, creator of the socially relevant *The Defenders*, made note that some of his correspondence “will be amusing and help to indicate to anyone studying tv techniques the problems of censorship imposed by the networks.”⁹³ The reply from WCTR Assistant Director, Kay Johnson, offered another lens: “The memo from CBS is amusing but, at the same time, raises the questions of whether or not television, in its search for dialogue that is non-offensive, becomes less meaningful.... But you’re right to laugh while seeking to make the medium better.”⁹⁴ Television collections were acknowledged as having a “double scope,” with “episodes of a series that can be studied by both mass communications students and students of social history.”⁹⁵

Whereas early pitch letters simply said theater and cinema history, later pitches described the Center’s significance as a “leading institution for studies in the performing arts and social and cultural history.”⁹⁶ This meant that television materials were valued not just for their instructional purposes, teaching students how to produce, direct, and

⁹³ Reginald Rose to Kay Johnson, Oct 24, 1969, Office Files (unprocessed), Reginald Rose Case File, WCFTR.

⁹⁴ Kay Johnson to Reginald Rose, Nov 12, 1969.

⁹⁵ Sy Salkowitz to Kay Johnson, May 1969, Office Files (unprocessed), Sy Salkowitz Case File, WCFTR.

⁹⁶ Kay Johnson to Hal Kanter, October 1972, Office Files (unprocessed), Hal Kanter Case File, WCFTR.

write for television. Nor just as distinguished examples of aesthetic and dramatic achievement. The inclusion of “social and cultural history” signaled that television was a record of life, featuring facets of political, social, and cultural dimensions of American history. Television was also recognized as a prism where political ideology (such as the Cold War) and social issues (such as civil rights) melded with creative endeavors and television network structures. As indicated with Reginald Rose and *The Defenders*, the documents regarding the production of a program are vital in understanding the how tensions between creator and network (and between a perceptive writer and the society in which he lives in) shape the final program that we see on television. It was a most valuable collection for all sorts of scholarly and instructional purposes.⁹⁷ With that sentiment in mind, the WCTR approached people like Hal Kanter, the creator of *Julia* and producer on *All in the Family*, among other notable and not-so-memorable programs. Around the time that Horace Newcomb edited the first edition of *Television: The Critical View*, Julie D’Acci was writing letters to donors with lines like: “Increasing numbers of graduate students and researchers want to direct their attention to the serious study of American television.”⁹⁸ Television, in all its artistic, popular culture, and commercial glory, had made a mark on the academy and the archive. It is hard, in this case, to point out which came first – the archive or the academic interest. The fact remains, though, that television was valued.

⁹⁷ Kay Johnson to Reginald Rose, April 14, 1970.

⁹⁸ Julie D’Acci to Aaron Spelling, October 1977, Office Files (unprocessed), Aaron Spelling Case File, WCFTR.

Ensuring the Preservation of the Popular and the Articulated Television Archive

In 1963, then David Knauf half-joked with donor David Davidson about the WCTR as a television archive and research center. Knauf noted his effort to locate television (as well as radio) scripts to the growing television collections as a result of Davidson's donations and his contacts.⁹⁹ Such efforts were not sustained with the next director, Albert Wiener. By the 1970s, however, a television archive was an articulated priority, which could be traced back to Davidson. As Julie D'Acci, the WCTR Assistant Director in the 1970s, did in a letter thanking him for his invaluable contribution in "getting [television] collecting underway."¹⁰⁰ It seems far from coincidental that D'Acci emerged as one of the leading scholars of television as it ascended in the academy. Knauf was interested in television as a way to extend the still-new center's archival holdings, pursuing leads made by one key donor to grow the WCTR and its clout. But it was D'Acci, as well as Balio and Kay Johnson, who rigorously pursued a swatch of television programming.

Quality certainly remained as a criterion of selection. The definition of quality, though, had expanded. Perhaps the notion of quality came from the viewing public and the caliber of programs in the 1970s. Thus, the WCTR sought out donations from creators and producers of popular and quality shows. They contacted Aaron Spelling, Norman Lear, and Gary Marshall to no avail. They successfully acquired a donation from Hal Kanter, who created *Julia*, among other programs, as well as a substantial donation from Ed Sullivan. They wrote to Mary Tyler Moore in the hopes that she would establish a

⁹⁹ David Knauf to E. Jack Neuman, December 04, 1963, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 2, I-Sk, ca. 1959-1976, WHS.

¹⁰⁰ Julie D'Acci to David Davidson, April 27, 1977.

collection. As well, the WCTR communicated with Grant Tinker at CBS Studio Center, who was able to commit a donation of scripts and programs for all of MTM Enterprises' shows.¹⁰¹ Generally speaking, this drive to collect television came at a time of greater interest in popular culture belonging in the archive and in history.¹⁰² Implicitly, strands from cultural history and the valuation of the vernacular, popular culture inverted previously held notions of high culture. The caveat, however, that the WCTR still pursued mostly the products of primetime television.

One example of the percolating interest to archive the popular was Balio's efforts to track down *Bonanza*. The WCTR had sought out the papers of one *Bonanza* producer, David Dortort, in 1971. He donated documentation of the production process, including shooting schedules, scripts, and production reports. However, a condition of Dortort's donation was the inclusion of films, which were technically owned by NBC. Balio wrote to NBC, explaining the significance of the WCTR, alongside the MCHC, and their television holdings. He asked for NBC to donate a sampling of episodes, stressing that "without the films, the documentation of the series would be incomplete and the research value of the manuscripts would be lessened."¹⁰³ Sydney Eiges, Vice President of Public Information (who also communicated with Kaiser at the MCHC), responded positively,

¹⁰¹ The WCTR did attempt to acquire documents associated with the production of MTM Enterprises shows, not just scripts. See Office Files (unprocessed), MTM Enterprises Case File, WCFTR.

¹⁰² This trend was evident at various libraries across the country. Bowling Green State University started a center devoted to the study of popular culture, the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming heightening their efforts to collect popular culture, to name a couple of examples.

¹⁰³ Tino Balio to Walter Scott, June 22, 1971, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 2, I-Sk, ca. 1959-1976, WHS.

agreeing to *lend* fourteen films representing each of the fourteen seasons on NBC.¹⁰⁴ The films supplied by NBC, ready for strictly research and reference purposes, sealed the deal for Dortort's donation of production documentation. Such a move demonstrated the explicit understanding that the research value of documentation was greatly enhanced by the product, especially in an age before canonical reruns and home videos. A similar process occurred with the MTM Enterprises donation made by Grant Tinker. He had agreed to donate scripts for *Mary Tyler Moore* and all other MTM productions. The tapes, however, had to be secured from CBS. Balio made the same pitch to CBS as he did to NBC, stressing the need for film to go along with documentation.¹⁰⁵ Two key takeaways are one, a commitment to the popular, and two, a commitment to developing the moving image archive alongside documentation.

The WCTR approached Aaron Spelling in 1972, emboldened by an interest to actively pursue television as popular culture. At that time, he was known for *The Mod Squad*, *The Rookies*, and ABC Movies of the Week.¹⁰⁶ Kay Johnson succinctly noted in a field trip report the significance of seeking out the commercially popular: "Spelling is ABC's chief independent supplier of prime-time "product"; thus his collection would provide unique and invaluable research material regarding contemporary television production."¹⁰⁷ He was known for producing a product, not necessarily a product of

¹⁰⁴ Tino Balio to Sidney Eiges, June 18, 1973, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 1, A-H, WHS.

¹⁰⁵ Tino Balio to Robert Wood, December 16, 1974, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Correspondence, Box 1, A-H, WHS.

¹⁰⁶ "Note to File," October 1972, Office Files (unprocessed), Aaron Spelling Case File, WCFTR.

¹⁰⁷ Kay Johnson, "LA Trip, Oct 30-Nov 3, 1972," November 1972, Division of Archives (1983/139), WCFTR Corrs., Box 3, Field Trips – 1962-1973, WHS.

creative endeavors like previously sought after television producers. A Spelling collection had great potential in documenting the television industry, with an emphasis on the industrial component as well as cultural history. A few years later, the WCTR approached another creator of popular and commercially successful television programs, Gary Marshall. Like Spelling, the WCTR persistently tried to pursue Marshall amidst his busy production schedule as well as legal entanglement with the networks and production studios. Still, D'Acci explained that he was worth pursuing

because HAPPY DAYS and LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY while not 'art', have held high places in the Nielsen ratings for a long period of time. They should be documented if not for reasons of superior quality, for reasons of sociological significance and importance in television history.¹⁰⁸

While this note was intended for internal record keeping, it speaks volumes in regards to the history of television studies as well as television in the archive. This note affirmed the break in valuing television with criteria associated with discourse of the performing arts. Had the archive been operating under the presumption that only “art” belonged in its vaults, then perhaps television never would have entered to the extent that it did. As the WCTR formed and amassed collections, television as art was never quite articulated. However, it was presumed by way of collecting the exemplars of fine writing and cultured programming, which at times also meant popular. Documentation of programs that was neither popular nor quality is available in the archive, but acquired as a part of notable authors and producers. Deliberately noting *ratings* and *sociological significance* were indicative of budding academic interest in television.

¹⁰⁸ “Field Report Nov 6-13,” 1977, Office Files (unprocessed), Gary Marshall Case File, WCFTR.

This was part of the larger picture to develop a television archive within the WCTR. It was not until around 1977 that the words *television archive* or *television library* appeared in writing. For example, D'Acci's letter to Gary Marshall noted "we are continuing to develop a large television archive in addition to our already well established film and theater archives."¹⁰⁹ The desire and persistence was there, but the economic obstacle remained. As noted earlier, the tax reform removed the financial incentive to donate one's materials. Furthermore, the television industry was moving closer towards consolidation and tightly controlled system of networks and production studios. As indicated in a field trip note following a visit with Grant Tinker, the problem in successfully soliciting production records was "an acutely development wariness with regard to rights of ownership, and consequently rights of disposition." While the problem with acquiring prints from the studios and/or networks was that "providing prints or cassettes means an outlay of money with no consideration for return and no included benefits (not even those of helping to clean out the garage or studio closet). It is really, in most cases, a gratuitous gesture for history and research."¹¹⁰ The following (and final) section closes with a discussion about the major obstacle in archiving television.

The Business Manager and the Consolidated Television Industry

At this point, it should become clear that taste hierarchies privileging certain aspects of television were factors in television's inclusion in the archive, but perhaps not as major as originally anticipated. The WCTR made efforts to invite donations from a

¹⁰⁹ Julie D'Acci to Gary Marshall, March 1977, Office Files (unprocessed), Gary Marshall Case File, WCFTR.

¹¹⁰ "Field Trip Note," November 06, 1977, Office Files (unprocessed), MTM Enterprises Case File, WCFTR.

fairly representative range of television programming (even if the aim was to document the popular television product, with the less popular and more obscure programming as part of the writer's and/or producer's career arc). In some regards, then, it was not for lack of trying that some of television was not preserved. Rather, it was the economic aspect of the television *industry*. This was especially apparent as television industrialized in the 1970s into a tightly controlled system of networks and production companies.

When material (documentation and/or the moving image product) was in the possession of the creator or independent producer, there was far more leverage to negotiate a donation. However, as business managers and studio executives held more control, materials that might constitute a cohesive collection were harder to come by. Even in the 1960s, corporate ownership presented obstacles. For example, in pursuing a donation from Lucille Ball and her Desilu Studios, the major problem regarding “the availability (or more properly, the lack of availability) of records pertaining to the I Love Lucy show [was that] the series was sold to CBS and no one seems to know what happened to many of [the scripts and the production records] at the time of sale.”¹¹¹ The donation never happened, perhaps in part due to the obstacles in securing rights.

The business manager and the conditions of the television industry really surfaced in the 1970s. What had happened to the Aaron Spelling pursuit? He was interested in donating a collection, although he did not have much from his past productions; all he had were scripts neatly bound in leather binders. The really rich materials – legal papers, correspondence, business records, and so on – were off limits. Spelling wrote that his

¹¹¹ “Field Report Jan,” 1965, 7, Office Files (unprocessed), Field Trip Reports Through 1965, WCFTR.

business manager advised that “these papers and documents cannot be made public.”¹¹²

The pursuit continued for a few years, with promises to send materials soon, albeit purged of any traces of production processes. A collection never did happen. The culprit?

The business manager and matters of ownership. As noted in a field trip report,

The problem, as it turned out, was that they were not sure what to send, and were not sure just what they could send without legal problems from Twentieth Century Fox. Again, the problem of who owns, or has disposition rights over, what. After explaining that we are interested in documenting not only Spelling's life and career as a producer, but individual series with scripts, production material, cassettes, or films, [Spelling's assistant] advised that I begin corresponding with Marvin Katz at Twentieth Century Fox who manages Spelling's business affairs.¹¹³

A similar fate occurred with Garry Marshall. He expressed interest in establishing a collection after initial contact was made. His lawyers, however, dissuaded him. Again, the conversation was noted in field trip reports. D'Acci had just talked to Marshall's assistant, who said

that Marshall had been advised against the project. When I asked why, she said that the lawyers dissuaded him because there was no tax advantages, and no other reason to do it that would be financially beneficial. In my next letter to Marshall I will stress the advantages (although not monetary) of historic preservation, organization of his files, easy retrievability, and lack of storage problems.¹¹⁴

Another collection, barred from entering the archive for reasons beyond the center's control. In selecting the failed attempts to solicit donation, I aim to demonstrate that the formation of this television archive (and perhaps somewhat generalizable to others undertaking similar endeavors) was not solely subjected to personal taste. A confluence

¹¹² Aaron Spelling to Kay Johnson, April 17, 1973.

¹¹³ “Field Trip Note,” Nov 6-13, 1977, Aaron Spelling Case File.

¹¹⁴ “Field Trip Note.” Gary Marshall Case File.

of factors was at work. By the late 1970s, an inverse relationship occurred between what the archive was interested in collecting and what they were able to acquire. As the scholarly community and the archive grew more and more interested in the “serious study” of television, the potential donors pulled further away, tethered by legal and economic dynamics. A decade earlier, there was greater flexibility to acquire personal and business papers. The archive could approach an individual, and if that person was receptive, there were few barriers in securing a comprehensive manuscript material. When the time came that there was a greater appreciation for programs that were *popular*, and not just exemplary works of narrative and aesthetic achievement, the likelihood of acquiring documentation were grim. The caveat, though, was that the studios seemed receptive to loaning the programs to the WCTR for duplication (so the product could be preserved) were more generous with sending copies of scripts. Archiving the industrial and creative processes, though, were challenging. A broad conceptualization of television’s scholarly and historical value seemed to peak as the doors of acquisition closed. The corporatization of the television industry was such that documents of production became guarded corporate assets. Without financial incentive or sense of cultural/historical uses, the donation of television material was a hard sell.

Lessons from Television’s Archival and Academic Legitimation at the WCTR

This chapter sheds light on the formation of one of the most substantial television collections in the country. Reflecting on the WCTR development, the 1983 Director’s Report noted, “as academic and scholarly research grew in film, the Center began to emphasize film collecting; as interests in television history intensified, efforts in

broadcast collections expanded.”¹¹⁵ Television was not at the forefront when the WCTR began. One reason was that it was not institutionally supported; there were few guiding frameworks from academia or the archive. The archivists were vigilant to curtail any frivolous acquisitions, especially those that were voluminous.

Conceptually, one entry point for television was the theater, the performing arts, and more broadly the humanistic approach to the study of media. The WCTR pursued collections emphasizing “your career in our theater.” When the original director left, the new director was more open to exploring how television intersected with the performing arts. Subtly transitioning from performing arts to entertainment industry meant greater opportunities to pursue television and its various facets of creative and industrial processes. While not all of television was worth consideration, a surprising array of television genres and aspects of the industry were targeted for inclusion. A major moment for collecting was a change in the generous tax donations for self-created works, which brought an influx of television (even though television was not always the object of interest) to the WCTR. Following the loss of the financial incentive, the WCTR began defining television's worth explicitly in the context of cultural and historical worth. By the 1970s, the WCTR was more comfortable in approaching donors who represented the popular aspects of the medium, which were of interest for social and cultural history purposes. Indeed, the WCTR attained a degree of notoriety as a premier research center and archive, thus conferring television and its study with legitimacy. The irony, though, was that as the WCTR became increasingly interested in *directly* collecting a wide swatch of television’s material traces (the process and the product), factors in the

¹¹⁵ Balio, “WCFTR Director’s Report,” 8.

television industry made it more difficult for the archive to acquire desirable material. As such, it is important to keep in mind that in the history of archiving television, there was much beyond the control of the archivist or the academic who sought to bring television into spaces connoting historical, scholarly, and cultural worth.

Two particular dimensions informed the processes of selection and acquisition of television related collection as they occurred over time. On one level, physical and material constraints shaped what could be collected and to what extent. The construction of WCTR relied on Society archivists to turn donations into archival collections. The Society provided the time, labor, finances, storage space, and other resources. As such, the growth and degree of accessibility were beholden to these factors. On another level, discourses of quality, culture, and what constitutes as historical evidence figured into collecting priorities. It is important to stress, though, that at various times the WCTR exhibited foresight in who they solicited. Even if the WCTR envisioned someone's materials as crucial contributions that did not mean that the people on the other end agreed or were able to reciprocate the request. Perceptions of television's artistic merit or distinctions of quality were just one factor in the archiving process. This case study demonstrated the multiple layers of complexities that go into a process that seems largely beholden to individual biases. This is not to take away the power of the archivist or in this case, the academic, in deciding on what to pursue. The point is to highlight that these individuals operate within larger institutional and conceptual contexts.

The academic archive was a key site for television's legitimation, one that slowly treaded into a territory that designated television as historically and culturally valuable. Academics and archivists worked with one another (albeit, at times quite contentiously,

as they operated with different frameworks – the scholarly/pedagogical and the archival) to formulate what might be collected by archives and for what purpose. The archive tends to react to current academic trends and attempt at foreseeing future interest; but the MCHC and the WCTR case studies demonstrated that the archive is also a space that stimulated academic interest. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the two archiving efforts anchored in the mature archiving apparatus, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, situated television as archival and facilitated the contexts in which television could enter the archive. Whether these institutional structures inscribed television within mass communications (or rather, as broadcasting) or within the performing arts (as creative endeavors that take place on television), television’s material traces entered the academic archive. Likewise, television’s material traces – both documentation of the industrial and creative processes and the products – could ‘slip’ into the archive, given the propensity for media convergence and the fluidity of creative labor (e.g. the acquisition of television via corporate records or the playwright). The flexibility for some but not of all of television to fit into established archival and academic discourses facilitated many entry points for television’s inclusion in the archive, and thus, available for unknown future uses.

The case studies in this chapter and the previous one outlined institutional structures that facilitated the direct and indirect acquisition of television’s material traces. The rationales associated with pulling television into these archival spaces closely aligned the foundational logic of the traditional archive as well as academic disciplines. These case studies map onto the formation of various academic trends, particularly those that increasingly valued television as worthy of academic study. The case studies in the

next chapter can also offer insights about the scholarly valuation of television, but moreover, the industry-initiated archives demonstrate the deliberate strategy to utilize an archival logic to legitimate television. The next chapter shifts the focus onto the industry-initiated archives, which were born out of different rationales than the academic archives and further illuminate how television was valued in the 1960s and 1970s.

CHAPTER VII

PRESERVING RECORDED TIME CAPSULES:

INDUSTRY-INITIATED PROJECTS TO ARCHIVE TELEVISION

Pat Weaver, the man at the helm of NBC television in the 1950s, said television “is the best presence at an event – the best attendance at history.”¹ For television to truly be an attendant at history, though, it had to be recorded *and* accessible. It is the preservation of television as it was aired and recorded that is the central concern of this final chapter. While there were some early ideas to develop an archive or library of television programs, it was not until the late 1960s and the 1970s that these efforts were successful with the UCLA Film and Television Archive and the Museum of Broadcasting.

The previous case studies examined institutions with established and inherent structures and their propensity to facilitate television in archival spaces. The two case studies presented in this chapter, however, began as ideas from people in the television industry who had to seek out partnerships or build new structures. The industry-initiated archives are labeled thusly because a television trade organization and a broadcasting mogul (who serves as a stand in for the television industry as a whole) catalyzed efforts to archive television. Unlike the academic archive with an interest in gathering documentation of creative and industrial processes, the industry-initiated archives focused on television’s *recorded* material traces – the television program. And unlike an internal archive for a broadcast network or production company, the industry catalysts

¹ Sylvester “Pat” Weaver, “Concepts and Policies: A Policy Audit of TV and Radio Network Concepts”, August 1955, Bee Levery, Secretary to Pat Weaver, Binder 1: Concepts and Policies, Cinematic Arts Library, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

envisioned an archive for public use. The industry-initiated archives drew on interlaced archival, academic, and industry logics. The archival meant the collection, organization, and preservation of television's output. The academic referred to the inscription of television as historically and culturally significant materials that are used for research and instructional purposes. In other words, the academic logic was essential for keying into existing infrastructures. The industry orientation, on one level, referred to the internal logics to store past programs for referential, commercial, or legal reasons. More appropriate for this chapter, though, the industry logic was also a strategy to raise the cultural status and appreciation of television. If the previous three case studies exemplified the challenges in "fitting" television in existing archival spaces, these last two cases highlight the challenges in forging archival spaces specifically dedicated to television.

The television archives highlighted in this chapter were initiated by the television industry with the primary purpose to preserve and make available recorded television (and other media recorded media) to diverse publics. The caveat, though, is that both institutions were tied to and/or mimicked the other types of archives discussed in this project. One archive began when the director of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences in the 1960s actively pursued the idea of a television library or archive. It was not until the organization partnered with an academic institution with adequate resources and interest, UCLA, that such a vision succeeded and remains today as the UCLA Film and Television Archive. William Paley, the head of CBS and a broadcasting mogul, catalyzed the other archive. Before opening the Museum of Broadcasting, Paley commissioned a communications professor to study the existence of recorded programs

and tackle the problems of selection. With research, substantial funds, and representatives from the television industry (and some academics and archivists), Paley constructed an institution with characteristics of a museum, library, and archive.

In both cases, there was a reason to archive television, but it was unclear how to proceed. One idea developed into an academic archive, given its location within an academic institution that provided the infrastructure and prestige to make such a television archive possible. Another idea developed into the formation of a new cultural institution, which was less of an archive and more of a collector and public interpreter of the recorded program. Even with different institutional structures, the end goal was the same: frame television as culturally and historically valuable. The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and William Paley (as representative of the three major networks – his own CBS, NBC, and ABC) actively participated in the discursive formation of television as an American cultural heritage while strengthening television's claim as an attendant to history. How they proceeded is of direct interest to this dissertation about television's archivability. As such, this chapter has two related aims. One aim is to examine how people associated with the television industry enacted on a rationale to archive television. The reasons to archive television's most salient aspect – the programs – were apparent. Namely, that the industry had a dual interest in developing an archive of its recorded output in order to steer their own history and signifying television's cultural and historical value. Less apparent, though, was how to proceed. The other aim, then, is to examine how the different archival contexts – the academic archive and the cultural institution – played a role in fostering television's cultural and historical status and which aspects of television were privileged by such status.

The formative moments in these two archives – the UCLA Film and Television Archive and the Museum of Broadcasting – are illustrative cases about the designation of television as cultural and historical material and as worthy of scholarly study. Moreover, the differences in how these archives developed point to the stakes in defining archival spaces and classifying which television programs belong in these archival spaces. The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (hereafter referred to as the Television Academy) first drew pursued branch libraries to develop a national library of television programs, hoping to associate television with the literary and cultural qualities of public libraries. The partnership (and really, the stewardship) with an academic institution conferred the Television Academy’s project with legitimacy. The Museum of Broadcasting reflected a deliberate strategy to name the first institution dedicated to the collection and preservation of television (and radio) programs as a *museum*. It connoted qualities of a museum, such as cultural authority, the assemblage of a cultural heritage viewed and appreciated like art objects on a wall, and public enrichment. Although there were few explicit references to develop an archive, per se, both cases demonstrated archival tendencies: the selection of certain materials over others, the organization of materials so that they can be used for historical and scholarly research, and the overall commitment to validating television as historical evidence that must be preserved for posterity.

Both case studies begin with an overview of the primary institutions, then decisions to pursue projects to define television’s cultural and historical value, and lastly how such projects developed. For the first case study, the institution is the Television Academy and the context is the interest and attempts to elevate television’s status in the

early 1960s. The decision to pursue a television library was not a difficult one to make, but the Television Academy faced challenges in implementing its vision and was not wholly successful until the 1970s. This case study illuminates the importance of strong infrastructures, investment from the academic community, and clear conceptions of television's value beyond its moments of broadcast. For the second case study, the institution is the Museum of Broadcasting, with William Paley as the catalyzing force. The core feature of this case study was the steps leading up to the institution's opening in 1976. The decision to pursue an institution dedicated to television's history was in the form of a wide scale, multi-year study about the existence of television's recorded output and how to select the programs deemed appropriate for the soon-to-be Museum of Broadcasting. This case likewise highlights paths taken by the television industry to convey television's lasting cultural, historical significance by drawing on the academic realm. More so than the Television Academy's efforts, Paley's effort frames that significance as part of a cultural heritage framework. The two cases were linked together by virtue of both stemming from an industry interest to define television's worth. Although they diverge on the mechanisms to convey that worth, both cases depended on the academic context to aid in conferring such status and rally preservation efforts to save television's most notable and ephemeral trace – the audio visual record.

The Television Academy and the Pursuit of Legitimizing Television

The Television Academy formed around 1947.² The chief goals were to create a structure for industry professionals to exchange ideas to advance television, for educators

² The Television Academy started to keep records of its correspondence, minutes, and scrapbooks in order to secure its status as a legitimate organization. See "Minutes of the Board of Directors", August 10, 1948,

and public leaders to interact with industry professional in regards to television's public and artistic presence (and promise), to present awards, and to stimulate research.³ As part of the mission to elevate television's status amidst the film-centric Hollywood community, the Television Academy initiated the Emmy Awards in 1949. The Television Academy was envisioned as more than just a trade organization (such as the National Association of Broadcasters). It was designed as a resource to its members and especially focused on crafting a public case for television as an art and as constituent of culture.

Early on, one goal was to develop a library as a resource for members.⁴ The first step was a bibliography of books about television currently available.⁵ Next was to start building a collection, including television programs, by way of acquiring telefilms.⁶ In 1956, the Board took another step towards a library by formally authorizing "the establishment of an Television Academy archival library."⁷ It was not until 1959 with the

Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Archive, Hollywood Minutes: 5/13/47 to 12/20/49, Cinematic Arts Library, USC Libraries.

³ See Bylaws in "Monthly Meeting of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences", February 10, 1948, Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Archive, Hollywood Minutes: 5/13/47 to 12/20/49, Cinematic Arts Library, USC Libraries.

⁴ "Board of Governors Meeting", June 2, 1947, Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Archive, Hollywood Minutes: 5/13/47 to 12/20/49, Cinematic Arts Library, USC Libraries.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Specifically, the Television Academy acquired the "first films to be televised on the West Coast." "Monthly meeting of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences", September 18, 1948, Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Archive, Hollywood Minutes: 5/13/47 to 12/20/49, Cinematic Arts Library, USC Libraries.

⁷ Robert Lewine, "An Open Reply to David Yellin from the National Television Academy of Television Arts and Sciences," *Television Quarterly*, 1975.

formation of the Television Academy's educational arm, the Academy Foundation, when a more institutionalized effort to initiate a television archive started to take shape.⁸

The Academy Foundation, and the archive project soon to come, was part of the Television Academy's strategy to convey television's status as a legitimate art and respectable element of American culture. In other words, the Television Academy actively campaigned for television's legitimacy. One tactic was to cull academic support with the Television Academy produced academic style journal, *Television Quarterly*. The journal was first published in 1961 with "the cooperation of the Television and Radio Center at Syracuse University."⁹ In fact, the journal later noted that its inception was a direct result of FCC commissioner, Newton Minow's famous critique that television was a vast wasteland, where programs were generally deplorable and without substance.¹⁰ The journal, then, was a part of a concerted public relations effort.¹¹ The journal's board reflected the industry-initiated scholarly pursuit combined with drawing on television personalities associated with prestige. For example, the first board included Walter Cronkite as Co-Chairman alongside NBC's public relations executive, Sidney Eiges. The rest of the board was a who's who representing television networks, production companies, and popular criticism. Still, the editorial board mission claimed independence and critical scholarship.

⁸ Lynn Spigel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation," in *A companion to television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 71.

⁹ *Television Quarterly*. (1962). Volume 1, Number 1.

¹⁰ Minow, "Television and the Public Interest (1961)."

¹¹ Susan Ginsberg and David Manning White, "A Brief History of the Television Quarterly." *Television Quarterly* (1970). Volume 9, Number 1, 60.

The Library as a Tool for Legitimacy

Another tactic was a plan for a national library or archive of television programs; one that would be framed as a resource for scholars and students, specifically for developing sophisticated analyses of television. Within the Television Academy's committee structure, a committee formed called the National Library and Museums Committee and developed the "blueprint stage" for the proposed effort starting around the late 1950s and into the early 1960s. The committee decided that the library ought to operate as three branches at different locations: Los Angeles, New York, and Washington D.C. As such, three committees formed in 1962 for each location.¹² Furthermore, each committee could appoint members for subcommittees to focus on "Site Selection, Criteria for Collection, Acquisitions, Historical Artifacts, Documentary and News Collection, Literary Collection, Catalogue, and Public Relations."¹³ The public relations lens in examining the history of the Television Academy's archive efforts was evident from the start, but so was an archival logic to develop selection, acquisition, and cataloging standards. The overall intent of the project tied together the self-aggrandizing purpose along with the broader history-centric goals: "that successive generations be assured of an archive of the development of the world's most important medium of communications."¹⁴

¹² Jess Oppenheimer (*I Love Lucy*) headed the Hollywood committee, Evelyn Burkey headed the New York committee, she was administered the Emmy Awards, was on the *Television Quarterly* board, and was the Executive Director of the Writers Guild (and had worked with the Mass Communications History Center). Lillian Brown headed the D.C. committee and was the only one with direct relationship to the academic environment as the Director of The George Washington University's Department of Radio and Television. See - "Progress Report: The Library and Museum of Television Project Leaders Hailed," *Academy Newsletter*, December 1962. McGreevey Mss., Box 1, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Like the academic journal, Lynn Spigel persuasively argues that the Television Academy's interests in an archive, museum, and/or library were rooted in a public relations campaign to elevate television as cultural and artistic form, while neutralizing critiques against television's vapidness.¹⁵ The public relations ploy was also inherent given the active role by the Television Academy's public relations executive, Peter Cott, who was also the director of the Academy Foundation. He proposed a plan or "discursive rules" to guide the formation of the proposed institution, which was a "marriage of public service and public relations."¹⁶ The plan involved developing a "canon" for educators and users; a canon of programs selected based on the donation of programs that were deemed "quality" by the networks or advantageous to donate for tax exemption purposes. Naming the project a library, rather than an archive, carried the types of connotations the Television Academy might have been after: public accessibility, cultural prestige, literary qualities applied to television programs, and certainly a collection of materials that could constitute a sense of history.¹⁷ A library of recorded programs had the potential to reframe an industry construed as popular culture at best, and crass commercialism with a smattering of 'quality' programs at worst, into an industry recognized for its achievements in arts and culture. Even with the public relations veil to improve the public

¹⁵ Or more cynically, the national library would repair the perception that television was a wasteland and had betrayed the public's trust following the quiz show scandal. For more discussion on the Television Academy and its pathways for legitimacy, see Lynn Spigel, "The Making of a TV Literate Elite," in *The television studies book*, ed. Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (London; New York; New York: Arnold; 1998), 63–94. Also, an update on her argument is found in Spigel, "Our TV Heritage."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁷ As Spigel points out, the "Academy Foundation even set up a committee called the National Literary Subcommittee." *Ibid.*, 73.

image for the television industry, the end goal was still to preserve the products of television as culturally and historically valued artifacts.

Why Save Television? Articulating Values to Archivist Community

Lillian Brown, a Television Academy member, an academic, and a curator for the proposed Washington D.C. branch library, wrote an article for the *American Archivist* that nicely articulated the Television Academy's reasons to save television. She explained the complexities involved in constructing a television archive (with acknowledged help from the Television Academy's public relations figure, Peter Cott). Television was a unique medium fulfilling many roles and thus was vital to preserve. The critical roles included news and documentary (surpassing radio and motion pictures), as educational and instructional (including cultural instruction), as entertainer, and as recorder of history (from somber events to diversions to celebrities). Television forged its own narrative and aesthetic forms, presenting a range of programming. Specifically, Brown wrote about television as a unique and specific artistic form. Television (or rather, the writers, directors, set designers, camera operators, editors, etc.) experimented with the electronic image, borrowed from past artistic forms, and worked within the constraints of the television screen and individualized viewing experiences. The result was a form worth saving, including the captured content. Thus, "one of the primary objectives of a television archive" was to enable the study of these "unique qualities."¹⁸ However, television's transitory quality – the "here today, gone tomorrow" effect – made the task difficult and that much more urgent.¹⁹

¹⁸ Lillian Brown, "The National Library of Television," *The American Archivist* 30, no. 3 (1967): 503.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 504.

Brown's article corroborated that the Television Academy had a conceptualization of television that intersected with archival logics. Indeed, Brown's audience was the professional archivist. The aim of her argument was to offer a rationale for television's worth in the archival context, rather than a public relations campaign to convince the public of television's multiplicities cultural and historical significance. It was possible that the appeal to the archivist community was a public relations move to garner professional appreciation for the effort. The point here is that the Television Academy, as implicated in Brown's essay, had an articulated conception regarding television's cultural and historical significance. Television programs representing all forms and roles (although the arts and the "great works" were privileged) ought to be preserved and made available for academics, industry professionals, students, and the public at large. Television entered the archive, in this case, when it was conceptualized as a public service to the industry, scholars, and the general television-viewing public.

Attempts to Secure Commitments and Stature from Cultural Institutions

Promising leads from committee leaders and rhetorically stated reasons to form a national television library, though, did not necessarily amount to firm commitments. The goal was to "attempt to work cooperatively with a related organization or institution in each of the branch cities."²⁰ However, television was still not prevalent in cultural institutions, let alone institutions with a mission to preserve and/or display popular culture (and not artists' portrayals of popular culture, like Andy Warhol). The one exception seemed to be the MoMA. As noted in Chapter 4, the MoMA put on an exhibit called *Television USA*, a retrospective of the best and culturally-distinguished in

²⁰ "Progress Report: The Library and Museum of Television Project Leaders Hailed."

television's first thirteen seasons. The Television Academy considered an association with the cultural institution. The MoMA and the Television Academy were in fact aware of one another's efforts. For the exhibit, Richard Griffith was advised by the president of CBS to see if "there was any conflict between [the MoMA] proposal and the archive project of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences."²¹ Griffith spoke with Peter Cott (the Television Academy's public relations executive) and they agreed that there ought to be some form of cooperation between the two institutions. While Cott might have aided in securing films for the MoMA exhibition, there was no further effort to establish a physical library in collaboration.

There were other promising attempts. In 1961, *Variety* reported that the Television Academy's vision for a library/museum had a willing partner with the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City and the soon-to-be-completed National Cultural Centre in Washington D.C.²² Those partnerships fell through. Another close attempt was in Hollywood. There was a promising association with the Los Angeles County's proposed Hollywood Museum. It was a cultural institution devoted to film and television. As of 1962, the plan was that the acquired materials for the "Hollywood Branch Archives and library" would be stored at the Hollywood Museum.²³ The Hollywood Museum never came to fruition; neither did any of the Television Academy's

²¹ Richard Griffith to Mr. D'Harnoncourt, re: TV Series, March 9, 1961, RdH, IV.221, MoMA Archives, NY.

²² Herm Schoenfeld, "TV Acad's Tri-City Museum-Library As a Shrine For Program Landmarks," *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, November 8, 1961.

²³ "Archives Project Proceeds," *Academy Newsletter*, December 1962, McGreevey Mss., Box 1, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN..

attempts to establish ties with other cultural institutions.²⁴ The Television Academy would have to pursue its campaign for cultural legitimacy via a national television library with the academic institutions.

The emphasis in this case study is less geared towards conceptualizing why television belonged in an archival setting; the notion that television programs ought to be preserved was well ingrained in the Television Academy's mission and the desire not to repeat the fatal errors of the motion picture industry.²⁵ Thus, the emphasis in this case study is on the structural and material factors in forming an archive of television programs. The following sections focus on the Television Academy's failures and successes in partnering with academic institutions and then the development of the UCLA TV Library into the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

Building a National Television Library with Academic Capital

As previously noted, the Television Academy partnered with three universities to "house branches of the National Library of Television, which will be associated with their burgeoning programs in the communications arts."²⁶ The deliberate interest in growing programs labeled as communications arts, as opposed to a journalism or mass communication program, further demonstrated the interest in associations with television as part of the arts discourse. Thus, the strategies to both establish a library and to reframe television's stature depended on emerging academic disciplines that likewise sought

²⁴ Spigel, "Our TV Heritage."

²⁵ Merrell Clark, "TV Tape Library, Conversation with Robert Lewine", January 30, 1974, Ford Foundation, 749-827, Section 5D, Rockefeller Archive Center.

²⁶ Brown, "The National Library of Television," 501.

associations with culture and the arts. The Television Academy relied on academic capital to advance their cause.

The intention to establish three branch libraries was announced to the press in 1965, with a goal to officially open to the public in 1968. The goal was for each location – American University, New York University, and University of California at Los Angeles – to “build identical files containing TV film, kinescopes, video tapes, literature, designs and equipment as supplied by the TV networks, major studios, organizations and individuals.”²⁷ Washington D.C. was the least successful of the three regions to establish a strong enough foothold for future developments. Details about this branch are sparse, except that it was housed at American University. It is unclear whether the branch acquired any materials and why it ended. As noted earlier, branch curator Lillian Brown wrote a thoughtful piece on the Television Academy’s plans for a national library. Despite the well-intentioned statement, the D.C. branch did not move far past a promissory state.

More assuring were the relationships with New York University and UCLA. These two institutions symbolized the television industry, a split between the culturally elite television critics and live production on the east coast and the more popular (and denigrated) filmed television programs on the west coast. Both schools entered into formal agreements with the Television Academy in 1965 to establish a branch library in each location. However, slight differences in the agreements might have contributed to the success of one location over another.

²⁷ “TV Libraries Started at Two Universities,” *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, December 6, 1965.

New York University: A Failed Attempt

The Television Academy's relationship with NYU tends to be very briefly noted without much detail.²⁸ Although there is still not much in the way of evidence regarding how the relationship formed and dissipated, a few details are known. To begin with, Richard Goggin was the liaison between the Television Academy and the university. He was an early educator in the television field and the head of NYU's Department of Television, Motion Pictures and Radio in the mid 1960s. The Television Academy and NYU entered into a formal agreement to house a television library in 1965. NYU was to serve as a location for the national library, holding "scripts, films, and tapes from the 1950's and 1960's programming."²⁹ The repository was understood as "historical and meaningful" for both the scholarly community and the industry.³⁰

The arrangement was outlined in a contract signed by the Television Academy president, Robert Lewine, and NYU. The Television Academy Foundation would be responsible for securing recorded television (films, kinescopes, and tapes), artifacts, scripts, books, papers, industry-oriented speeches, and even the technology associated with television. Specifically, only the Foundation would negotiate agreements with the networks and other organizations, so as to streamline the solicitation process. An Operating Committee composed equally of members appointed by the Television Academy Foundation and the University would collectively determine the selection

²⁸ For example, see William Thomas Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997 : a Report on the Current State of American Television and Video Preservation : Report of the Librarian of Congress*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1997).

²⁹ Louise Ramsay, Note to File, March 25, 1974, The Records of the Tisch School of the Arts, RG 3, Box 28, Folder 1, New York University Archives.

³⁰ "Contract Agreement, NYU and ATAS", November 24, 1965, 4, the Records of the Tisch School of the Arts, RG 3, Box 28, Folder 1, New York University Archives.

criteria. The Collection (the term used to refer to the television materials on deposit at NYU) was to be made available for educational, research, and professional purposes, which would be open to members of the university community, the Television Academy, the industry, and the general public. The University would provide space for the Collection but the Foundation would pay for all costs related to the maintenance, equipment, salaries, and insurance. According to sections six and seven, the University was not obligated to cover any expenses or to secure donations or equipment. The University was only responsible for the space and to take care of the Collection. That said, the Academy Foundation had the right to remove the collection at anytime and both parties had the right to terminate the agreement.³¹

NYU was in a fairly passive position to build the collection. The burden to develop, expand, and especially fund the television library fell largely on the Academy Foundation. Goggin and his colleagues may have utilized the collection, but it is difficult to ascertain that the archival collection had the vocal support of faculty, such as the archives in Madison, Wisconsin. Perhaps the one exception was the support from Robert Saudek, an NYU professor at the time. He was producer of the esteemed 1950s program, *Omnibus*, and donated about two hundred programs.³² By 1967, the NYU repository held about 1200 print materials including scripts and periodicals.³³ Short of that, though, little else is currently known about the scope and contents of the collection. It is feasible that

³¹ “Contract Agreement, NYU and ATAS.”

³² “Saudek Donates Prints Of ‘Omnibus’ and ‘Excursion’ to Library,” *Back Stage (Archive: 1960-2000)*, December 17, 1965.

³³ William Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study”, January 1971, 21, Library Files, Paley Center for Media, New York.

the repository was of use and value to the scholarly community, but without the contractual power for the University (via Goggin or a designated librarian) to develop the collection, the television library floundered. After the three-year contractual period, the relationship was terminated.³⁴ It did not seem like much had happened over those years, a span of time when the Television Academy was simultaneously working to establish a collection in Washington D.C. and in Los Angeles.

The next contractual agreement between the Academy Foundation and a university – UCLA – was more carefully worded. This was especially the case concerning costs, as will be discussed in the following sections. The NYU relationship, though, offers crucial lessons about the formation of an archive. A partnership is a difficult venture, especially when one institution provides the physical location and the other one is responsible for the rest. The onus was on the Academy Foundation to fund and secure all matters in forming collections. There is little evidence to suggest that there were persuasive individuals on either side who worked to secure donations, raise funds, and perhaps most crucially, build awareness about the collections.³⁵ For the television archive to take hold, there needed to be an infrastructure. The notion that television programs were culturally and historically significant for preservation purposes was not enough.

³⁴ Robert Saudek to Martin Siegel, Note to File, March 25, 1974, the Records of the Tisch School of the Arts, RG 3, Box 28, Folder 1, New York University Archives. One of the professors tried to restart the relationship again in 1974, but never came to fruition. See Louise Ramsay, Note to File, March 25, 1974, the Records of the Tisch School of the Arts, RG 3, Box 28, Folder 1, New York University Archives.

³⁵ For example, active individuals with a dedication to particular visions, such as building a collection of television programs, was vital in the struggles and successes of the archives in Wisconsin.

On a related note, in ambitiously pursuing a national television library spread across regions, the Television Academy's efforts were fractured to the point where only one location was able to survive. For instance, even when NYU was still interested in pursuing a television library, the Television Academy president seemed too overwhelmed with the financial and operational struggles at UCLA to reciprocate the interest.³⁶ The following section examines how the Television Academy established the relationship with UCLA.

Success: The Television Library at UCLA

The factors at play in the formation of this particular television library were more favorable than in New York and certainly Washington D.C. To start with, the Television Academy had a firmer presence in Los Angeles since the Hollywood Branch was the largest.³⁷ By the 1960s, television production was a major industry, alongside (and intertwined with) motion pictures. The chances of securing material donations from the production companies and especially from individuals was likelier than the network bureaucracies in television's other center, New York City. The prevalence of professors with ties to the Television Academy and the industry fostered an environment more conducive to building up a television library. Specifically, professors teaching courses on film and television had been forming their own archives of sorts. Thanks to close ties with the local industry, the professors collected films and kinescopes to show in class; some instructors also participated in the industry as writers, directors, and other creative

³⁶ Clark, "TV Tape Library."

³⁷ Dick Adler, "Hollywood, N.Y. in TV Television Academy Power Struggle: EMMY OR HOLLY? L.A., N.Y. in Test Pattern Hollywood, N.Y. in TV Test Pattern," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, March 8, 1976, p E1.

labor.³⁸ Perhaps the biggest sticking point about UCLA's position for success was the contract with the Television Academy. It did *not* specify that *all* funding would originate from the Television Academy Foundation. The subtle differences in the contracts were critical in fostering the archive.

The relationship began around 1960 when materials acquired for the proposed Hollywood branch archive needed a *temporary* location, since the ideal location at the new Hollywood Museum (or Motion Picture and Television Museum) was yet to be built.³⁹ In 1965, the Academy Foundation and the UCLA formally agreed to establish a contractual relationship about storing the Hollywood branch's materials.

Many of the contractual points were the same as the NYU contract: the Academy Foundation would work to secure donations, the collection would be open to researchers, industry professionals, and even the public, and the Operations Committee (composed of representatives from the university and the Academy Foundation) would work together on selection criteria. The major difference, though, was in the responsibilities of the two institutions.

The UCLA contract indicated that funding and acquisition activities would be shared between the two institutions.⁴⁰ The language was not particularly clear as to how funding

³⁸ Robert S Birchard, "Nitrate Machos Vs. Nitrate Nellies: Buccaneer Days at the UCLA Film and Television Archive," *Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (2004): 119–129; Raymond Fielding, "Archival Misadventures at UCLA: The Earliest Years," *Moving Image* 5, no. 1 (2005): 125–128.

³⁹ "Archives Project Proceeds."

⁴⁰ There is one major exception in the formality of the agreement. No one at the UCLA Film and TV Archive or the University Archives can locate the original 1965 agreement. Perhaps there never was an officially documented contract in 1965, a testament to the close ties between the university, the Television Academy, and the industry. This is suggested by mention that an agreement was made in 1965. It is likely that the 1976 contract is the same as the 1965 agreement. The language is nearly the same as NYU, except much of the funding part. Since the University funded the television library from 1965 to the date of the re-signed contract in 1976, it is reasonable to assume that this was the same contract. "Theater Arts

and acquisition would be divided, but UCLA had more power than the NYU agreement with the Television Academy. Or rather, UCLA had more flexibility to nurture a television library. To demonstrate the differences, the following table compares the parallel sections from the NYU and the UCLA contracts regarding the delegation of responsibility (Table 1).

Table 1: Contractual Differences in the NYU and UCLA Agreements with ATAS

	NYU	UCLA
Section 4 (both contracts)	“The Foundation shall be responsible for the collection of all materials. The University shall have no obligation to the Collection. ”	“The University shall have no obligation to accept any material for the Collection from the Foundation or any source, but the University may choose to accept material from sources other than the Foundation and to make it part of the Collection.”
Section 7 (NYU), Section 6 (UCLA)	“ The Foundation shall be responsible for all costs related to the Collection. The Foundations’ obligation shall include, but not be limited to, responsibility for the cost of maintenance, equipment, building alterations, salaries, and insurance. In no event shall the University have any obligation with respect to any expenses relating to the Collection.”	“ The Foundation shall use its best efforts to make contributions to the University to provide for the costs related collection.”

Emphasis added.

Source: NYU contract, UCLA contract.⁴¹

Whereas the NYU contract stipulated that the onus was solely on the Foundation, the UCLA contract outlined that both institutions had a responsibility to develop and fund the

Department - TV Library Agreement”, December 1, 1976, School of the Arts and Architecture. Administrative files, RS 777, Box 2, F.11, UCLA University Archives.

⁴¹ “Contract Agreement, NYU and ATAS,” 3–5; “Theater Arts Department - TV Library Agreement,” 2–3.

television library. NYU's main responsibility was to provide space, not the formation and funding of the archive's contents. Conversely, UCLA could pursue and accept collections as well as funding (although vague as to how). The difference in contract language meant the difference in structures to build an archive. UCLA was contractually obligated to share responsibilities in seeking funding and securing collections, which was certainly helpful in empowering what would have been a "branch library" to dictate its own priorities and ensure success.

What began as an industry-driven endeavor shifted into an academic context. the Television Academy's vision would take on a more academic tone, primarily serving instructional and research need, with the professional community as secondary. The academic archival context was also what helped lend the cultural legitimacy desired by the Television Academy. Despite the label as a 'library,' this was to be a repository driven by an archival logic. The archival principles of acquisition, preservation, and availability to researchers for on-site use undergirded the endeavor. The next section outlines the development of the first archive devoted to television programs, including the material constraints and challenges of selection and acquisition.

From an Ad Hoc Project to Professionalized and Institutionalized Archive

In keeping with the Television Academy's original vision, the new joint effort was called the NATAS – UCLA Television Library. The Television Library was clearly set up as an archive with a mission to "collect, preserve, and disseminate its holdings for the use of historians, scholars, and professionals, in film and television, sociology, political science, and other disciplines."⁴² Perhaps the collection of some print material,

⁴² Pamphlet, "NATAS-UCLA Television Library", c 1975, Subject Files, Theater Arts Dept., UCLA University Archives.

such as periodicals and scripts, exhibited the functions of a library. Likewise, there were some visions for a circulating loan policy that also resembled library functions.

Ultimately, though, the purpose of the new project was to collect and preserve television's recorded output, especially for the scholarly community.

The break down of funding in the first ten years demonstrated how the onus to construct the archive shifted from the Academy Foundation to the University. In the first decade of operation, 1965 to 1975, the television archive operated with a total of \$86,000, a relatively small amount for an archive to flourish. The Academy Foundation funded roughly sixteen percent of the total cost, or \$14,000, while UCLA (with the help of the National Endowment for the Arts) funded \$72,000.⁴³ Thus, the University had a sense of ownership over the project.

Likewise, professors volunteered their time (and eventually were paid for their labor) to cultivate a record of television history in an archival form. Arthur Friedman, a professor specializing in television with close industry ties, was the curator of the newly formed ATAS-UCLA Television Library from 1965 to 1969. Another professor, Ruth Schwartz, was also active since the inception and followed Friedman as curator. Schwartz in particular propelled the archive's growth, including publishing articles and accounts about the efforts on the UCLA campus and elsewhere. The Television Academy's presence remained through the active fundraising and advocacy by Robert Lewine, the president.⁴⁴

⁴³ UCLA, *Systems Analysis of ATAS/UCLA Television Archives*, May 1983, i-ii, School of the Arts and Architecture. Administrative files, RS 777, Box 3, F.40, UCLA University Archives.

⁴⁴ Lewine was the public spokesperson for the Television Library. He certainly greatly cared about securing television's history in an archive, but was perhaps more dedicated to the project as a "monument" for his

By the 1970s, the interest in preserving television, specifically commercial programs, was gaining traction, as was the institutional support to do so. Schwartz explained in the *Journal of Broadcasting*, that the “passage of time and transitory availability of television programs for education and research make the task of acquisition and preservation urgent.”⁴⁵ As the on-the-ground head of UCLA’s television library, she was in the position to champion an archive for educational and research purposes.⁴⁶ With the academic mission in mind, the television library and the film archive, which had been established in 1968, formally united resources and organizational structure in 1976.⁴⁷ The move signaled two directions for the combined archive. One was professional stewardship over the care of moving image materials – the moving image archivist emerged as a specialized field. The preservation of film and tape required scientific management and care to “prevent damage, loss or distortion of the magnetic or chemical particles.”⁴⁸ Strategically, it made sense to unit the two media into a dedicated archive and preservation effort. Two was that television could be valued for its historical and cultural content, much like the increasing academic interest in film scholarship. Institutionalized under the name the UCLA Film and Television Archive (and at times,

efforts. See Erik Barnouw, “Report on Los Angeles Activities”, September 10, 1977, Erik Barnouw Papers, Box 34, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁴⁵ Ruth Schwartz, “Preserving TV Programs: Here Today - Gone Tomorrow,” *Journal of Broadcasting* 17:3 (1973): 287.

⁴⁶ This represented a shift from Robert Lewine, president of the Television Academy, and his tendency to frame the television archive as servicing the industry.

⁴⁷ Robert Rosen, Submission on Behalf of UCLA Film and Television Archive, April 26, 1996, in William Thomas Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997 : a Report on the Current State of American Television and Video Preservation : Report of the Librarian of Congress*. Volume 5: Submissions (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1997): 450-459.

⁴⁸ Pamphlet, “NATAS-UCLA Television Library.”

also radio included in the title), the archive could now define clearer functions specific to an academic context. The Television Academy envisioned an archive dedicated to serving the industry community and elevating television's status as primary goals. Conversely, the new joint archive focused more explicitly on teaching, research, preservation, and public outreach such as regular screenings and talks.⁴⁹

Selecting and Acquiring Content

When the Television Academy publicly announced the national television library effort in 1965, it was reported, "the library will contain at least one episode from each program series on a network. The collection is supposed to be historically representative, whether the films are good or bad."⁵⁰ Ideally, the new library would have 5000 titles representing all of television by 1966. Moreover, the library would collect not just the programs, but also "books and periodicals about television and communications, scripts of TV plays and programs, and material on production and technical data."⁵¹ This was far from a realistic goal. Instead, the television library began more modestly with thirty kinescopes in 1965.⁵² The emphasis on obtaining programs became the main directive of the television library.⁵³ The task to acquire programs and maintain the library of recorded programs proved to be more than enough for the new archiving effort. Stilted by lack of

⁴⁹ Grant Lee, "An Archive of Media Memories," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)* (Los Angeles, Calif., United States, December 29, 1977), sec. G1.

⁵⁰ VAL ADAMS, "Libraries to House Films of TV Shows Back to 1948," *New York Times*, May 12, 1965.

⁵¹ "Plans Defined for History of TV Library," *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, May 17, 1965.

⁵² Robert Lewine to Richard Frank, "Re: ATAS/UCLA TV Archive Luncheon," Letter, March 19, 1984, School of the Arts and Architecture. Admin files, RS 777, Box 3, F.1, UCLA University Archives.

⁵³ The collection of periodicals, books, scripts, and other materials was under the purview of the Theater Arts Library, a separate but still related entity on campus.

infrastructure and trickling funds from the Television Academy Foundation, it took about ten years to surpass Lewine's optimistic projections in 1965: the collection consisted of just 225 titles in 1970, then incrementally grew to 2000 titles by 1972, 4500 by 1976, and 8000 by 1979.⁵⁴

How did the archive build up its collection and authority as a television archive? At first, there were two broad approaches to securing donations: serendipity (with some persistence) and contractual agreements. In the first stages of formation, a method to collect recorded programs was haphazard at best. UCLA professors sporadically collected some television programs for the purposes of in-class instruction.⁵⁵ These programs were mostly acquired from studios and probably (based on anecdotes about the early days of the UCLA film archive) 'rescued' prints from the dumpster.⁵⁶ There was an amount of luck and industry insider knowledge necessary in knowing where to look and who to ask. Lewine found that asking for donations from notable television stars was easier than waiting for networks and studios to comply. For example, he asked Ed Sullivan and Lucille Ball for tapes, who then quickly and enthusiastically responded and were happy for the free storage facility.⁵⁷

The other approach – contractual agreements – also seemed to be haphazard at best. Industry and Television Academy reports indicated that the Television Academy

⁵⁴ UCLA, *Systems Analysis of ATAS/UCLA Television Archives*.

⁵⁵ Fielding, "Archival Misadventures at UCLA."

⁵⁶ This is a popular refrain in anecdotes about the formation of this archive and others. Fielding's article corroborates this point as well as Spigel's comment that the first television archives were universities "storing waste" from the industry ("Our TV Heritage," 69). When I was doing research in LA, I met an archivist who also offered his anecdotes about the formation of the UCLA Film and TV Archive, such as rescuing production files from Paramount Studios and collecting films and tapes from studio dumpsters.

⁵⁷ Clark, "TV Tape Library."

negotiated agreements with the networks and “producing organizations” regarding the acquisition of programs.⁵⁸ The goal was for each network to submit “one representative episode of each series it carries, a copy of each special and a copy of each production that wins an Emmy award.”⁵⁹ Lacking any actual contract to illustrate this agreement, a contract written well before the Television Academy’s successful relationship with UCLA offers a glimpse. The Television Academy was so optimistic about its television library project, that it entered an agreement with NBC in 1962. NBC contractually agreed to send recordings of on-air broadcasts to the Television Academy. NBC could select which programs to send to the Television Academy and could decline any requests for a particular program. The contract did not outline which types of programs were to be selected, but it did outline a key facet of selection: the clearance of rights, such as from the writer, network, or unions. Only programs that “NBC has obtained all necessary packager, literary, talent, music and other rights and clearances” may be *considered* for the Television Academy’s collection.⁶⁰

Although the Television Academy had brokered contractual agreements with the networks, documents from the 1970s and 1980s suggest that such agreements actually carried little weight. This was especially the case with developing a systematic method to acquire programs from the networks. One would assume that by the 1980s, the archive would have at least developed a way to acquire the Emmy-nominated programs. Indeed,

⁵⁸ “Progress Report: The Library and Museum of Television Project Leaders Hailed”; “PROGARMING”; “Nat’l. TV Library Plans Firmed,” *Back Stage (Archive: 1960-2000)*, May 21, 1965.

⁵⁹ “TV ACADEMY OPENS ITS D.C. TELIBRARY,” *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, December 1, 1965.

⁶⁰ NBC to Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Foundation, Contract Agreement, November 27, 1962, Ford Foundation, 749-827, Section 5D, Rockefeller Archive Center.

these programs were entitled for deposit, as part of the Television Academy's financial support and invested stewardship.⁶¹ However, a 1983 report analyzing the archive's operation noted a recommendation "that ATAS [the Television Academy] immediately regularize the deposit of such programs and make every effort to bring this particular collection up to date."⁶² This recommendation gestures towards the insufficiencies of previous arrangements with networks and studios, failing to institutionalize a fluid mechanism for depositing award nominated and winning programs.

Perhaps one reason why the contracts (or at least, reported accounts that there were contracts) did not amount to systematic acquisition was the lack of cooperation from the industry. Lewine noted that television executives were "skeptical about the need for a such a collection. They maintain that if it was that important the three commercial networks would have established such a library long ago."⁶³ Lewine chided the television executives about their lack of interest stating "ironically, our largest donors have been major advertisers."⁶⁴ Specifically, he was referencing the largest acquisition this far: *Hallmark Hall of Fame*.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the television industry was in danger of repeating the mistakes of the motion picture industry by failing to preserve "its output." The industry as a whole seemed to care more about solving "real estate problems" (as in,

⁶¹ "UCLA Gets \$6,000 From TV Television Academy," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, March 5, 1968, pg C16. Emphasis added.

⁶² UCLA, *Systems Analysis of ATAS/UCLA Television Archives*, 10.

⁶³ Lewine, "An Open Reply to David Yellin from the National Television Academy of Television Arts and Sciences."

⁶⁴ Lewine to Frank, "Re: ATAS/UCLA TV Archive Luncheon," 66.

⁶⁵ "Ucla Library Given Hallmark Tv Films," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)* (Los Angeles, Calif., United States, October 24, 1972), sec. D20.

dumping libraries of tapes and films) and economizing on expensive tapes by continually erasing and rerecording broadcasts than preserving its history.⁶⁶ These were challenges for the television archive project that persisted over time until discourses about television as a cultural heritage facilitated greater cooperation from the corporate owners of television's products.

Despite the lack of defined policies in the 1970s, there were two things for certain. One, television ought to be valued as cultural, historical, and artistic artifacts. The first decade of acquisition tipped towards programs representing critical acclaim (via the Emmy award designation) and quality programs, such as the drama anthologies, public affairs documentaries, and select comedies. It was not until the 1980s (well into the professionalized moving image archivist era) when an institutional review process crystallized the archivists' intents to collect a greater representation of programs such as "television movies and mini-series, daytime programming, children's programs and certain generic forms (western, etc.)... [also] examples of rock videos and other new television formats that recently have begun to emerge."⁶⁷ Two, there was a clear need to rescue programs from destruction and neglect. The archivists intervened in the industry's overall lack of interest in its own historical presence. Robert Rosen, director of the newly joined film and television archive in the mid 1970s, explained: "The studios and networks had a need for space. People prejudged the values of these things and didn't think about

⁶⁶ Clark, "TV Tape Library."

⁶⁷ UCLA Film and TV Archive, "Archives Collection Development: A Preliminary Report", August 15, 1985, 7, School of the Arts and Architecture. Admin files, RS 777, Box 3, F.11, UCLA University Archives.

their worth to future generations.”⁶⁸ At least publically, then, the mission was to collect anything that was known to exist in a recorded form, acknowledging that as archivists in the 1970s, they could not foretell what will be important in later decades

Overall, the Television Academy’s efforts to establish a television archive was only successful at UCLA, most likely due to the privilege of location and an academic affiliation. The nature of the agreement between the two institutions also facilitated more autonomy on the part of the academic community to mobilize a television archive. What started out as a semi-cloaked public relations effort to promote television as a cultural form shifted into a more traditional academic archive with the specialized focus to collect recorded media. As the television archive developed during the Television Academy years and into the 1970s, the impulse was to collect the programs the industry and critics (and academics) deemed as quality programs. These programs were exemplars of artistic achievement and mastery of the televisual medium. However, the pertinence of the generic (such as the Western serials), the feminized (as in, movies-of-the-week, miniseries, and daytime programs), and the fringe became increasingly valued texts for academic pursuit. The close relationship between the archive and the academic contexts allowed for the expansion of holdings.

The Television Product in the Academic Archive

Before the professionalized modes of archiving and preserving moving images in the 1980s, television entered the academic archival setting in an unsystematic attempt to stave off widespread destruction of films, kinescopes, and tapes. The television library at UCLA, as part of the larger project for a national television library, was still rooted in

⁶⁸ Lee, “An Archive of Media Memories.”

hierarchies of tastes and notions of quality, especially when the library was closely tied to the Television Academy and its project to legitimate television. As the archival process formalized and distant from the Television Academy, the breadth of program acquisition expanded to accommodate for future unknowns. Such unknowns were which television programs may be of interest to future scholars and historians looking for nonconventional texts in pursuing cultural and alternative histories.

A common thread persisted as the archive shifted from industry-oriented to academically-driven: that television programs held intangible value as historical and cultural documents. It was a fallacy to assume that the networks, studios, production companies, and other profit-oriented organization would prioritize the task of preserving films, kinescopes, and tapes. That sort of task required a different context where television programs would be valued as records of culture, society, politics, and every day life. The Television Academy served the role as advocate, raising the flag of concern and pointing a finger at the film industry's mistakes in failing to care about their own history and lasting presence. However, the Television Academy itself could not facilitate the physical construction of an archive, ranging from the actual building to acquiring programs. At least, it could not do this on its own.

Thus, the industry-initiated project became the purview of the academic institution, which held onto the notion of intangible value. The distinction might hinge on who benefited from the intangible value and how that was defined. In other words, the industry might place an intangible value associated with a television archive as contributing to a sense of prestige and potential to mythologize a particular television history. When television resided in an academic archive, the intangible value might be

better construed as bestowing the product of televisions with the gravitas of historical evidence. The instructional benefits were rolled into any archive that resides within the premises of an academic institution; surely the UCLA theater arts and then the television department greatly benefited from onsite television films and tapes in the age before personal video recording devices. Moreover, the professionalization of moving image preservation combined with the notion that any and all television programs might serve as records of broadcast history and American history contributed to a reorientation of the intangible value for a television archive. An industry-initiated idea for an archive might favor a narrow scope of programs to preserve in order to accommodate a particular mission. An academic archive still has a particular mission, and certainly a particular vision of which programs might constitute grounds for historical evidence and cultural significance, but there is the potential that the scope of programs worthy of preservation might be greater.

Eventually, the intangible values of television articulated in the 1970s translated into a television heritage in the 1990s. The television heritage statement organized the notion that television programs (as well as commercials) were constituent parts as well as recorders of our collective cultural experiences and national identities. The television heritage, or more broadly a cultural heritage with television as a central component, was one reason to mobilize the preservation of television.⁶⁹ The Television Academy could boast that it initiated the call of concern and catalyzed the formation of an archive dedicated to preserving the fragile and scattered records of television. But it was the academic contexts that generated the capacity to do so, providing the space, funding,

⁶⁹ Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation : How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

infrastructure, and people to implement the initial concept. These structures were strongest at UCLA.

The next part of the chapter shifts to how an individual within the industry catalyzed an institution. The intentions were similar to the Television Academy's initial vision for a national television library. The similarities included both the conceptual and physical facets that went into the television library. Conceptualizations of television programs as historically and culturally valuable undergirded the archival process. Specifically, discourses about television's cultural legitimacy and heritage provided a rationale to save television programs. Furthermore, there was an overall sense of service, whereby an archive of television could benefit a range of users, including academics, professionals, and the public. The difference, however, was in the execution of the idea. Rather than utilize the academic institution as a site for legitimation, the last case study illustrates the formation of a cultural institution.

The Formation of the Museum of Broadcasting

The Museum of Broadcasting, or known today as the Paley Center for Media, rounds out the discussion on contexts in which television entered the archival setting. Like the UCLA Film and Television Archive, this institution was an outgrowth from the industry. More specifically, an individual with great power (and great ego) catalyzed the formation of the Museum of Broadcasting. The discontinuity lies in the methods of formation and the eventual outcome. The Academy's method involved an ad hoc construction of branch libraries, with rhetoric about building a national library that exceeded the material resources to do so. The result was a single location that took root in

an academic institution, benefiting from an environment that was scholarly and connected to the industry. The Museum of Broadcasting began less publicly, with large-scale studies assessing interest in a national television archive and availability of recorded programs. Funding was not a problem; rather the challenge was in implementing such a project.

Unlike the other archives, the formation of the Museum of Broadcasting was born out of a careful investigation about the state of recorded television (and radio) across academic and corporate institutions, with the results summarized in what is known as the Bluem Report. Thus, the report sheds light on two areas. The report offers a sense of the broader context of television as it intersects with archival articulations and its valuation as historical and cultural material. The report is also insightful in that it offered recommendations regarding what an institution devoted to the preservation and interpretation of a broadcast history might look like. Whereas the “Prospect for a Television Archive” written by the MoMA’s Richard Griffith in 1955 never materialized into an actual archive, the Bluem Report directly help shape the Museum of Broadcasting. The dissertation began with a case study of an imagined television archive with no intention of follow-through. The dissertation concludes with a case study of an intensely studied prospect for a television archive with a definite outcome – The Museum of Broadcasting.

The following sections outline the oft-repeated story about the Museum at the time of its opening in 1976 and arguments about Paley’s intentions. The bulk of this case study centers on the events leading up to the Museum’s formation. The Bluem Report appears in the 1996 Television and Preservation Study, but only as a brief reference that Paley commissioned a study and that Bluem determined that there was an interest to

develop methods to select and acquire television programs for an archive of sorts. Little has been written about the contents of the Bluem Report, which are central to this case study. Bluem surveyed the existence of programs in the late 1960s, which demonstrated the existence of a great many broadcast records. More importantly, Bluem devised a classificatory systems that reflected which television programs were most valuable as historical and cultural artifacts and thus belonged in an institution, thereby marking the rest of television's recorded traces as marginal and disposable. His study and recommendations heavily factored into the formation of the Museum of Broadcasting. As such, the case study concludes with an evaluation of the Museum as a cultural institution and the implications on conceptualizing television as worthy and capable of preservation.

Paley and the Opening of a New Cultural Institution

When the Museum opened in 1976, a newspaper headline "The Museum is the Media" playfully introduced the Museum of Broadcasting, its contents, and its message.⁷⁰ The message being that the broadcast media had a history and a cultural presence that could be experienced via the museum setting. The Museum remediated television in a form that crossed the concept of an archive, which was devoted to collecting and preserving broadcast history, with the operation of a museum, which was defined by its publicness, educational mission, and interpretive functions. The television industry practically sponsored the cultural institution, with guaranteed financial support from Paley and with material contributions from the networks.

It all began with an idea: William Paley wrote in his autobiography, "I had an idea that the broadcasting industry should sponsor some sort of museum to preserve and make

⁷⁰ Kay Gardella, "The Museum Is the Media," *Daily News*, November 10, 1976, sec. Television.

available the best of its output for students, scholars and any of the public.”⁷¹ The idea was a museum of broadcast history, containing the programs that aired long ago, rather than the artifacts and documentation of production. Television historians have commented on Paley’s hubris to claim ideas as his own.⁷² To Paley’s credit, however, he acted on an idea to pursue the subject of television preservation for scholarly and public use (whether it was his idea or not, is questionable). Regardless, the case of the industry-initiated Museum of Broadcasting affords an illustrative look at the formation of a television (and radio) archive dedicated to the collection of the recorded program.

The story of the Museum’s formation tends to go like this. Paley had the idea and commissioned a study in 1967 about “the possibility of creating a master collection of broadcast programs.”⁷³ His private philanthropy, the William S. Paley Foundation, funded the study, with the aim to survey whether there was an interest in such an idea to preserve broadcast history as well as to determine what exists.⁷⁴ Thanks to the study and Paley’s ability to persuade his fellow network presidents, there was plenty of interest and agreement to proceed with an archive of sorts. Paley (via the foundation) provided the start-up funding of two million dollars for five years and the building for the Museum of Broadcasting, which opened in 1976. The Museum was the first of its kind, systematically attempting to archive fragile records of broadcasting history and make

⁷¹ William S Paley, *As It Happened: a Memoir* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 368.

⁷² William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Douglas Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008).

⁷³ Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, 7.

⁷⁴ Jack Harris, “The Preservation of Yesteryear: A Look at New York City’s Unique Museum of Broadcasting,” *Video Action*, January 1981.

those available to scholars, industry professionals, and the public.⁷⁵ Paley remarked at the Museum's opening that the new institution was a public service and would "advance the broadcasting arts."⁷⁶ The Museum was located near CBS, ABC, and NBC headquarters in New York City as well as Paley's beloved MoMA (he was a trustee and elected president in 1968). It did not have the conventional objects on display, such as television sets, but rather viewing carrels where anyone could watch a program in the museum's catalog. In other words, the Museum was an archive with a publicly accessible interface, labeled as a museum to convey a sense of cultural heritage and prestige. Or conversely, it was a museum with an archival logic to collect, catalogue, and preserve the records of broadcast history.

The Museum proved so popular that a year and a half into its operation they had to turn people away since there was such a high demand.⁷⁷ It expanded its holdings from 300 television and radio programs in 1976 to 2000 in 1978 to over 7000 in 1980 (4,187 of which were television), and to 50,000 television programs in 1996.⁷⁸ The non-profit institution changed its name to the Museum of Radio and Television in 1991, opting to replace broadcasting in light of cable and satellite television. The name changed again in 2007 to the Paley Center for Media. This name better reflected shifts in the media environment (namely, the internet) as well as the redirected priorities towards celebrating

⁷⁵ Gardella, "The Museum Is the Media."

⁷⁶ C. Gerald Fraser, "Museum of Broadcasting Opens With Paley Gift," *New York Times*, November 10, 1976, sec. Westchester Weekly.

⁷⁷ Richard F. Shepard, "Broadcasting Museum Is Too Popular," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, June 6, 1978), sec. Sports.

⁷⁸ Ibid.; Richard F. Shepard, "Broadcasting's Past Proves Popular," *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 13, 1980), sec. Arts & Leisure; Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, 84.

the creative industry and its role in society (while also posthumously bestowing Paley's legacy).⁷⁹ Today, the cultural institution operates in tandem with the contemporary television industry more so than it did when it first formed.

Context at the Time of the Museum's Formation

The 1976 Museum of Broadcasting opened as a confluence of other television preservation efforts as well as television industry events occurred. The Television Library at UCLA merged with the film preservation efforts on campus to become the UCLA Film and Television Archive. In the mid 1970s, the American Film Institute and the Ford Foundation explore the rising interest in the preservation of television programming. They convened the Ad Hoc Committee on Television Preservation, specifically focusing on challenges associated with technical preservation, selection criteria, and how to actually acquire programs.⁸⁰ The University of Georgia formalized their collection of Peabody Award submissions as an official archive.⁸¹ As argued in this dissertation and elsewhere, these preservation efforts occurred alongside the growing academic legitimization of television. However, the preservation of *programs* – television's products – were front and center in the 1970s. Kompare argues television reached a historicity in the 1970s. The prevalence of reruns, reunion specials (an industry strategy to capitalize on the past), and a broader nostalgia coalesced to form fertile ground for a television heritage. The television heritage was the “dominant cultural embodiment of the recent

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Jensen, “New Name And Mission For Museum Of Television,” *New York Times*, June 5, 2007.

⁸⁰ As briefly noted in the chronology appendix in Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*, 157–158. In the process of researching this dissertation, I came across extensive documents pertaining to the Ad Hoc Committee on Television Preservation. Little has been written about these committees and their reports.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 158

past... an active memory bank of *images and sounds*,” which positioned television as “the subject of active nostalgia, historical exploration, and cultural preservation.”⁸² The Museum of Broadcasting formed in response to and a driver of such an articulated heritage.

Meanwhile, the opening of the Museum of Broadcasting was significant in the context of the television industry. The Museum opened on the fiftieth anniversary of broadcasting. As Paley noted in the public unveiling of the new institution, radio and television “have become a mature, responsible and important force in our national life.”⁸³ More cynically, though, the Museum opened following the litigious battles between CBS and Vanderbilt University. CBS claimed copyright over their news broadcasts while Vanderbilt defended the public interest in enabling anyone to review and study network newscasts. The lawsuits challenged legal categories of ownership of broadcasts and off-air recording, positioning CBS’s (and by extension, Paley) reputation as an organization that barred public access to news and historical records. These disputes directly impacted the new copyright act in 1976, which allowed for libraries to tape off-air broadcasts. Additionally, Spigel persuasively argues that the Paley’s intentions to form an institution devoted to broadcast history was born out of his overall project to “raise television’s reputation,” especially CBS’s reputation.⁸⁴ Indeed, one article at the time of the Museum’s opening noted that the museum was both “an attempt at

⁸² Kompare, *Rerun Nation*, 104. Emphasis added.

⁸³ “Paley Opens Broadcasting’s Own Museum,” *Broadcasting*, November 15, 1976.

⁸⁴ CBS’s reputation was arguably still tarnished from the quiz show scandals in the late 1950s and the general state of CBS’s lowest-common-denominator programming the 1960s and 1970s. Lynn Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation,” in *A Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 82.

legitimizing the medium most viewed with contempt in intellectual circles” and a monument to Paley’s career.⁸⁵

Thus, the Museum of Broadcasting is easily framed as a public relations effort, similar to the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and the pursuit of a national television library. A cultural institution that collects and interprets television (and radio) history can confer the medium with legitimacy, while wielding the power to dictate the programs that should be remembered for posterity. Spigel, for example, explains the Museum of Broadcasting as Paley’s “brainchild;” a mix of public relations to promote the television industry (and CBS), canonization of a television art form, and a tourist attraction that capitalized on nostalgia.⁸⁶ In the capacity as public relations tool, the Museum was embedded in discourses of quality and efforts to legitimize television as a culturally significant medium.⁸⁷ The first president was Robert Saudek, which signaled an air of cultural elitism given his associations with Harvard, New York University, and the critically acclaimed art program, *Omnibus*. Furthermore, the remediation of television programs in a museum-like place, which was located alongside other cultural institutions, was a deliberate strategy in this process of legitimization. However, of interest to this dissertation, was how this cultural institution developed, beyond the arguments that the museum functioned primarily as a public relations tool for the industry. More broadly, this case study engages with the formation of a cultural institution devoted to broadcast

⁸⁵ Judith Hennessee, “Tuning in the Past Is a Snap at the New Broadcasting Museum,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1976.

⁸⁶ Lynn Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation,” in *A Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 82.

⁸⁷ This rhetoric was especially prevalent in later years, see Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and Video Preservation 1997*.

history, examining the factors and rationales in the Museum's construction. Before highlighting the central feature of this case study, the following section highlights the context in which Paley might have drawn inspiration for his idea to develop an institution for broadcasting history.

Paley's Influences and the Museum as a Tool for Legitimacy

Earlier, I referenced Paley's memoir where he says he came up with the idea for an industry-sponsored institution. He certainly did not pull this idea out of thin air. As an influential television executive, Paley must have had knowledge of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and its interest in developing a national television library in 1965. Perhaps there was some competition to wrest the noble act of a national television library away from the Academy. Additionally, Paley was on the MoMA committee that interacted with Richard Griffith and the Film Archive in the 1950s. It is possible to imagine that Paley was aware of Griffith's essay, "Prospect for a Television Archive" or at least Griffith's attempt to acquire a recording of a teleplay as a test case for a television collection. Furthermore, Paley served on the Ad Hoc Committee for Films and Television at the end of 1960, which recommended against television activities in the Film department (best left to other areas of the museum, such as exhibition).⁸⁸ In the years leading up to his presidency, the MoMA pursued an archive of television programs that featured artists talking about their craft. Conceivably, Paley's experiences at the MoMA contributed to his interest in forming an institution devoted to a broadcasting history, pursuing a television library or archive that resembled a museum in function. That is, a

⁸⁸ "Report of Ad Hoc Committee for Films and Television to Board of Trustees," November 10, 1969, Alfred Barr Jr. Papers, Correspondence 1959-1974, Folder 12.11, MoMA Film Library Archives, New York.

cultural institution that treated television programs like art in a museum space; something to be appreciated and interpreted for the public.

There is much to suggest that the Museum of Broadcasting was a public relations tactic on behalf of Paley, a gesture towards legitimizing television as an art as well as an act of self-mythologizing a legacy.⁸⁹ Still, it took a conceptual leap to transfer the principles of displaying and interpreting modern art (including commercial art) to television, specifically a consideration of television as an object to preserve and display for various publics. Given Paley's interest in preserving television television's creative and commercial products – the programs – and reinterpreting those as cultural and historical artifacts, the museum framework seemed appropriate. By this, I mean the principles of the museum that collects, displays, and interprets objects via public exhibits and programs. There is no doubt that the Museum of Broadcasting was a monument to interpret broadcasting history. As an archival space, the Museum collected (either acquired or borrowed and then copied) television programs for posterity. The cultural institution could function as an archive by virtue of its mission to collect, organize, and provide access to broadcast's past. Moreover, Paley built the Museum as a site of legitimation, signaling to critics, academics, television viewers, and any one that television and radio history were worth preserving. Television scholars have viewed both efforts through the lens of the television industry's public relations tactic to define a television heritage. Another perspective is to evaluate how and why this archival space was built, especially in contrast to the other industry-initiated archive discussed in the first half this chapter.

⁸⁹ Spigel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation."

With these points in mind, the following examination takes a step back to the institutional structures involved in the years before the Museum opened in 1976. The cultural institution did not form by virtue of Paley's specific wishes. Leading up to the museum's opening were studies and deliberations about what such a museum, or "Library and History Center" might look like.⁹⁰ As evidenced by a paper trail, there was much work done by people other than Paley to prepare for such an institution. Documents from a three-phased study lasting from 1967 to 1971 along with newspapers articles provides details regarding the state of television programs (and radio). However, the paper trail is a bit spotty. Records of how the Museum of Broadcasting formed and developed are not publicly available.⁹¹ Furthermore, there are no publicly accessible archives for William Paley or for his foundation, which funded the study and the new cultural institution. Still, the events leading up to the Museum of Broadcasting shed light on the discussions about television and its history. Among the key points were the expressions of television's historical and cultural significance as well as establishing a classification system to proceed with selection. Additionally, this case provided an overview of technological and legal obstacles in program acquisition as well as preservation. Above all, the studies catalyzed by Paley led to the collection of some empirical data regarding the existence of recorded programs, thus precipitating the need to collect such records in a centralized institution.

⁹⁰ Bluem, "Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study."

⁹¹ This is a non-profit without its own archive, such as the MoMA or the Ford Foundation. Additionally, the Paley Center for Media no longer has a formal library. Back when it was the Museum of Television and Radio, there was a researcher library housing books, newsletters, publicity clippings, and reports.

The following sections discuss the report commissioned by Paley and highlight the significant points about classifying television into worthy and marginal categories of historical value. These section serves as the part of the framework that addresses how individuals enabled by institutional structures approached the problem of defining television's historical value and archivability. The last section examines the formation of a museum as a site for broadcast history by focusing on how the newly formed cultural institution selected television for its archival space.

The Bluem Report: Demonstrating a Need to Preserve Broadcast History

Towards the end of the 1960s, universities increasingly demonstrated an interest to collect and preserve television, particularly as part of efforts to archive material and popular culture. Presumably, it was in this climate that Paley catalyzed efforts to survey the possibility of an institution solely dedicated to the preservation of broadcasting. Although the outcome was not a university-oriented institution, Paley relied on the academic context to begin the process of legitimating a television heritage. The Paley Foundation, his philanthropic organization, commissioned a Syracuse University professor to pursue a large-scale study that inventoried the existence of recorded television and gauge interest in forming a national archive. The professor was A. William Bluem, the same person who imparted an air of scholarly legitimacy to the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences as the editor of *Television Quarterly* from 1961 to 1967. Bluem bridged the academic and industry spheres.

Paley's foundation provided the money and the framework to guide the study: "a preliminary investigation into the desirability and feasibility of establishing a master collection of documents representing the history of radio and television, with emphasis

upon aural and/or visual recordings.”⁹² The main goals were threefold: to assess present efforts at preserving broadcast history, survey the “sight-and-sound” collections that do exist (and how they were funded, organized, and valued as culturally and historically significant), and recommend what a “Library and History Center” might look like.⁹³ The Library and History Center label was a generic name denoting the function and purpose of an archive to collect and make the archive available for the general public. The Paley Foundation fully funded this first phase.

Realizing that an inventory of network holdings was essential to any consideration for a national archive, the second phase involved an inventory of CBS’s holdings in 1969. The third phase replicated the network inventorying process with NBC. The Paley Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities jointly funded this phase. The goal for inventorying NBC involved identifying basic information such as titles, dates, source, whether the content aired, format (tape, film, kinescope), and technical condition.⁹⁴

Bluem and his colleagues drew on their academic training to design a study that could address their basic questions.⁹⁵ Was there an interest in forming a national or centralized archive of broadcast history? Where, and to what extent, did recorded broadcasts exist? How were they organized? How were they used? What physical and

⁹² Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study,” 1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ William Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting History,” c 1971, 6, Section 5D, 749-827, Ford Foundation. The NBC inventory project also was an attempt to determine the technological and financial dimensions associated with acquiring such programs. However, this part was never fully realized and tabled for later investigation and study.

⁹⁵ Among Bluem’s colleagues was Louis Lochner, a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

technical states were they in? And how would it be possible to aggregate the materials that existed into a preservation and access type of space? Bluem and his colleagues visited universities, libraries, historical societies, museums, and broadcast networks (and not just limited to the US, there were a few international archives). They interviewed over a hundred people at various universities with TV-radio departments and surveyed over four hundred college and universities in general, seeking input from interested departments and campus libraries.⁹⁶ They also asked for data, or at least estimations, about existing broadcast material. In this regard, they were interested in identifying the scope of audio recordings, films, kinescopes, and tapes held by the institution.

At the conclusion of the study, Bluem presented preliminary conclusions to the Paley Foundation trustees. Next, he compiled all the data, findings, and summarized recommendations in a final report. He presented the report to a small advisory council in 1971. A two-day conference convened with a council of professors, librarians, and broadcasters to discuss Bluem's findings and recommendations.⁹⁷ Particularly, the conference participants were asked to assess Bluem's recommended priorities in light of academic interests (both instructional and scholarly) as well as comment on how to develop such an institution.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Bluem, "Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study," 2.

⁹⁷ Bluem, "Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study." The binder containing the study had a list of 17 conference participants including a executives or leaders from PBS, BBC, George Eastman House, The Film Department at the MoMA, *American Heritage*, Archives of American Art, and the Museum of Science. Also included were academics from Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Temple, and SUNY Buffalo. Of particular interest was Robert Saudek, Professor of Film at Harvard University who later became the Museum of Broadcasting's first president.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, based on the conference agenda, also included in the binder. Agenda items included presentations from the BBC and George Eastman House, which demonstrated an interest in policy and structural issues, and a concluding session on "defining and developing the proposed institution."

Just Cause for an Institution Devoted to Broadcast History

The outcome of the study offers a look at the state of broadcast preservation around the late 1960s. The study demonstrated that there was indeed an interest in the preservation of television as historical and cultural material. This was not surprising given the rising educational and scholarly interest in television. Television programs were not absent from academic institutions. Bluem noted, “the mere fact that any library-type institution has seen fit to preserve a given program has been sufficient reason to suggest, albeit indirectly, that it had some historical significance.”⁹⁹ However, the existence of programs in these institutions was inconsistent and subject to material constraints such as financial support, storage space, and access. The report regularly highlighted the concern with lost records of history, both in terms of news (and what they called “actuality”) and entertainment. This concern stemmed from Bluem’s inventory of corporate archives. The corporate archives functioned for internal purposes to track their holdings for varying purposes such as legal reasons, future syndication possibilities, or re-use for news programs.¹⁰⁰ These archives tended to have only an “operational inventory,” which was minimally enough to locate and identify programs, but was far from a comprehensive system. As such, another key outcome was the creation of the preliminary frameworks for systematically classifying broadcast materials for the purposes of making informed selections for preservation. Lastly, the report offered a set of recommendations for future discussion.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 14.

Concretely, the Bluem Report demonstrated that while a substantial amount of broadcast materials did in fact exist, there was a vital need to systematically and strategically preserve broadcast history in a centralized institution.¹⁰¹ Bluem concluded “unless some concerted action is taken, the greatest part of the history of these media, together with the records of world and American history they have created, will be lost, hopelessly fragmented, and otherwise generally useless to posterity.”¹⁰² The task of preserving television (and radio) history was far more complex than initially anticipated. The studies indicated that factors such as neglect, deterioration, financial constraints, legalities of ownership, and the overall lack of uniform retention policies, and others, precluded “efforts to attempt inclusive television preservation at this time.”¹⁰³ The following delves deeper into the study’s highlights, particularly those that address the quantity and location of television’s recorded history and the selection of those records for an imagined archive labeled as the Library and History Center.

The study’s priority and urgency was to locate the important broadcasts and then later focus on how to select entertainment programs for posterity.¹⁰⁴ Bluem determined that while a great deal of broadcasting’s recorded past existed in private collections (e.g. entrepreneurs and personal collections of writers, performers, even advertising agencies), he would focus on formal collections held by institutions and corporate holdings. Formal

¹⁰¹ Bluem estimated that about one million hours of unique radio and television broadcasts existed in recorded form, of which about 25 percent was news and actuality, thus worth saving. The remaining 750,000 hours of programming were entertainment and needed to be sparingly selected. See *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰² Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study,” 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

collections referred to the conventionally understood archiving institutions – universities, libraries, museums, or archives. The corporate holdings were the broadcast recordings held by networks, broadcast ownership groups, and stations.

Institutional Holdings: Sparsely and Sporadically Collected

The final report broke down radio and television holdings across institutions and then in networks and some stations. Bluem provided a succinct summary about the state of television preservation within archival institutions (libraries, archives, museums):

Although the television medium has been creating potentially valuable historical resource materials for over a quarter of a century, surprising few archival efforts of an institutional nature have been attempted. Indeed, fewer than 7,500 films, videotapes or kinescopes are presently retained by any institution and less than half that number are actually catalogued, indexed and available for use.¹⁰⁵

Whereas there were a great many of radio broadcasts in a recorded form (over 40,000, assuming that their survey methods were thorough and comprehensive), television in the institutional setting was in a much poorer state.¹⁰⁶ There could be many reasons for such disparity: insufficient technological capability, lack of interest on the part of the university or archive to collect recorded television broadcasts, and especially a lack of interest on the part of the industry to save recorded television that did not have an apparent use value. However, it was not the goal of the study to evaluate why archival institutions held television programs in their collections. Rather, the report summarized empirical findings about the institutions, with attention to the quality (technological) and quantity of recorded units. To organize the findings, Bluem identified four main

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 18.

institutions where recorded television was preserved. The following table summarizes data from these four institutions, along with a fifth miscellaneous category (Table 2).

Table 2: Breakdown of Television Holdings in Institutions, circa 1969

	Estimated recorded programs held in collection*	Types of programs / reasons to collect
MoMA's "Television Archive of the Arts"	75 – 100	Art; documentaries about artists
National Academy of TV Arts and Sciences "Library and Museum"	600 (vague estimate)	Unclear, still in process of figuring out how to proceed with a national library
George Foster Peabody Collection	3,000	Nominations for Peabody awards; the "best" programs as judged by broadcasters
Motion Picture Division of the Library of Congress	2,500 (as part of 32,000 motion pictures collection)	Sampling of various types of programs; poorly catalogued
Misc. and University Teaching Collections	800	Unclear; mix of Emmy-nominated programs (50 of which at Eastman House, film archive), recorded programs for teaching-purposes, etc.

Source: Bluem Report.¹⁰⁷

* It is important to stress *estimation*, especially within the Miscellaneous and University Teaching Collections category. Bluem concluded that "no more than 5,000 to 5,500 recorded TV units are now retained in non-governmental institutional collections;" meaning that there could be at least another 500 - 1000 recorded units not accounted for in the above chart.

In light of an earlier estimation made by Bluem that there must be about one million unique recorded programs in existence, the amount held by institutions was a mere fraction. Still, it was a promising start, especially since Bluem could assume that

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 21-24.

these broadcast records were already historically significant given their location within archival and cultural institutions.¹⁰⁸

The recognition of the MoMA's archive might be associated with William Paley's involvement in the museum. It was also one of the few archives devoted solely to television, albeit very limited in scope (it should be noted that the Bluem Report made no mention of the MoMA's earlier history with television and a proposal for a television archive). Similarly, the report indicated that Bluem and Paley were well aware of the Academy's national archive efforts. At this point, however, the Academy's interest in an archival type institution (via partnering with three universities) was still quite ambiguous and undefined. Bluem noted that nothing of interest was happening at the Washington D.C. branch and "the contents of the collection at NYU were vague and the collection itself not in service."¹⁰⁹ At least there was some progress towards a national library at UCLA but Bluem reported that a lack of funding threatened any further progress. Of significant interest is the fact that Bluem reported on the Peabody Collection, the collection of radio and television programs that program creators and broadcasters submitted for consideration of the Peabody award. This archive was more or less a haphazard collection of self-selected broadcasts. The 3000 programs reflected a history of award winners, but also a bit broader swath of programs considered for awards. Like the Academy's efforts, though, the Peabody Collection lacked funds and formalized catalogues.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 21.

¹¹⁰ The Peabody archive serves as a reminder that collecting recorded programs does not imply preservation efforts and an archival logic. The Peabody Collection was not secured until 1980 when the University of

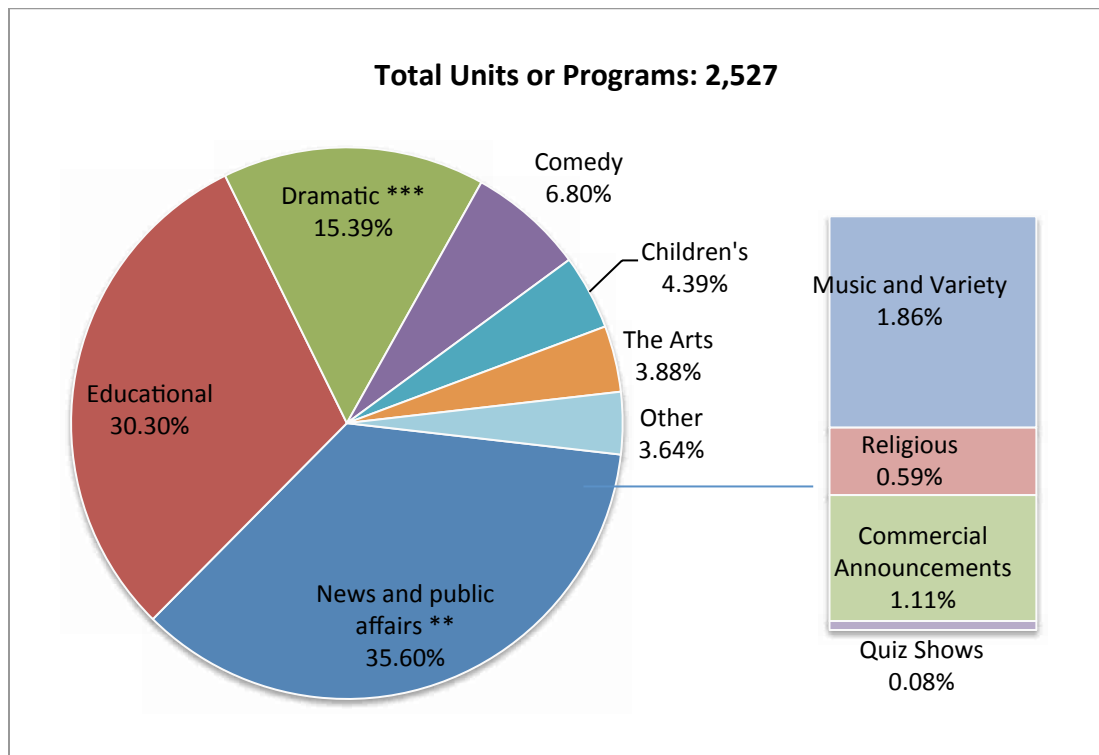
Lastly, the Library of Congress and their Motion Picture Division held a decent collection of television materials. Their holdings were a solid place to start, but “accessibility, cataloging procedures, and general reluctance of some producing organizations to place material make the collection one of limited quality and dubious influence.”¹¹¹ Arguably, surveying the status of the Library of Congress around 1969 catalyzed concern about the uncertain state of television preservation. Later preservation studies identified the Library of Congress, and especially the mechanism of copyright, as a possible solution to building a centralized, national archive of television programs. Bluem contributed to the preservation concern by collecting data from the Motion Picture Division about their television holdings – a task that had yet to happen. This represents one of the more complete pictures of just how representative a collection’s contents were circa 1969 (Figure 1, next page).

As expected, the types of broadcast programs with inherent historical and cultural value constituted the largest percentage. News, public affairs, documentaries, special events, and educational programs made up the bulk of the Library’s holdings. But the Library’s holdings were not to the exclusion of other areas of broadcast content, specifically entertainment.

Georgia Library took in the collection and was able to ensure that tapes and films were properly preserved. See Schreibman, “A Succinct History of American Television Archives.”

¹¹¹ Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study,” 24.

Figure 1: Number of Units (programs) at the Library of Congress’s Motion Picture Division, 1956-1966*



Source: Television Holdings, Library of Congress as Requested by Motion Picture Division, 1956-1966, in Bluem Report.¹¹²

* Does not include gift holdings, as in television programs donated as part of an individual’s manuscript collection

** Includes news, documentary, special events, sportscasts, and political coverage

*** Includes serious drama, light drama, movies, and soap operas

To help frame the types of programs held by the Library, Bluem requested a list of major contributors to the Library’s collection. The list indicated two factors in the selection of recorded programs, particularly factors that came from the industry and not from archival management or the Library’s curatorship. One, studios and networks with the means to record television or produce programs on film contributed to the Library of Congress. Two, the list demonstrated how copyright functioned as an archival mechanism. The above chart and the list of contributors included in Bluem’s report

¹¹² Ibid., 25.

represented the companies with a proprietary interest to copyright their broadcasts, especially at a time when there was no mandate to copyright television broadcasts. The biggest contributors were Official Films, Inc., with 721 units that included newsreels and films for television syndication, and CBS with 514 units, presumably news content. Other major contributors included Turn of the Century Fights (95 units), NBC (75 units), Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc. (61 units), Walt Disney Productions (41 units), Screen Gems (25 units), Desilu Productions (21 units), and ABC (18 units).¹¹³ Such data provides a clearer picture about the existence of recorded television programs.¹¹⁴

Two points were clear from the institutional survey. One, recorded programs did indeed exist. The motivation to collect programs varied, such as collections to support teaching and research or as copyright deposits. This meant that collections were far from representative. Two, recorded programs may exist, but without any systematic cataloging or selection methods. The state of television collections varied from institution to institution, with discrepancies in inventorying, cataloging, and accessibility.

Corporate Holdings: Privately Held Assets

The survey of corporate holdings yielded somewhat similar results. Namely, that recorded programs did in fact exist and that holdings were poorly cataloged (and certainly not accessible to the public, let alone researchers). Bluem and his colleagues first surveyed the inventory of CBS. Accounting for the CBS News Division, TV Network, and one owned and operated station (WCBS), Bluem reported that CBS held an estimated 52,000 recorded programs. This number included kinescopes, films, and

¹¹³ “Major Contributions to Library of Congress Television Holdings” Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁴ It was likely that this data helped spur the urgency for the Library of Congress to study the state of television preservation and develop a national repository of recorded programs.

videotapes (and it was possible that the number could be far greater, if kinescopes or videotapes contained multiple programs) and spanned from 1948 to 1969.¹¹⁵ The CBS inventory was the largest archive surveyed thus far. Not surprisingly, since the network's holdings spanned decades, bicoastal production, and programming types, such as television films either made by or distributed by CBS and news programs. Despite the impressive quantity, Bluem recommended that less than ten percent of the total amount (including radio, which ups the number to 60,000 recorded radio and television programs) belonged in an archival type of institution. This was based on a rationale that classified certain programs as more likely to be historically significant over other programs, which ought to be retained on a very selective basis. Bluem and his colleagues undertook a comparable inventory with NBC. They estimated that NBC held about 34,500 films, kinescopes, and tapes. The networks had "the essential content which an LHC [Library and History Center, generic name for an archive-to-be] would seek to preserve."¹¹⁶ There was a rather substantial quantity of recorded programming, but realistically, not all of these programs could go to an archival institution.

While it might have been exciting that far more television existed in a recorded format than initially anticipated, two factors precluded a wholesale consideration of all material for a proposed archive. First, there were the realistic limits on space, funding, and ability to transfer all network holdings to an institution devoted to a preserving television for the public good. Similarly, Bluem noted that "one could not be at all certain of what was unique and what was duplication, what was complete and what was

¹¹⁵ Bluem, "Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study," 42–45.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

fragmentary.”¹¹⁷ Each recorded program might have had an identifier on it (such as a title on the film canister), but there was no consolidated listing and no uniform identification. Second, there were more academically and intellectually driven limitations. Specifically, there was an implicit commitment to sampling methods, whereby Bluem or another academic could devise a formula or scheme that would build a representative sample of the total sum. Additionally, Bluem implied that there was little value to save all of the network holdings – only a fraction of all the programs were a logical fit for the proposed Library and History Center.

The ultimate goal was to develop a classification system to manage the corporate holdings, placing each program under a taxonomic structure that enabled rapid assessment for either definite preservation, possible preservation, or of marginal interest. The selection process would not necessarily be contingent on subjective factors of judgment, tastes, and conventional wisdom (such as, the implicit historical value of news and public affairs programs), but rather could be scientifically derived with a clinical precision. Classifying programs on a spectrum of historically significant to somewhat important to inconsequential meant an efficient system of selection. Of course, subjective factors would intimately figure in to the selection process, as Bluem’s classification system implicitly carried discursive valuations about television’s worth.

Bluem reported on the proposed classifying system in tandem with the results from surveying CBS, NBC, and television stations. The recommendations for classifying programs for the purposes of retention programs and an eventual national archive were commendable – tackling the great task of organization, cataloging, and especially

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 29.

selecting programs was a struggle at a moment when there were few standards. The classification system was an attempt to separate the content that was of historical value (such as news, no surprise there) and the content that could potentially have historical and cultural value, but did not require maximum preservation (such as entertainment).

Towards a Classification of Content

A classification system was an essential mechanism in a proposing how a future television archive might operate. Surely all recorded programs could not be transferred to a hypothetical archive or the generically named, Library and History Center. At a very basic level, a network or corporation would never donate a whole library of corporate assets for the public good. Plus, there never seemed to be an interest in establishing a complete archive, but rather a representative and well-sampled archive. As such, a vital step in the formation of an archive was the inventory survey. The survey also stated that the networks ought to implement a retention plan. Or as Bluem noted, “what was worthy of retention and what could be abandoned in response to continuing operational demands for storage space and reduction of inventory costs.”¹¹⁸ A systematic approach to selecting which programs must be saved, which could be saved, and which were less important for historical posterity was one way of balancing the needs of the network and the anticipated needs of a television archive.

Again, note that Bluem did not feel the need to classify the recorded programs held by academic and archival institutions. There was an indirect assumption that such material was already historically significant by virtue of its location in these institutions. The academic, cultural, and/or archival institution already legitimated the status of its

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

materials. The industry, however, had different motivations for recording and storing their programs. As corporate assets, recorded programs were subject to “operational realities” such as storage space, the re-use of tapes, and selling-off assets rather than a general concern for historical significance.¹¹⁹ As such, Bluem was mindful of the corporate concerns when constructing the classification system.

Bluem was also mindful on the veracity of the historical record when it came to television’s products. He outlined two pre-existing *physical* conditions before explaining the classification system. The first condition for selecting programs for preservation purposes was the fact that the program had to air. Of course, exceptions could be made, but the essential prerequisite was that people had to have seen it. If the program had not aired, then “its inclusion in a Library and History Center for Radio and Television did not seem vital.”¹²⁰ The second condition required that the recorded unit (the film or tape) must be the master copy or a duplicate copy in order to ensure authenticity. This condition was rooted in the same principle that the program saved was the program aired, and thus viewed. Additionally, this condition applied to technical quality. These two conditions immediately eliminated “hundreds of thousands of physical units now actually stored.”¹²¹ From there, Bluem developed a classification system with three levels of content types. The following table summarizes Bluem’s explanations (Table 3).

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹²¹ Ibid., 35.

Table 3: Bluem’s Classification System

	Priorities in selection	Descriptions	Recommended Amount for Retention
Class I	Serious and significant content	News, public affairs, “serious” cultural programming, informational/educational, religious, instructional (basically aligns with FCC classification)	All; except future daily news, to be sampled for preservation and serious cultural and entertainment specials on item-to-item
Class II	Specially selected content	Sports, entertainment; series and specials	5%; some possibility for leeway based on critical recognition
Class III	Non-aired material	Auditions, electronic tests, closed-circuit, out takes (specifically from cultural and public affairs), footage of actual events, production elements	No set percentage; Item-to-item basis

Source: “Retention Plan Adopted for This Study,” Bluem Report.¹²²

Effectually, the classification was a short hand way of instantly distinguishing the quality programs from all the rest. This did not mean that every program marked as Class I would be historically significant for an institution to preserve, but that it was likely to be significant and therefore a priority to examine. Bluem acknowledged that while these classifications were “quasi-subjective” assessment, they could be still useful in planning for a proposed institution and considerations of budget and staff.¹²³ Thus, a Class I designation narrowed down the scope of recorded programs that needed to be inventoried and examined. The alternative was for individuals to look through every program without a sense of priorities. Class II was still potentially significant, but less so and less urgent to

¹²² Ibid., 34-40.

¹²³ Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting History,” 2.

examine. Likewise, Class II indicated “limited sampling” rather than the more comprehensive retention of Class I programs.¹²⁴

Furthermore, while Bluem wrote authoritatively concerning his recommendations, he did offer a disclaimer that these were his “ideas and opinions in matters which should reflect the concerns of all who are interested.”¹²⁵ Indeed, these recommendations were developed with the intention for discussion and critique, particularly at the intimate two-day conference staged by the Paley Foundation in 1971. Furthermore, Bluem offered the disclaimer that these recommendations for retention were an intervention for the networks (and more generally, any institution with recorded programs).¹²⁶ At the time, Bluem observed that network inventoried their holdings for purposes of “storage-and-retrieval” rather than identification for long-term preservation based on content.¹²⁷ Still, these recommendations are significant in framing the selection process, prompting modes of thinking about evaluating programs for preservation in an institution dedicated to broadcast history.

The classification system was a useful tool, but one that reflected the inherent biases and notions about television’s historical and cultural value. In applying the

¹²⁴ William Bluem, “The NBC Kinescope Recording Collection 1948-1963”, January 1971, 2, Library Files, Paley Center for Media, New York.

¹²⁵ Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study,” 29–30.

¹²⁶ Bluem drew from other broadcasting systems for guidance about a classification system for the purposes of retention. For example, the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) identified three reasons to guide which programs might be selected for long-term retention. Reasons for retention included records of Canadian history and culture as shown in programs, of Canadian broadcasting history, and for future re-use. The CBC identified two broad classes of programs: historical value and artistic value. These were very broad categories, with subcategories encompassing Canadian, World, and broadcasting history, controversial issues, contemporary themes, technological achievements, overwhelming audience response, award-winners, and more. *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

classification system to the CBS and NBC holdings, Bluem determined that 25% of CBS's entire inventory and about half of NBC's entire inventory merited inclusion in an archival institution. The classification system no doubt favored news, public affairs, and network-produced specials. For instance, nearly seventy-five percent of all the CBS News division recordings (mostly kinescopes but some magnetic tape reels) was marked as Class I and vital to preserve. This was in contrast to about fifteen percent of CBS Television Network (the division responsible for producing and licensing entertainment programming) recorded output that Bluem marked as Class I.

The higher percentage of NBC's entire inventory reflected another inherent bias or priority for preservation – to save anything “old,” as in the first decade of commercial television when the kinescope was the only means to save live programs. Bluem recommended that the majority of NBC's kinescopes should be preserved and held within the proposed Library and History Center. These fragile records of live television were identified as historically significant, regardless of content. He identified a total of 13,322 kinescopes from 1948 to 1963, noting that all of these should be saved “on the basis of age alone.”¹²⁸ Still, the programs he chose to highlight in the report reflect the Class I, or news and serious drama programs: *Kraft Television Theater*, *NBC Symphony*, *Author Meets Critic*, *Meet the Press*, *Camel News Caravan*, *Hallmark*, *American Forum*, and *Continental Classroom* (among others). Bluem's inventory of NBC indicated that NBC recorded and saved many more program types than just news and public affairs. However, Bluem recommended that the majority of the entertainment (e.g. disposable) programs did not need be retained, save for a few representative samples. This included programs

¹²⁸ Ibid., 52.

such as *Colgate Comedy*, *Zoo Parade*, *Your Hit Parade*, *Ding Dong School*, *I Married Joan*, many episodes of *Howdy Doody*, and the program noted in the introduction, *Ethel and Albert*.¹²⁹ NBC had a substantial library of programs. But like CBS, that did not mean that all programs were on equal terms for their potential to be conceived of as valuable beyond internal network uses or very limited future historical value. While a classification system was a reasonable mechanism to tackle the vast and scattered network holdings, it remained as a de facto reflection of how particular programs were perceived within a conventional notion of historical utility.

Bluem concluded that the networks had historically valuable content recorded in some form. Summarizing his findings following the NBC inventory, Bluem further noted:

We cannot ignore the significance of this material, and the need to preserve not only a printed ‘paper-record’ of what was said or done at a given time, but also those actual ‘sight-and-sound impressions of what has gone before. Perhaps we will only begin to understand in our time when we are afforded the opportunity to consider the impact of the new media in light of the complete sensory experience they convey.¹³⁰

On the one hand, the report confirmed that there was an interest and a pressing need to preserve television as historical record. It was inherently clear that the sight and sound programs carried different dimensions of historical understanding than solely relying on paper records. Bluem’s reference to the *senses* suggests a McLuhanesque conception of media’s significance in shaping our contemporary existence as well as our future ability

¹²⁹ Bluem, “The NBC Kinescope Recording Collection 1948-1963.”

¹³⁰ William Bluem, “The NBC Holdings -- A Summary of Research Findings”, c 1971, 19, Section 5D, 749-827, Ford Foundation,.

to examine the past.¹³¹ On the other hand, a classification system that prioritized news, public affairs, and special/serious programs while minutely sampling from the rest could potentially make that sensory experience incomplete. By skewing the sight and sound records held within the proposed archival institution, a chunk of historical understanding may be absent.

Ultimately, Bluem's report drew on the available empirical evidence (and a fair number of approximations) to form recommendations concerning an archive in service to an accessible broadcast history. Accessible meant the ability for a general public to access the records of broadcast history. Another implication, though, was in the feasibility of a single institution to manage resources in an effective manner so that an accessible history could exist in the first place. It was neither logical nor possible to stage an all-encompassing archiving effort. No institution could realistically collect and preserve *all* that exists. Bluem was not an archivist by training, but he demonstrated an archival sensibility that accounted for principles of selection and anticipating future use, albeit a notion of future use that was still rooted in prevailing notions of what counts as historical evidence.

Bluem suggested sampling methods, prioritization, and other actionable plans. Fifteen years earlier, Richard Griffith at the MoMA (Chapter 4) proposed a television archive as an intellectual exercise, suggesting that an archive required industry cooperation in tandem to an appreciation of television's cultural significance. He also noted the many materially-based obstacles in forming such an archive, namely the bureaucracy of securing rights and the fragile state of recorded television. About ten

¹³¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media; the Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

years before Bluem's report, participants at the Mass Communications History Conference (Chapter 5) speculated about how to sample from the vast broadcasting universe, debating how to capture the ephemeral and save it for possible future use. The Bluem Report echoed many of these earlier concerns, specifically reasons to save broadcasts, building cooperation, and dealing with vast quantities of raw material (the recorded broadcasts). Backed by data, Bluem offered concrete recommendations. The following section concludes this case study by examining the implementation of a broadcast archive.

From a Study to Reality: The Founding of the Museum of Broadcasting

Bluem offered three overarching recommendations: structure of the institution, its functions, and specific activities. Structurally, the institution would be a non-profit run by a Board of Trustees. The Board, composed of "prestigious figures drawn from national leadership," would be responsible for raising funds, securing industry cooperation, and appointing a director. Additionally, they would appoint an advisory council to represent academic (social sciences, humanities/arts, and history), industry, legal, and engineering interests as well as experts from the library sciences. The institution would focus on three main functions or goals. First, it would collect and preserve the sight and sound material (as well as supplemental print material such as scripts and periodicals). Second, it was imperative that such an institution provided access to *all* people – scholars, historians, students, professionals, and the general public. Relatedly, the third function was programmatic. Bluem outlined more specific activities to correspond with each function. For example, in regards to programs and services, the institution could create sub collections geared towards particular subjects (such as the comedy genre or political

coverage; essentially a curatorial activity), publicize its holdings, and develop exhibits and public programs. Furthermore, the institution ought to take a leadership role in recommending industry-wide retention plans, preservation standards, and service as a clearinghouse of information about available resources in general.¹³²

The Bluem Report suggested that there was a consensus regarding the need to seek out and preserve the products of television. Although Bluem posed the question, “shall [the institution] store and preserve materials?” the concluding recommendations and considerations implied an affirmative answer.¹³³ The archival function of such an institution was evident; no other institution was dedicated to the preservation of recorded broadcast history, and especially formulating a widely accessible archive. The concerns were geared towards the problems in fulfilling such a function. Bluem outlined problems such as acquisition (concerns of rights, industry cooperation, and other institutional cooperation), accession (balancing the interests of the industry and proposed institution), cataloging standards, duplication, and above all, financing. These were practical concerns, which could be worked out later as the institution materialized. Seemingly, more pressing matters were the institution’s functions of providing access, services, and programs – and to whom with what intention.

The key distinguishing function of this proposed institution was the focus on the public. It was apparent in 1971 that access to recorded television was limited. The holdings at the Library of Congress were effectively inaccessible since there were no

¹³² Bluem, “Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study,” 70–73.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 71.

viewing facilities.¹³⁴ While programs existed in archival and academic institution, that was for the privileged few in educational and scholarly settings. The potentially great resources for studying and appreciating television for multiple purposes were the network, station, and other commercial holdings. Access might be granted to educators and academics, but would require a bureaucratic maze of requesting permission, sending prints, and so on.¹³⁵ Thus, the proposed institution would function as an archive for researcher use, especially since so few facilities existed that were dedicated to broadcast history and its physical records.

Implementing the Recommendations

It is not too difficult to see how Bluem's recommendations eventually played out in the formation of the Museum of Broadcasting. To start with, the Museum was (and still is) a non-profit institution with a Board of Trustees, whose first Board comprised of mostly network executives and cultural elites (including William Paley's wife). Function-wise, the Museum pursued the collection and preservation of recorded broadcasts. It was unique in that it was open to the public.

When the Museum opened, Paley explained that the selection of programs was "designed to give a good indication of what broadcasting was doing in a particular field at a certain time."¹³⁶ Despite the wealth of materials held by network and studio archives, the Museum started off with a small collection of about 700 television and radio

¹³⁴ Barbara Kaiser, "Proposal for Establishment of N.E.T. Film and Tape Archives," July 07, 1967, Administrative Subject File of the State Archivist, 1942-2001, Box 3, NET, Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹³⁵ Bluem, "Preserving Broadcasting Materials of Historic Significance: Summary and Report of a Four-Year Study," 64.

¹³⁶ "Paley Opens Broadcasting's Own Museum."

shows.¹³⁷ These represented the early years in broadcasting, specifically those programs that had been recorded *and* deemed as worth preserving (the Class I designation). Not surprisingly, this meant broadcasts of presidents, congressional hearings, Edward R. Murrow's *See It Now*, *Studio One*, and Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town*. The Museum's curator selected of programs guided by three criteria: popularity, prizes, and artistic merit. To account for contemporary programs, the goal was to select three representative episodes from each of the top fifteen highest rated shows.¹³⁸ Hence, a large proportion of the 900 hours acquired in 1977 represented top rated programs: 200 hours of primetime's and 50 hours of daytime's top rated programs. The rest of the acquisition featured 100 hours of milestone special, award winning programs (Emmy's, Peabody, and Clio's), performing arts, informational, children's, and sports.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the technology to record a full day's worth of programs – broadcast flow – meant that it was possible to capture television as broadcast. Thus, another goal was to record one full day every few months from different stations around the country. As one article reflected, the “complete broadcasting days preserve in an immediate fashion the ethos of an entire era.”¹⁴⁰

From the Bluem Report recommendation, the research and scholarly function was also present. When the Museum first opened, one article noted the excitement from the academic community, particularly a graduate student named William Boddy working on

¹³⁷ Gardella, “The Museum Is the Media.”

¹³⁸ Fraser, “Museum of Broadcasting Opens With Paley Gift.”

¹³⁹ Susan Schur, “Museum Profile: The Museum of Broadcasting,” *Technology & Conservation*, 1977, Museum of Broadcasting Publicity: 1976-1977, Paley Center for Media, New York.

¹⁴⁰ Laurence Bergreen, “Paley Preserves the Past,” *American Film*, September 1977, Museum of Broadcasting Publicity: 1976-1977, Paley Center for Media, New York.

dissertation research (and who would later go on to publish one of the central texts about television history, *Fifties Television*).¹⁴¹ However, the academic dimension was limited to facilitating research by way of offering researcher membership prices; none of the recommendations about grants or academically oriented conferences seemed to materialize (at least in the first few years). The educational and programmatic function supported both academic and wider public interests, with exhibits, curated selection of formative radio and television broadcasts, and public lectures and seminar. Above all, it was evident that the most visible function was engaging with the public. A central facet of that public engagement was to frame television as a cultural institution. Television was a mostly a small scale, domestic activity. It was a mass medium for entertainment and information. When contextualized within the space of a museum, though, the intention was to reframe television in light of cultural signification.

A Monument to Television and Its Cultural Significance

At one point, the Museum of Broadcasting was described in the press as a “cultural service,” seeking to preserve a “melting pot of the educational, the entertaining, the good, the bad and the mediocre.”¹⁴² The cultural service sentiment demonstrated that the Museum successfully framed itself as an institution built for the public good. It was a place where the public could experience television in similar terms to that of art in a museum or books in a library.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ SHEPARD, “Broadcasting’s Past Proves Popular.”

¹⁴² Jack Harris, “The Preservation of Yesteryear: A Look at New York City’s Unique Museum of Broadcasting,” *Video Action*, January 1981, Museum of Broadcasting, MoMA Queens Library Video Organization Files.

¹⁴³ The public, though, was still limited to mostly middle class tourists and nostalgia buffs. See Kompare, *Rerun Nation*; Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation.”

Thus, the recommendation to collect and preserve materials for public use was the most distinguishing and perhaps radical function of the proposed institution. To a degree, this was an altruistic effort. The goal was to mobilize an archive of broadcast history for the public good. A representative sampling of programs could be viewed by anyone, whether for purposes of historical inquiry or general curiosity (or more likely, nostalgia). Perhaps that was one reason to forgo the labeling the institution an archive, but instead as a “Library and History Center.” Such a label was more inviting, suggesting the benefits of public library that enriches the public’s ability to access materials.

The cultural service function also correlated with the notion of a cultural heritage. Specifically, this was the notion that television’s contents help to shape and reflect American life (albeit, a narrow, hegemonic, and homogenous culture, seeing as how the television collected spanned the 1950s and 1960s). Television programs, whether news or entertainment, was part of a shared collective experience, such as books, magazines, and music. The Writers Guild of America succinctly noted this sentiment, explaining the new museum “provides a living memory of the twentieth century, a present-tense history of its changing arts, attitudes, and technologies.”¹⁴⁴ Television was enveloped in a discourse of cultural heritage. This was not an uncommon discourse at the time. The notion of film as a cultural and national heritage was in circulation at this point, mobilized by the American Film Institute and others in an effort to raise concern about a disappearing heritage, thereby instigating a desperate need for preservation.¹⁴⁵ The cultural heritage frame was likewise a convenient organizing principle regarding television’s importance.

¹⁴⁴ “Museum of Broadcasting Established,” *Writers Guild of America*, May 1977, Museum of Broadcasting Publicity: 1976-1977, Paley Center for Media, New York.

¹⁴⁵ Caroline Frick, *Saving cinema the politics of preservation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Television was integral to both televising and shaping collective experiences. A discourse that inscribed television's intangible cultural value could justify its inclusion in a cultural institution. Or perhaps that operated vice versa, that by virtue of its location in a cultural institution, television ought to be considered as culturally valuable and essential building blocks for nation, identity, and culture. More cynically, the Museum of Broadcasting was an institution made by the industry for the industry. In this sense, the cultural institution could serve two purposes. One, the Museum of Broadcasting catalyzed a sense of significance, formulating statements that connected television with a cultural heritage. Two, by imbuing a historical and/or cultural quality to broadcasting as a whole, the rationale of a cultural heritage justified why a non-profit ought to preserve privately held assets (and provide tax deductions to the networks in the process).

When considering the amorphous cultural rationale in a broader context, though, the public service function can be interpreted in a more nuanced, and arguably, cynical manner. The same notions of a cultural heritage and the connotations of collective experiences and national identities were also a rationalization for a non-profit to preserve privately-held assets. Although, this critique is more apt with academic institutions (or historical societies, such as in the Wisconsin case) and funding sources not directly tied to the industry. William Paley essentially bankrolled the Museum of Broadcasting through his philanthropic (and tax deductible) foundation as he “personally guaranteed the museum’s financing for the first five years.”¹⁴⁶

An institution devoted to preserving television might be counter-intuitive. Since the 1950s, a number of discourses circulated that denigrated television as trash, as

¹⁴⁶ “Paley Opens Broadcasting’s Own Museum.”

disingenuous, and as disposable.¹⁴⁷ There were quiz show scandals, a blanket statement that television was a vast wasteland, and various critiques about opaque commercial imperatives driving everything from programs to political advertisements. In reaction to these critiques, television executives instituted codes of conduct and reacted against the criticism that television was a vast wasteland by pointing to programs of a “high culture” or democratic persuasion.¹⁴⁸ Proposing an institution devoted to the preservation of a broadcast history operated in a parallel logic to the Academy’s pursuit of legitimation via a scholarly journal and a national library. Specific to Paley and his museum, an institution that was labeled a museum, rather than an archive or library, could be interpreted as another strategy in the reorientation of television. An institution that contained the objects of television was analogous to an art museum. Thus, the records of broadcasting were objects of artistic and cultural merit, or at least, objects that reflected American cultural, social, and political life. Placing such objects in a cultural institution was another avenue to convince the public (and television’s critics) of television’s cultural and democratic contributions.

Appropriately, the Museum of Broadcasting’s public unveiling coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of network broadcasting. Broadcasting had reached a historicity, a point in time when it was feasible for a monument to a television history to come into being *and* to embrace television as recorder of history.¹⁴⁹ Or as Paley explained at the

¹⁴⁷ Boddy, *Fifties Television*; Kompare, *Rerun Nation*; Spigel, “Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation.”

¹⁴⁸ Michele Hilmes, *Only connect: a cultural history of broadcasting in the United States* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002).

¹⁴⁹ P Scannell, “Broadcasting historiography and historicity,” *Screen* 45, no. 2 (2004): 130–141.

press conference upon the Museum's opening, "radio and television ' have become a mature, responsible and important force in our national life."¹⁵⁰ Paley's statements, as reported by the press, implicated two intertwined foundational reasons to pursue an archive of television. Such reasons included a sense of broadcasting history and a sense of American history. The former point was evidenced by Paley's remarks that without the Museum, "a precious body of broadcasting history could slip away, leaving only scattered collections and random holdings."¹⁵¹ Or said another way, Paley also explained that "it is time that we take stock of our past, so that we can know and understand the heritage of the broadcast media in building our future."¹⁵²

The Museum of Broadcasting was to be a monument to television's indelible mark on American history. On the one hand, this could easily be construed as a self-aggrandizing measure on the part of Paley as metonymic of the industry. The Museum was a gesture to codify television's institutional, social, political, and economic power in "building our future," as Paley put it. The formation of such a monument to broadcast history and American history in general meant the power to distinguish which programs constituted a body of historical documents. This also meant the power to define the terms in which the public could connect with that history; as a museum of the audio-visual record. On the other hand, it is difficult to deny Paley's sentiments that a broadcast history ought to be preserved before it slipped away. It was apparent that the records of television's most visible output – the program – were scattered or soon to be lost due to

¹⁵⁰ "Paley Opens Broadcasting's Own Museum."

¹⁵¹ Gardella, "The Museum Is the Media."

¹⁵² "Paley Opens Broadcasting's Own Museum."

neglect. Thus, mobilizing a repository of such records, even if it was a monument to the industry itself, meant intervening before all was lost.

Television in the Museum, Again, but as Successful Archive

In the 1950s when the Museum of Modern Art played with the notion that television might belong in its midst, there were sparse efforts to archive television. Or rather, sparse indications that television was even conceptualized as a specific medium meriting consideration as historical and cultural artifacts. It was remarkable that an institution with a cultural authority considered television. By the 1970s, efforts to include television within various institutions were well underway. What was new about this case, though, was that television did not need to enter an existing archive or institution. Rather than justify television's inclusion in a place with preexisting structures, this case study demonstrated the formation of a new institution solely devoted to the records of broadcasting. The museum framework suggested a desire to elevate television's status, particularly to convey the half hour or one hour television show as an object. The new institution divorced television programs from its context of creation and broadcast flow. Still, the Museum of Broadcasting facilitated a space for a dedicated effort. At its core, it could be an archive in practice, meaning the acquisition and ordering of materials. If the archive is understood as a space that accommodates the materials used in the construction of knowledge, then this archive formed a corpus of a television history. The Museum of Broadcasting also developed preservation and access standards with implications for later preservation efforts. For example, the Library of Congress and the Division of Motion

Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound used the half-inch videocassette as standard viewing companies, as was established by the Museum.¹⁵³

The Industry's Paths to Legitimate Television

In sum, this chapter traced strategic moments in the preservation of the television product. By focusing mostly on the moving image output, these archival efforts elevated the product over the process. Granted, any task to archive the vast processes and outputs of television ought to be divided. The key distinguishing features of these case studies were the *industry* motivations to preserve their products outside of industrial structures. The initial appeal to form both of these archives was pitching a service to the industry, with the rhetoric of a public service and sense of historical value. The service to the industry was manifest in at least two ways. Abstractly, an archive and a museum filled with recorded television was an attempt to bestow a degree of cultural prestige. More tangibly, these archiving institutions could help to alleviate the problems of storage experienced by networks and production houses. All the while, they could also intervene in an overall lack of interest on the industry's part to value its output for historical reasons. As such, the television industry seemed to be repeating the mistakes of the film industry – not taking their own history seriously and dumping films or erasing tapes to save short-term costs.

Both these archives – the UCLA Film and Television Archive and the Museum of Broadcasting – defined television's historical and cultural significance by virtue of

¹⁵³ Schur, "Museum Profile: The Museum of Broadcasting"; Erik Barnouw, "Summary of Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division Plans, Policies, Re Television and Radio", September 21, 1978, Erik Barnouw Papers, Box 34, Library of Congress M/B/RS etc. 1978-83, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

television's location in institutional contexts that were tangential to the industrial context. The former drew from the academic institutional context to confer television with legitimacy as objects for scholarly study. The latter drew from the cultural institutional context, namely the museum, as a model to transform television's ephemerality into admired objects. In both cases, the institutional context further spurred television's status. Television in the academic archive (UCLA) and the cultural institution (the Museum of Broadcasting) signaled to the industry that a television history was worth preserving.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Television in the archive speaks volumes about academia, archivists, the industry, and an amalgam of perceptions regarding television's scholarly, historical, and cultural values. The goal of this project was to establish a historical context regarding television's presence in the archive. We often use collections within various archives but seldom scrutinize the factors that brought those materials to a particular space. In examining how television entered the archive, especially in the years prior to the formalized academic study of television (circa 1970s), signals how people perceived television's worth.

If the archive is understood as a site that holds historical evidence, then television's location in archival settings indicates that it too carries historical value. As evident throughout the case studies, archival spaces more readily accepted some aspects of television over others. There were many complexities regarding television's inclusions and exclusions, which can affect the histories and studies we pursue today. The discussions and decisions to archive television (or at time, indirectly archive television via the collection of media in general) illuminates an area of television studies seldom treaded. That is, this dissertation examined archival spaces as a lens to trace how archivists, academics, and industry professionals perceived television as historical and cultural material. For television to enter archives, and thus inscribed with a historical purpose, individuals enabled by institutional structures had to adapt existing archival processes to accommodate television or develop new ones. As proactive individuals engaged in the archiving of television (or more broadly, media), arguments regarding

television's cultural and historical worth coalesced into succinct rationales that further propelled television's natural position in the archive. Specifically, archival spaces fostered the notion of a television heritage and the utility of audio-visual records in historical studies. In examining a few of the institutions that dealt with television and the factors at play in archiving televisions, we can trace how television was valued as worthy of academic study and reflective of American history.

The concluding chapter is divided into five parts. The first part summarizes the major moments from the case studies as they relate to a history of archiving television. Although there were only a few case studies, we can begin to identify the trajectory of television in archival spaces. The second part addresses the research questions, identifying several major factors that facilitated the archiving of television in the 1950s to the 1970s. Broadly, these factors included technology, archivists and other individuals involved in collecting materials, and the television industry. Guiding these factors were ways to think about television, archives, and what constituted as historical material. The third part offers a framework for archives as these institutions relate to the organization of television as historical materials. The fourth part addresses the project's limitations and directions for future research. The last part concludes the dissertation by highlighting the study's significance and situating archives and television within the context of historical inquiry.

Summaries

This dissertation drew on historical methods and institutional analysis to examine several case studies that illustrated how television entered archival spaces. The common

thread throughout the case studies was the notion that the archive was a site of legitimation. The institution conferred television with the status as historical and cultural material. Proactive individuals or determinators grappled with reasons why television belonged in archival spaces and how to proceed. Each case study highlighted variations in institutional structures, thereby influencing the rationales to archive television (and whether television was of direct interest or if it was subsumed in other archival pursuits), the distinctions in which aspects to collect, and the process to construct television collections. In demystifying the archival process and examining institutional settings, we can trace the factors that enabled or dissuaded television from entering these spaces. Each of the case studies featured instances when people dealt with television's archivability – the material and conceptual conditions to archive television – and which aspects of television merited inclusion in archival spaces. The following summarizes the case studies.

Imagined Prospects

The first case study in this dissertation looked at an established cultural institution with reason to explore television in an archival form, but with little interest in pursuing an actual archive. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the MoMA experimented with television based on two rationales: that television was a modern visual art and that television, like the films in the Film Library, were sociologically and historically significant. There were remnants of television's material traces amidst the cultural institutions, specifically a few kinescopes, unpublished manuscripts about television, and a retrospective exhibit about television in the early 1960s (which the museum attempted to secure archival copies of the exhibited programs, but failed to do so). The MoMA case study was an important

component in pursuing a contextual history about television in archives. The cultural institution demonstrated an early interest to consider television as a specific medium that merited cultural and historical analysis. However, the institutional structure was neither suited nor motivated to build an archive or library of television programs. The MoMA's Film Library was already consumed with the complexities of archiving film (e.g. relationships with film studios, funding problems, struggles to preserve the moving image, etc). The pursuit of a television archive was not necessarily beyond the scope of the MoMA, but rather beyond their abilities and immediate set of priorities. The fact that the cultural institution experimented with television and devoted attention to a television history via the exhibition merited enough attention in this dissertation.

While the MoMA did not amass a television archive, the cultural institution's efforts resulted in what may very well be the first incursion into conceptualizing a television archive. Richard Griffith's essay in 1955 about the prospects of a television archive illustrated that when outlining reasons why there needed to be an archive of television's history, taste hierarchies were far down the list of concerns. His essay indicated that perceptions about television's overall sociological, cultural (broadly speaking), artistic, and historical worth were prevalent within the cultural institution. While there were a great many reasons to archive television (e.g. the near ubiquity of television in American life), there were far too many obstacles. The MoMA did not need to pursue a television archive for it to be recognized as a significant part of this history of archiving television; the case study marked a moment when people within an authoritative cultural institution considered television's worth beyond the initial broadcasting environment. Furthermore, the MoMA's experiments with television in

archival form may have left an indelible mark on one of the museum's board members – William Paley, the subject of one of the industry-initiated case studies.

Momentum for Academic Legitimation

The next two case studies focused on how archivists and academics situated within established institutional structures (the archive and the university) dealt with television in the late 1950s and into the 1970s. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin was a mature archiving apparatus, an institution notable for its leadership in the collection of manuscripts and its relationship with the University of Wisconsin – Madison. For the sake of argument, the Society was an academic archive, by virtue of its close association with academic and educational pursuits. This academic archive did not directly pursue television, *per se*. As discussed in Chapters V and VI, there were two research centers, or specialized collecting areas, that inherently dealt with television. The Mass Communications History Center and the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research both operated within the Society's institutional structure, although the faculty from the Speech Department administrated the WCTR. Both archiving efforts were noteworthy for their deliberations about the need to archive mass media and the performing arts, respectively, at a time when archival and academic disciplinary structures did not necessarily support the study of contemporary material associated with popular culture. In these cases, the academic archive served as a site to legitimate television for academic study.

In the case of the MCHC, the Society archivists demonstrated foresight around the mid 1950s about the utility of archiving contemporary material. Specifically, they considered whether modern mass media belonged in the archive, which invariably subsumed some aspects of television. This consideration was rooted in a professionalized

principle that archivists collect materials for unknown future uses and an increasing interest in pursuing contemporary (and often times popular culture) materials. Television entered this academic archive as early as 1958 in part because of archivists recognizing their roles as knowledge constructors. The archivists pursued the “raw materials” of mass communications in spite of having little experience with defining what mass communications meant and determining what utility such materials might have for present and future study. The archival structure was in place, but the challenges were in maneuvering how television fit in to existing archival practices and modes of scholarly research. The archivists learned how to deal with mass media as historical evidence, which implicitly meant fostering television’s worth for archival and academic pursuits. Still, television's material traces tended to be paper based and reflective of conventional collecting areas and domains of academic study, such as institutions, persuasion and public opinion, and journalism. Thus, the academic archive pursued the records of modern mass media institutions, pioneering efforts, journalists, people and businesses associated with persuasion or public opinion, and generally "evidence" to demonstrate democratic functions of American society at that time.

When the WCTR formed in 1960, it focused on collecting the material traces of the theater realm, which broadly became the entertainment industry. Television fluctuated as a constituent part of their collecting focus and as tangential. The designation of television’s archival value was at first contingent on a binary opposition to the collecting efforts of the MCHC, where a notion of mass communications enveloped television as broadcasting. Thus, the WCTR pursued television primarily as discursively defined by the performing arts collecting scope. Much of the WCTR’s efforts were dependent on the

archival institutional structure, relying on the labor, resources, and direction of the Society. The WCTR's interest to directly pursue television, as well as indirectly acquire television's material traces, occurred in tandem to the rising academic interest in studying television in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As evidenced by their solicitation letters, the WCTR drew on the growing scholarly and educational pursuit of television's various artistic, literary, sociological, and industrial facets to draw in more donations. The WCTR and the MCHC, as constituents of the Society, demonstrated the strength of the academic institution as a site for legitimation. The fact that university students and scholars actively used television's material traces, in the form of various manuscript and moving image collections, was a defining strategy of this institution's work to designate television with cultural and historical value. While it was not so much the project the academic archive to elevate the cultural status of television, this archival space sought to broaden the scope of materials deemed worthy of academic and historical study, which included television.

Industry-Initiated Pursuits for Cultural Legitimation

Conversely, the industry-initiated archives deliberately began as projects to raise television's cultural status. The Television Academy and William Paley wanted to convey television's lasting cultural and historical value, which was signaled by shifting television from ephemeral broadcasts to academic and cultural institutions. Both focused on the television program and both relied on academic input to strengthen a claim about television's cultural value by pursuing an institutional setting to convey legitimacy. In the process to elevate television's status, the eventual archiving institutions catalyzed by the Television Academy and Paley mobilized the notion of television as cultural heritage.

While both cases drew on similar rationales to pursue a television archive, or rather a repository dedicated to a television heritage, it was how they enacted on this vision.

The Television Academy's strategy was to draw on the institutional structures and prestige of the academic context to confer television with cultural value. The Television Academy developed relationships with academic institutions in the mid 1960s to make the vision of a television archive happen. The only successful relationship was with UCLA, who had the resources to follow through on such a vision. What began as a vision of a television trade organization soon became the project of an academic institution. Hence, the academic institutional structure again conferred television with legitimacy. Paley's vision for an institution devoted to broadcast history began with the help of an academic to carefully approach the state of television's recorded output as it existed in institutional and corporate holdings. The study was significant in surveying the existence of recorded programs and more importantly, defining classificatory systems that reflected which television programs were most valuable as historical and cultural artifacts and thus belonged in an institution. Paley's vision became the Museum of Broadcasting in 1976, a cultural institution that operated as a cross between a museum, library, and archive. As the only institution devoted exclusively to the preservation of television (and radio) history, the Museum of Broadcasting defined the scope of a television heritage and the means by which such a heritage could be accessible.

The case studies draws attention to the ways television entered spaces with connotations of historical significance, cultural value, and hence, academic worth. These cases were instructive in filling in gaps regarding how notable archives dealt with television's archivability. This was the goal of the first research question, which asked

how did different institutions approach the archiving of television. The second research question focused on the factors that enabled television's material traces to enter archival spaces. The following section synthesizes these factors from the case studies.

Findings: How Television Entered the Archive

In summary, there were multiple (and even contradictory) reasons as to how certain aspects of television entered the archive and others did not. Or rather, there were numerous factors that impact why television materials exist in archival institutions. Specifically, the following identifies three broad factors: technology, the industry, and the archivists or archiving institutions. To begin with, I'd like to offer an inverse statement, one representing various sentiments suggesting reasons for the haphazard existence of television materials in the archive.¹ For the sake of argument, let's say that television largely does not exist in the archive because of technology, industry neglect, and the selection biases and judgments of archivists. Such a statement removes structure and agency as they relate to the archival processes and television. Pointing at the technology suggests technological determinism as well as a myopic view of television history as just programs. Blaming the industry flattens the complexities of a television industry that was not necessarily centralized or all controlling, although at times these very characteristics facilitated television in the archives. There were many people and organizations involved

¹ This is evident throughout the Television and Video Preservations study, such as in the testimonies, written statements, and the final report. See William Thomas Murphy and Library of Congress, *Television and video preservation 1997 : a report on the current state of American television and video preservation : report of the Librarian of Congress*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1997); Another source for that represents the notion that television's archival presence is haphazard comes from Lynn Spiegel: "much of what remains of our TV past remains largely through accidents." Lynn Spiegel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation," in *A companion to television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 92.

who could decide to donate collections autonomous of the broader television industry (such as a writer deciding to donate his papers), although they still operated within interlocked structures of the corporation, legalities such as copyrights, and unions. Lastly, implicating the archivist places too much emphasis on the individual's schema of taste and assumes that the archivist's biases directly translate into preferential treatment. This view continues to mystify the archival process by obscuring the archivist as a profession and isolating the archive from surrounding contexts. This point about subjective biases may be a more apt criticism for the archive as an institution, which then calls attention to the discourses governing archival structures.

Each of these sentiments suggests a place to start when asking why and how television entered the archive. To a degree, there was some truth in each of these instances. The more powerful framework was to draw these sentiments together and trace how technology, the industry, and the archive interact as well as operate within larger discourses about television, history, and knowledge. When reframed as factors in the archiving process, each factor aided in archiving television as well as presented obstacles. The following breaks down these reasons based on the case studies.

Technology: Implicit Factor That Simultaneously Helped and Hindered

Despite the earlier warning about technological determinism, one factor to consider regarding television in the archive was necessarily technological. While technology was not at the forefront of this dissertation, it was implicit and difficult to ignore. The technological ability to record, preserve, maintain, and re-view television as it aired was essential in the *possibility* to develop archival holdings of recorded television. I begin with technology because the tendency when discussing television in the archive is

to think about our access to television programs. It was around the 1970s when there were dedicated efforts to the preservation of the product, a time when recording technologies and preservation methods developed alongside the rising interest repositories of recorded television history. To some degree, technology was also implicated in the ability to archive paper records, such as the mimeograph to copy scripts or carbon copies of correspondence. The focus, though, is on the technologies associated with television as audio-visual records.

The technological point verified one of the contradictory reasons that television was and was not preserved. The live nature of the televisual medium meant that networks, studios, or individuals (let alone archives) save much of on-air television without deliberate and cumbersome efforts. As recording technologies developed, so too did the possibility of saving television. The MoMA case study demonstrated the frustration with locating and acquiring television programs, in part because the technology to record and replay television lagged behind the technology to transmit and receive television. Even if museum staff were interested in acquiring television programs and mounting an exhibit, television recordings lacked the sort of fidelity desired by a cultural institution used to displaying high quality film. Recording technologies towards the end of the 1950s and into the 1960s enabled recorded television to be ubiquitous, with multiple copies of the same program existing across networks, stations, companies, and eventually the home recorder. However, as argued by archivist Jeff Martin, and supported by this research, tape was a transmission medium and not one for preservation.² The Bluem Report demonstrated that many recorded programs existed, of which a great deal were duplicate

² Jeff Martin, "The Dawn of Tape: Transmission Device as Preservation Medium," *Moving Image* 5, no. 1 (2005): 45–66.

copies. The existence of the recorded product did not equal preservation. There were additional steps that needed to take place in order for the recorded programs to become archival.

Technology was also expensive, especially for the academic and non-profit institutions. For example, the film archivist at the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research had to regularly justify the exorbitant costs of film viewing and preservation equipment. The television archive at UCLA benefited from pooling together institutional resources when it merged with the film archive, thus able to purchase equipment that could benefit both media. While the Museum of Broadcasting did not have the same funding problems as the academic archives (at least in the 1970s), it did have to confront the technological obstacles and in the process, innovated preservation standards and ways of increasing access. The point here is that the existence of the technology to record television was not a guarantee that there were methods to play, transfer, and maintain these records, let alone affordable methods.

While technology was certainly a factor, a history of archiving television must account for more than technology. A common refrain when discussing the absence of television records is to point to the lack of technology. But the technology was not so much a cause or effect; it was part of the structural conditions of television. Raymond Williams argues that while technologies of television transmission and reception preceded the development of content, social and institutional processes still drove these technological aspects of television. Thus, he builds his history of television on a foundational understanding that technology is important, but superficial in light of the “restraining complex of financial institutions, of cultural expectations and of specific

technical developments.”³ It is in this sense that technology was an implicit and indeed, influential, factor in a history of archiving television. As such, this dissertation highlighted the other aspects of television’s entrance in the archive. Like Williams’ formulation of television, television in the archival setting is a complex of institutions and expectations. Specifically, the next two subsections highlight the archival institution and the television industry.

Constructors of the Archive: Archivists, Academics, and Industry Catalysts

For television to be collected, or really, for anything to be preserved, one factor must be that there had to have been individuals who could conceptualize television as belonging in an archive. The archive connotes a sense of historical purpose, culling together the corpus of materials for people and institutions in the future to have a connection with the past. While we may critique the archive as a place of power that privileges some materials over others, we may also be mindful of the conditions in archival construction, which in turn contributes to knowledge production. Television affords an opportunity to analyze and highlight the archival process, especially as it intersects with popular and academic conceptions of television’s value.

The case studies demonstrated the complexities involved in the archival process. Simply stated, the process might begin with the archivist, who identifies and solicits donations, then applies archival principles to selecting and inventorying materials, and then users are able to access the material for various purposes. Tracing how television entered the archive helps to demystify this process, pointing out the mechanisms involved in each stage or layer of a process. It is tempting to assume that archivists’ biases or

³ Raymond Williams, *Television : Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 31.

institutional agendas were the primary culprits as to why there is not more television in the archives. Instead, the case studies highlight other key limitations such as unreciprocated requests and material based constraints such as lack of space, funding, and labor to carefully inventory materials. Furthermore, these case studies demonstrated that it was not solely up to the archivists and the archiving institutions to decide whether television belonged in the archive. Collectively, I refer to the archivists, academics, and individuals within the television industry who catalyzed archiving efforts as constructors. The individuals at the MoMA, Wisconsin, Television Academy, UCLA, and the Museum of Broadcasting were located within institutional structures that enabled them to pursue the *idea* to archive television in some form for various reasons. While the industry catalysts were certainly key factors, the primary findings for this section involve mostly the archivists and the academics who participated in collecting activities.

Present-Minded/Forward Looking Archivists and Collectors

While it is important to be skeptical of anyone in a position of power, especially as it relates to the construction of archives and what can be known via the archive, it is also important to be mindful of the overall process. The archivists and academics closely associated with the archive were key factors in a history of archiving television. Even if it was not their initial intention to pursue television, their processes facilitated a space in which television could potentially enter the archive. The academic archives in Wisconsin and UCLA demonstrated this best. The two collecting efforts stemming from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin were in the capable hands of archivists driven by archival principles. As such, the fact that television exists at the Society greatly benefited from professional archival stewardship.

The Wisconsin case studies points towards the centrality of what can be called the *present-minded/forward looking* archivist. Drawing the archival principle that tasks archivists to anticipate future research needs and unknown uses, the individuals in these case studies demonstrated tremendous foresight in how they dealt with the archive. Around the mid twentieth century, conventional modes of history and archival management collided with challenges presented by modern industries, technologies, and shifts in what constituted primary sources. Television, and to a larger degree, mass communications, might not have been comfortable or appropriate zones for historical inquiry.

It was not the job of the historian or the academic to necessarily think about the historicity of television. Indeed, “it is not a traditional field of interest to the historian... however, the historian of the future may be just as interested in the history of radio or of television...and the respective impact of each on social, economic, and political life of this century.”⁴ As such, one important factor leading up to television in the archive was the archivist’s ability to begin the selection of future historical material. While the Society director reflected that “there is something unsettling and challenging in the vision of historical agencies leading the historian to preselected areas of research,” it was vital on the part of the archivists to expand what constituted as worthy for “historical research for generations to come.”⁵ In recognizing the tremendous social, cultural, political, and economic forces of media, which included television, the Society blazed pathways for the

⁴ Les Fishel, “Working Papers for a Conference on Mass Communications History”, April 1960, 17, Office Files (unprocessed), Mass Communication History (Background), Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

⁵ Fishel, “The Massive Field of Mass Communications History,” 5.

acquisition of television related material. In this regard, the attuned archivist or academic in charge of collecting (such as WCTR and UCLA) can ask, what of the present might be worth preserving for the future?

The Television Industry

The television industry was another major factor in a history of archiving television. At the most basic level, the industry produced the documents and the programs that are now located in the archives that were the subject of this dissertation and many other archival settings. More complexly, there were parts of the television industry that were more receptive or facilitated television in the archive and there were other parts that limited archiving opportunities. Like technology, the industry both helped and hindered efforts to archive television. This was largely a result of the core tension of television: its commercial and its cultural dimensions.

Obstacles in the Way of the Archive

Television, especially in the United States, is primarily a commercial enterprise. Collectively, the case studies demonstrated the institutional dimensions of a centralized broadcast network (e.g. NBC archives at Wisconsin), the legal maze of copyrights and seeking permissions from various parties (such as the network, production companies, distribution companies, unions, etc.), and especially the conception of television programs as commercial assets. The fact that programs are copyrighted works presented challenges in each of the case studies. For example, the matter of securing archival rights to the National Educational Television library of television programs was too great an obstacle for the MCHC and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin to overcome. The WCTR wanted to acquire television programs to correspond with their extensive

production and creative manuscript collections, but had to go through multiple bureaucratic levels to secure a small sampling of a show like *Bonanza* from the networks. Television programs as assets were especially pertinent to the industry-initiated archives, which were non-profits solely devoted to the acquisition of television programs. The Museum of Broadcasting and what would become the UCLA Film and Television Archive essentially formed in response to the industry's lack of preservation concerns *because* they viewed programs as assets. As such, these industry-initiated archives began as industry correctives. Additionally, accompanying each corporate entity's donations were stringent contracts that stipulated that programs were on loan (rather than gifted) and were only to be used for on-site research with various levels of restrictions.

Moreover, examining the ways in which television entered the archive can map the television industry's shift towards media conglomerates in the 1970s. Television networks, production companies, and distribution companies were increasingly integrating under tightly controlled entities. This played out in two different ways regarding television in the archive. Along the lines of programs as corporate assets, the television industry found renewed value in their repositories of television programs in light of rapidly growing syndication and new distribution markets. The Museum of Broadcasting took off at a moment when the television industry was fully engaged in maximizing the commercial potential of their production libraries, particularly via syndication and international markets (and the home video market and cable in the following decade). The other way the television industry shifted, and thus negatively factored into the archiving process was evident in Wisconsin. Specifically, the WCTR attempts to acquire papers from prominent television producers, such as Aaron Spelling

and Gary Marshall, were thwarted because of the increasingly corporately minded studios who held firm proprietary control and no financial gain in donating materials. NBC ended its relationship with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in the 1970s.

Approaching television as commercial endeavors produced by corporate entities limited television in the archive, both physically and conceptually. Physically, this meant that it was difficult for the archiving institutions to acquire television related materials given restrictive copyrights and control. Conceptually, television was conceived by the industry more as assets and propriety information vital to television production rather than as historically valuable. On both accounts, television resided in corporate archives, with programs secured as commodities and assets, and only the documentation essential for legal, administrative, and fiscal functions. It was not a function of the industry to preserve its own output for cultural and historical reasons.⁶ The exception, however, was when people within the industry saw value in designating a television heritage in order to mobilize archival efforts.

Sidestepping Industrial Obstructions: The Industry Helps the Archiving Effort

These industrial and commercial facets of the television industry were (and continue to be) in tension with the creative and cultural dimensions of television. Television was also the products of creative endeavors and operated within social and cultural spheres. These dimension synchronized up with the discursive formation of television as culturally and historically significant. As such, there were components of the television industry that also enabled television to enter the archive. These included the industry's cooperation with academic archives and the fact that the industry was not a

⁶ Schreibman, "A Succinct History of American Television Archives."

monolithic and centralized institution, which meant that individuals had agency. The cooperation of NBC was a testament to how a major institution associated with the television industry saw value in partnering with an academic archive. Certainly there were benefits to NBC, such as a secure location for non-current records and the prestige associated with donating materials to an exemplary archive in the historical manuscript tradition. Over the course of the decade and a half relationship, NBC could have stopped at any time, given that it would have been easier to incinerate all records marked for destruction rather than spend time and labor on cooperating with the Society. The individuals at NBC who worked with the archive understood the intangible value for historical study, scholarly scrutiny, and education.

Relatedly, there were key moments when the television industry endorsed television in archival spaces, albeit for reasons associated with cultural legitimacy and public relations. This was evident in each case, beginning with the MoMA and the enthusiastic support from the network executives in staging the television exhibit to the Paley-funded Bluem Report and Museum of Broadcasting. When television was reframed as cultural heritage, there was a greater likelihood that the figureheads of the television industry (including the Television Academy) would agree that archiving television for historical and cultural reasons was a worthy cause.

Thus far, the television industry has been discussed as virtually a monolith. It is important to remember that numerous individuals donated their personal collections. Some donors even advocated on behalf of the archive to solicit more donations from their colleagues. In this regard, individuals within the industry were a major factor when tracing why and how television entered the archive. Archivists and those in charge of

collecting might have the conceptual framework to think about television as archivable, but thinking about it is not enough. The people who were approached by an archive must accept the solicitation offer.

The WCTR best encapsulated this point. For various reasons, they approached individuals who worked in television, mostly those who were writers or producers. And these individuals, such as Rod Serling, David Davidson, David Susskind, Sy Salkowitz, etc., reciprocated the interest. People involved in the creative and business side of production had amassed their own collections of paperwork and occasionally recorded programs. There were certainly benefits for the donors, such as clearing up space in crowded offices or as a tax incentive (before 1970). Nevertheless, these individuals indicated that they were grateful for recognition and the possibility that their creative and business lives could contribute to educational missions, the historical record, and open inquiries. Even those individuals who were constrained by institutional limits on what they could offer, such as Grant Tinker's inability to donate business records, still contributed what they could.

The other archives highlighted as case studies also relied on support from individuals in the industry. Bob Lewine of the Television Academy was especially vocal in mustering support for television in the archival setting, using his cultural capital to request donations (recorded programs and monetary) from the membership. The cooperation of the industry as a whole and as individual donors and vocal advocates helped to shape the rationale that television could be appreciated for its cultural dimensions as well as capacity as historical artifacts. Hence, the broadly labeled television industry played an active role in facilitating television's archival inclusion.

Generally, these factors were largely material based. Technology physically enabled or prevented the ability to archive television programs. People made decisions about approaching other people for their participation in archiving television to various degrees. There were institutional structures, such as the academic archive, the cultural institution, and the television industry, that enabled or disabled television in archival settings. However, these institutional structures drew on circulating discourses to inform perceptions about television as well as what constituted as historical evidence. Attention to a few of these discourses addresses the third question, which asked how the institutional structures conferred television with status historically and culturally valuable. I argue that in addition to the factors noted above, these discourses helped to shape particular conceptions of television that intersected with intangible qualities associated with archival spaces, specifically as repositories of historical and cultural material. The next section wraps up the dissertation's main findings by highlighting several ways in which television was discursively valued.

Discourses and Distinctions that Figured Some but Not All of Television for the Archive

None of the above factors occurred in isolation. That is to say, the interest in archiving television, or archiving something else that transitively included television, developed within various discourses. Early I noted that for television to enter the archive, there must be a conception that values television as historical or cultural material. Determinators drew from discourses that designated television as valid for the archive. I assumed from the start that of this project that television had cultural and historical value,

that all aspects of television could have evidential value. This assumption, too, is rooted in the discursive formation of television as it related to history and its location in the archive. The case studies implicated at least three prominent discourses, or circulation of statements and rationales, that helped to shape conceptions of television as it intersected with the archival process.

History

Each case study demonstrated an interest in television as historical. Whether that meant the history of television production, the history as seen or retold on television, or the aspects of television ripe for cultural histories and the budding cultural studies approach (e.g. studying television for representation, identity, gender, reception, etc.), corresponded with the type of institution and the purpose for their collecting efforts. The academic archives were especially constructed as places for the custodianship of historical material that were embedded in various ideological dimensions regarding history.⁷ As evidenced by the Mass Communications History Center, as well as Bluem's Report, the easiest aspect of television to define as historical material were news and public affairs type programs. These programs had intrinsic historic value. As the 'first drafts' of history, the production of television news and the broadcast output had archival potential under the conventional notions of historical material.

There was some evidence that a sense of television's historical value was broadly applied in the 1950s. Richard Griffith's "A Prospect for a Television Archive" offered a historically-rich rationale for television in the archive. The MoMA television exhibit strove to convey a historical development of television as a technology and as an art form,

⁷ Much of this notion of history draws on Susman, *Culture as History*.

just as the Museum of Broadcasting and the UCLA Film and Television Archive prioritized the acquisition of television ‘firsts.’ Likewise, the Society privileged ‘pioneering’ efforts to advance television technologies and broadcast news. As such, a dominant rationale for archiving television was how television conveyed history-as-it-happened or the history of the medium.

Furthermore, it was when the television industry or individuals within the industry could grasp the historical value of their materials, which they were more likely to respond to donation requests. When drawing on this discourse, a sense of history could trump commercial interests. Documents that were no longer needed for administrative purposes or guiding the production of a television program, were now inscribed with a historical value. While it was sometimes unclear how these documents might be used, when the documentation about the television industry were implicated as historical evidence, television entered the archive.

Conversely, a particular notion about historical inquiry and what constitutes as evidence limited television materials as belonging in the archive’s privileged spaces. A prime example of this comes from the Society files, where there is a letter sent from Oscar Handlin, the director of a history center at Harvard University to the Society director about the Mass Communications History Conference. Reflecting on the whether broadcast records offered anything new to the study of history, Handlin wrote

television is decidedly inferior as a record of events; almost anything that can be gotten from it can be gotten from other aspects. This is to a certain extent true of some aspects of its entertainment programs. For instance, the fact that the quiz shows were at one time important and expected large audiences is not doubt significant but probably the actual content of those shows is rather meaningless and not worth preserving.⁸

⁸ Oscar Handlin to Les Fishel, June 21, 1961, Office of Collection Development Archivist (Unprocessed), Mass Communications History Center Folder, WHS.

This sentiment encapsulated how a particular orientation within the history-centric discourse frames television as marginal and redundant. Presumably, if television was significant, it would be chronicled elsewhere. What might have been more palatable to historians like Hadlin were the conventional territories of history, such as business, politics, and institutions. Conceptualizing television as history due to its ability to convey evidence about institutions, business practices, and political processes was another mode of applying historical value to television. The formation of the Mass Communications History demonstrated one way television was positioned within existing valuations of historical significance.

Culture, Arts, and Creativity

The case studies implicated a broad notion of cultural value. The discursive notions of culture, whether popular culture, high culture, or the associated discourses of the performing arts, heavily factored into how television entered the archive. There were critical and popular discourses about television that devalued its cultural status, denigrating it as a medium of crass entertainment.⁹ In this regard, academics, historians, and archivists might draw on the valuations of television that permeated the 1950s and 1960s as well as the high/low culture distinction. Newman and Levine note that a strategy to legitimate television is to compare it “with already legitimated art forms, such as literature and cinema.”¹⁰ This strategy of legitimation was evident throughout the case studies. Such notions of television, then, might conceptually limit the possibility to

⁹ Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation : How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁰ Michael Z Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012), 4.

pursue television for the archive. For example, privileging the intersection of the performing arts and television especially played out in the formation of the WCTR and its trajectory. The dominant logic for the WCTR pivoted on a notion of the performing arts and chronicling these revered aspects of culture. This meant the acquisition of playwrights, directors, and producers who might have been associated with the performing arts, but whose medium was television. Likewise, the Television Academy's interest in pursuing an institution devoted to television history drew on the frameworks associated with the preservation (via circulation) of literature – the library. Functionally, the Television Academy was interested in an archive, but strategically opted to refer to the project as a library.

The distinctions of culture and what constitutes as culture was also evident in the Society's Mass Communications History Center, whose conception of television did not accommodate the pursuit of television as a specific and cultural medium. Unless, that is, the Society considered television as it related to educational and public broadcasting. In that sense, pursuing the records of NET indicated an interest in how television conveyed a mission to enlighten the public with 'cultural' programs such as opera, theater, music, and the arts. Similar modes of associating cultural programs with television as demonstrated by the Bluem Report. Drawing on existing hierarchies of culture, constructors of the archive could readily qualify which aspects of television fit in the archive. However, perceptions shift and discourses fluctuate. For example, the WCTR began with conventional notions of cultural programming. By the 1970s, though, they were more open to collect material a wide range of television, particularly those programs that were popular but not necessarily of a high cultural quality. Likewise, the UCLA Film

and Television Archive recognized the need to sample *all* of television, even if the archive's holdings did not always reflect that aspiration.

The cultural realm also afforded the television industry with a ready-made set of preferred taste hierarchies and cultural values associated with the performing arts and highbrow culture. If television tended to be associated with crass, popular, and lowest-common-denominator entertainment, then the industry sought ways to reframe the cultural dimension. As demonstrated by the case studies, the archive was a site for inscribing television with more desirable values. Additionally, the cultural realm increasingly became one of the core missions of an academic archive. Notions of the archive's cultural responsibility permeated the profession and practice in the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹ As such, there were more conceptual and institutional tools at the disposal of archivists to address television as culture.

Valuations of history and culture especially intersected with the articulation of a cultural heritage. Articulating television amidst this discourse helps to further illuminate how television entered the archive.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage became a powerful tool to justify the formation of archives and archival collections related to television.¹² Cultural heritage is not unique to television. As Frick explains, the deployment of this construct for film was a strategy for catalyzing preservation efforts.¹³ The archive was an important site in the process of connecting a

¹¹ Gilliland-Swetland, "The Provenance of a Profession."

¹² Cultural heritage was also a powerful framework for pursuing preservation studies in the 1970s and especially in the Library of Congress's Television and Video Preservation Study.

¹³ Caroline Frick, *Saving cinema the politics of preservation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

media product (typically, a commercial product) with a shared sense of identity, history, and collective experience. The archive represents a service to History in that it stores materials marked as culturally and historically significant for posterity.¹⁴ Framing television as cultural heritage, then, situates television (most evident with programs, although also with paper based materials) as essential archival material.

In the 1950s, Griffith expressed concern that the television industry did not care about its heritage and so it was slated to repeat the mistakes of the film industry in allowing significant remnants of history to deteriorate. In that sense, Griffith used heritage to refer to the history of the industry and art form, but also implicitly considered the broader cultural heritage of television as sociological and historical artifacts. Both collecting efforts at the Wisconsin archives developed pitch letters that started to crystallize television as cultural heritage. Albeit, the MCHC indicated an interest in how the institutions of mass communications contribute to cultural heritage while the WCTR at first drew on language associated with performing arts and then more broadly an American cultural heritage, as evident in their solicitation letters. This last argument that qualified why records of television production and creative process belonged in the archive was especially important following the loss of the tax deduction incentive in 1970. The cultural heritage rationale was strongest in the industry-initiated archives, as the Television Academy and the Museum of Broadcasting spoke highly of television's social and cultural dimensions as the driving logic for forming these archives.

Cultural heritage is also a concept that is built into the archival profession. For instance, a professional text explains that we preserve records because they “transmit our

¹⁴ Kompare, *Rerun Nation*.

cultural heritage from generation to generation.”¹⁵ In another formulation, there is the documentary heritage, which is the “totality of the existing evidence of historical activity, or as all surviving documentation on past events.”¹⁶ Hence, a heritage can be culled from documentary evidence of political and social life. At a basic level, the formulation of enduring value or archival value implicitly engages with the notion that future researchers and historians might use such material to inform national histories and trace collective experiences. As such, the archivists who participated in the formation of television archives and collections drew on the heritage construct.

While there were many other discourses that informed the distinction of television as historic, cultural, and thus archival material, these three discourses broadly represent imprints on the archival process that largely enabled television to be thought of as archivable. To further develop conclusions from this study, the next section offers a prospective framework to address archiving television. The goal of the framework is to pull together the various factors discussed in this section. I hope to parse out the distinctions in archiving the documentation associated with television and the program. Likewise, my intent is to demonstrate how television might have snuck into the archive, so to speak. The inclination for an archivist or an institution to favor one aspect of television or media in general did not preclude the fact that other aspects of television entered the archive. Ultimately, this framework is a step towards formulating theoretical

¹⁵ Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*, 1.

¹⁶ Hans Booms, Hermina Joldersma, and Richard Klumpenhouwer, “Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources,” *Archivaria* 1, no. 24 (January 1, 1987): 76.

and practical approaches to archiving television that take into account the complexities of television as a medium, as an industry, as a creative platform, etc.

Prospective Framework: Matrix of Process/Product and Creative/Industry

The introduction to a special issue of *Communication Review* about archives reflects that attention must focus on how “archives position media as discrete objects.”¹⁷ Media are certainly objects, and have been addressed as objects in the archive. However, this historical inquiry regarding television and the archive suggests that archives also positioned media as processes. Even if we do not take the object as a literal physical object, it was still the case that television was seldom an object of interest. There was little regard for television as a discrete object, as it was integrated into other objects of study (such as, the theater) or broader creative and industrial-processes. As demonstrated in the academic archive case studies, television tended to enter the archive as constituents of processes associated with media in general. This was particularly evident with the NBC archives, whereby the archivists at the historical society articulated an interest in the processes of a major mass communications institution – the network.¹⁸ Evident in the research was that the institutional context and the conception of how television belonged in an archive helped shade how television was collected as objects or processes.

Television in the archive confounded what archives collect and how to order those materials. If archives were to accept television as archival materials, then which aspects should archivists privilege for selection? Which aspects of television map onto already

¹⁷ Craig Robertson, “Historicizing the Archive,” *Communication Review* 13, no. 1 (January 2010): 3.

¹⁸ Or as Jeremy Packer would argue, media as apparatus. See Packer, “What Is an Archive?”

existing structures of archival custodianship and modes of historical inquiry? Television presented two challenges. One seemed to simply be a matter of why television. The challenge was in defining the reasons to archive some aspects of television, which was where discourses governing television and its location to culture and history came into play. The archivist could also draw on existing ontologies that rationalized the accession of television material in familiar ways, such as treating a television writer like a playwright. The other challenge was the materiality of television as an object. This related to the technological necessity to have television recorded and capable of playback.

Overall, these challenges point to an almost new category for archivists (and similar determinators of archival collections) to grapple with. Or rather than a new category, perhaps a more suitable suggestion is that they dealt with a mix of emergent domains of popular culture and twentieth century media. They had to navigate why television belonged in the archive and how to do so. Television could be objects of popular culture and/or commercial products. Television could be emblematic of popular culture, literary or theatrical creative works, news and actuality, or the industrial production of entertainment. Plainly stated, individuals within institutional structures had to rationalize how television connected with twentieth century political, economic, cultural, social life.

To make these thoughts clearer, I'd like to offer a conceptual framework. The goal is to parse out reasons to archive television and how individuals within various institutional structures approached this task (whether directly the task to archive of television or indirectly draw television into the archive via related efforts). This framework also helps to mark the distinction between the programs and the invisible

processes related to television. The matrix is also useful for tracing the various ways in which television entered archival spaces. While is set up to ask questions about what is the archival intention towards media in general, the goal is to consider television as unique or familiar for the archival setting (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Matrix of Archiving Television

	PROCESS	PRODUCT
CREATIVE / CULTURAL	<p>Is the intention to archive the creative and cultural processes of media?</p> <p><i>Notes, journals, scripts (revisions, shooting), correspondence, ephemera, fan mail, interaction with networks, studios, and the industry</i></p> <p>valued: individuals and their creative enterprises associated with TV</p>	<p>Is the intention to archive media as creative and/or cultural products?</p> <p><i>Scripts (final) Recorded programs</i></p> <p>valued: worthy as creative endeavors, as cultural and/or historical artifacts</p>
INSTITUTIONAL / INDUSTRY	<p>Is the intention to archive the institutional, industrial, commercial, regulatory, etc. processes of media?</p> <p><i>Executive files, corporate records, contracts, research and tech. development, policy, correspondence, interaction with creative labor</i></p> <p>valued: institutional functions, the business</p>	<p>Is the intention to archive media as industrial and/or commercial products?</p> <p><i>Recorded programs Corporate records</i></p> <p>valued: corporate assets, proprietary</p>

Text Key:

Question posed: what's the rationale for archiving television?

Materials Collected

From the perspective of the archivist or persons in charge of the archival repository, which aspects of television are conceptualized as valuable?

The case studies, especially the academic archives in Wisconsin, suggested that the project of archiving of television generally fell along two continuums. Figuring into

these continuums were the orientations of the archive and the goals of the people involved. For example, the WCTR's mission was to collect, preserve, and make available documents pertaining to the history of performing arts. The Museum of Broadcasting's mission was to collect the audio-visual records of broadcasting history based on criteria of popularity, artistic merit, and historic significance. One continuum is process – product. The archives tended to collect two sorts of materials: documents pertaining to television's 'behind-the-scenes' realm and/or television's output. In other words, archivists sought out paper records documenting the processes of television and/or television programs, either in script form or as moving image programs. The other continuum is creative/cultural – industrial/institutional. In this sense, they were intent on collecting records associated with creative and cultural aspects of television, which typically meant soliciting donations from individual writers, producers, critics, and smaller organizations. Or they tended to approach the archival task in collecting the materials revealing industry practices, commercial operations, and the overall functioning of a media institution within the broader social system. The last point might serve as a catchall for areas such as social institutions, regulation, political operations, and organizations representing business and creative interests (e.g. trade associations, unions, etc.). Combined, these continuums form a matrix with permeable quadrants.

The idea of the matrix developed as it became necessary to isolate two points about archives and television. One point stemmed from vagueness of the term 'television.' As noted in the introduction, television can mean any number of things, with the tendency to mean television programs. Identifying *product* signals to television programs as discrete objects for the archive. The other point emerged from the patterns in

the academic archives at Wisconsin. The MCHC organized their collecting activities under the label ‘mass communications’ while the WCTR pursued the ‘performing arts.’ Both efforts did not begin necessarily with an interest in television as a specific medium or object of study, but both invariably amassed television related material. To that effect, the matrix breaks down the case studies and their approaches to television in the following ways:

Archiving creative and cultural processes: WCTR’s pursuit of donations from playwrights, directors, and other creative laborers who fit within a performing arts framework. Since creative labor was not bound by media or art form, such as film or theater, then the WCTR collected a substantial amount of television as they pursued a particular conception of television inscribed within the performing arts and cultural taste hierarchies. As the WCTR actively pursued television as a unique and popular medium, they still went after the creative and business processes as seen from the perspective of key writers and directors, such as pursuing Grant Tinker of MTM Enterprises. In general, this was the realm of academic archives that were keen on collecting the records of twentieth century entertainment and performing arts. In doing so, they were also documenting the industrial and institutional aspects of television, but from the perspective of the creative laborer.

Archiving industrial, institutional, and media as integrative of social systems: The collecting efforts of the WCTR somewhat permeated this realm. For example, the pursuit of the United Artists records demonstrated an interest in archiving the film industry from an institutional perspective. As argued in Chapter VI, this acquisition came with the added bonus of television, given that the WCTR acquired the complete archives

of a film company whose assets included Ziv television and other television related material. This aspect of the matrix, though, was best demonstrated by the MCHC. The archivists at the Society had a macro orientation pertaining to media. For example, they pursued NBC, BBDO, Nielsen, and other media companies as a representative of industrial and institutional processes. They acquired manuscript collections of prominent broadcast newsmen whose papers demonstrated the news production process. Records of technological development, government regulation, and the pursuit of educational and public broadcasting were suggestive of how media operated within broader social systems and institutional structures. In this respect, the MCHC might not have actively pursued television as a unique medium or object of study, but a vast array of valuable historical documents about television made their way into the archive. This was especially the case with NBC records. In documenting the industrial and institutional processes of a major media corporate, the Society also acquired documents (and occasionally moving image records) about all sorts of television programs that otherwise would be absent from the archive. As evident by the academic cases studies, where NBC stopped depositing their records and the WCTR faced difficulty in acquiring television related records in the 1970s, it is feasible that this realm may be limited by the consolidation of the television industry.

Archiving creative and cultural products: This was where the formation of archives specific to the collection of television's primary output – the program – fits in. The Museum of Broadcasting, the UCLA Film and Television Archive, and to some degree the WCTR, all conceptualized television's value based on the final product. This largely meant the acquisition of moving image records, although final versions of scripts

might also fit under this construct. The archiving goal from the perspective of the industry-initiated archives was especially focused on discursively constructing rationales for non-profit institutions to preserve television's commercial output.

Archiving commercial and industrial products: This realm mostly conveys the consequences of conceptualizing television as commercial assets. In particular, this gestures towards corporate archives that are repositories of television programs and documentation that serve the administrative, fiscal, and/or legal needs. The case studies bled into this quadrant. Each of the case studies demonstrated that this facet of television was inescapable; the archives were dependent on agreements with copyright holders, which granted the archive recorded television programs with tight restrictions. The Bluem Report also demonstrated the extent of corporate holdings. In that case, television as commercial products were reframed as cultural and historical products when inscribed in cultural heritage discourses. This conceptualization of television was also the crux of litigation battles between CBS and Vanderbilt Television News Archive, which helped in the revision of the Copyright Act of 1976. Thus, while outside of the scope of this dissertation, Vanderbilt Television News Archive would appear on the matrix as an archive that focuses on the television's products from a cultural and historical perspective, but overlaps in the commercial realm given the disputes about copyright.

In sum, this matrix is an attempt at organizing reasons why television was archived and how individuals and institutional contexts selected certain aspects of television for the archive. As a framework, this helps focus attention on the ways archivists, academics, and industry professional conceptualized television's purpose and worth in the archive. Worth might be evaluated according to commercial value (e.g. the

corporate archives), but the case studies mostly demonstrated the valuation of intangible cultural and historical dimensions. As evident in the case studies, at times it was not television per se that was worthy of the archive, but some other aspect that encapsulated television. The variations in the case studies demonstrated how the institutional contexts – academic, archival, industry – facilitated how television might be positioned as an object of study or whether television was subsumed into other objects that were already well positioned for the archive. As I continue to trace the ways in which television entered the archive and was thusly inscribed with the associative values, this framework will be tested and revised.

Limitations and Future Research

This dissertation was limited in a number of ways. Even though the focus was on the discursive formation of television as archive, a major limitation of this study was that it began from a position that assumed the inherent historical and cultural value of television. I took these statements as a given, associating constructed notions of history and culture as almost natural reasons as to why television belonged in the archive. While television studies literature helped to inform this study, it also positioned the research orientation towards an understanding of television as unproblematic historical evidence. As such, this study may be limited by presentism or evaluating the past using the frameworks of the present. This study was also limited by failing to connect the contents of the archive to broader historiographical issues or discussions about collective memory and other similar functions of the archive. These aspects are implied at various points, but rarely developed. Future studies can make stronger connections between the formation of

archives and the construction of historical understanding and unpack the complexities of heritage and memory.

Another limitation was the study's scope. The dissertation covered a number of crucial archives associated with television. However, the project to trace television in the archival context requires examinations of many other archives as well as preservation discourses. While it is challenging to cover many case studies, the dissertation is limited in scope of archives. Particularly, this history is missing the essential government archiving institution, namely the Library of Congress. The archives highlighted in this dissertation are only a few of the numerous places where television 'lives.' A more comprehensive history about how television entered the archive must include other academic archives such as Syracuse University, the University of Wyoming, and the Peabody Archive at the University Georgia, is especially pertinent given its connections to awards.

An additional required component is the corporate archives. As suggested by the matrix of archiving television (Figure 1), the sites where television is conceptualized as corporate assets presents numerous entry points in industrial histories. This dissertation is also limited by its discussion on mostly the acquisition part of the archival process as well as the infrastructures that support the archive. Missing is the thorough examination of preservation processes and especially the preservation discourse. The case studies selected for this project indicate that there was an increased interest in the preservation of television programs (the product) in the 1970s. Preservation and access are essential component to the archival process. As such, a history of archiving television must account for the discussions surrounding preservation. For example, the Ford Foundation

and the American Film Institute initiated television preservation studies in the 1970s, which led to further preservation studies by the Library of Congress and the revision of copyright.

Among the chief priorities for future research is to pursue the Library of Congress and their involvement with archiving television. There are two particular points that are of central interest in the project to comprehensively trace such a history. One is to pursue copyright as a mechanism of preservation. Before the Copyright Act of 1976, some networks and production companies elected to send copies of their programs to the Library of Congress as a means to protect an uncertain copyright. The collection of recorded television was haphazard. As demonstrated by the Bluem Report, however, the Library of Congress held a considerable amount of programs, but it is curious as to why certain programs were deposited over others. After the Copyright Act of 1976, the Library of Congress was *mandated* to form the American Radio and Television Archives (ARTA). Such an archive never really materialized; it is of great interest to the history of archiving television to trace the successes and failures in attempting to implement such a mandate. Fortunately, documentation exists. There are many primary documents in Erik Barnouw's papers related to the mandated television archive, thanks to his role as the new director of the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. In his collection are documents pertaining to television preservation and the bureaucratic challenges in implementing a television archive. Two is to trace how television entered another division within the Library of Congress – the Manuscripts division. It is possible to pursue an inquiry similar to the Wisconsin archives, where the goal is to examine the extent of the Library's interest in television. For example, how did

the NBC records also end up at the Library? Which television writers and directors did the Library pursue, as a comparison to Wisconsin? As the preeminent public archival institution, the Library of Congress ought to hold administrative records documenting their decisions and archival processes. At the very least, it is essential to track the promises of the American Radio and Television archives in preserving and legitimating television. Then reflect on why such an archive never fully came to fruition.

Significance and Contributions

The significance of this study is as a contribution to television studies and a general call to critically examine archival formations. These largely fall in the epistemological sphere. Critical interest in archivists and archives aids analyzing how professional training and institutional spaces of marked as ‘history’ relate to the construction of knowledge. For television studies, this study implicates an intellectual history of television in the academy, and by extension, the discursive justification for television a historical and cultural material. The intersection of the two areas sheds light on the processes and factors that shape archives and domains of knowledge, including popular culture and commercial products.

Not surprisingly, a core issue in this dissertation stemmed from these concerns about how materials were marked as archival and thus ordered within archival contexts. The implication was that the materials located in these contexts are grounds for historical knowledge. Guided by varying conceptualizations of television, the inclusion television in archival settings signaled how television might constitute as traces of a usable past. Television can be a lens to examine archives and the epistemological consequences of

defining what ought to be preserved for posterity. Specifically, this dissertation highlighted a key mechanism in the construction of knowledge via the archive. Archival practice depends on distinction and classification, whereby aspects of television were favored for archival contexts. The study contributed to our understanding of archives by highlighting how individuals operating in archival settings could pursue possibilities to draw television into a realm associated as a repository of knowledge. Individuals made choices that distinguished and classified television in one way or another. This study demonstrated “the power of archives and archivists, in effect, to structure what is knowable and how it is known... how the archiving process works *to create* information, to produce not only social or historical understanding but the very elements of social and historical knowledge itself.”¹⁹ The purpose in using television in the archive was to make some of these processes of power and knowledge creation clearer.

Integral to the process of archives and the inclusion of television were various discourses that facilitated the frameworks for designating some of television as worthy of the archives, or more broadly, designating media as worthy of the archives. Drawing on Foucault, it may be more appropriate to refer to the episteme about television, archives, and history – the “sets of discursive structures as a whole within which a culture formulates its ideas.”²⁰ There were many factors that helped shape how television was thought of as historical artifacts, as culturally significant, and thus, as valuable for the archive.

¹⁹ Francis X Blouin and William G Rosenberg, *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 86.

²⁰ Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 51.

People, technologies, and the industry were the ‘on-the-ground’ manifestations of an episteme that guided how television might be construed as archival or obstructed from the archive. As television increasingly entered archival settings, there were epistemic breaks in what can be regarded as archival and grounds for historical analysis, while also maintaining conventional notions of historical evidence and historiographic methods.²¹ The point was that television challenged what could belong in the archive and why, while able to also enter the archive through established areas of archival and historical categories of knowledge.

Intimately related to how information is construed as historical material were the academics who used these materials in order to construct social and historical knowledge. Tracing television’s inclusion in the archive can be mapped along the lines of television’s worthiness for academic study. The intellectual history of mass communications research suggests that the primary modes of conceptualizing television in the 1950s meant studying its effects, mostly as social ill will negative effects or an instrument to influence public opinion and transmit information. As such, what interest might an academic archive have in pursuing the acquisition of television related materials? The interest in archiving television in the 1950s did not seem to emerge so much from the social science paradigms but from the humanities paradigm. As demonstrated by the Society’s Mass Communications History Conference, social science contributed in the way of sampling techniques and desire to accumulate materials for the purposes of functionalist studies of media. While a humanities paradigm might not have been wholly favorable towards television, there were entry points in the way of theatrical trends and ideations that

²¹ For example, one such break was the shift towards cultural responsibility models in archives. See Gilliland-Swetland, “The Provenance of a Profession.”

television might be rich sites for social and cultural histories. Fast forward to the 1970s when television studies begins to emerge as an area of critical study and we see greater archival efforts to collect more broadly across television.²² Academic interest and archivist intentions to stimulate research mutually propelled television's worth.

An Archival Dimension to Television Studies

There have been numerous histories within television studies that examine television production, texts, and reception. One goal of this dissertation was to pursue an archival dimension, which meant how people enabled by institutional structures valued television and which aspects of television entered spaces of privileged knowledge and culture. This dissertation's case studies emphasized the relevancy of archival spaces in understanding the discursive formation of television as cultural and historical material (as well as very much so a commercial and industrial endeavor). A key consideration was the role of the archive and archival spaces in fostering television's legitimacy. Hence, the archive provided rich ground for tracing the development of television studies, television industry practices, and the valuation of television's role in culture and society.

Another goal of this dissertation was to provide a historical context regarding the existence and absences of television in the archive. My historical inquiry greatly relied on the work of television scholars, Lynn Spigel and Derek Kompare, who have argued that archival spaces such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Broadcasting, and the UCLA Film and Television Archive conferred television with cultural and historical

²² For example, there seems to be little coincidence that the key people involved in the WCFTR at the height of its television-centric collecting period were Patricia Mellencamp and then Julie D'Acci, both of whom left their posts at the archive to pursue graduate work and made significant contributions to television studies.

value, thereby constructing a television heritage.²³ While their arguments are strong, their evaluations of these archival spaces are brief and embedded within broader studies. I sought to extend the argument of archival spaces as sites of legitimation. This dissertation delved deeper into the formation of television-specific archival efforts. Both Spigel and Kompare discuss the aforementioned institutions' role in constructing a television heritage and especially advance the argument about the archive or museum as a public relations effort to bolster television's cultural legitimation.²⁴ One aim of this dissertation was to further examine why and how these institutional contexts pursued television's archivability. Relatedly, another aim was to interrogate the academic archive as a site of legitimation, thereby extending the scope of archival spaces that conferred television with cultural and historical value in the years leading up to the ascent of television studies.

The contents and accessibility of the archive and scholarly pursuits were interrelated. With television materials gradually residing in the archive's aura of legitimacy, academics interested in television as a 'serious' course of study could pursue industrial, textual, and reception histories. Outlining a history of archiving television provides another lens into a history of legitimating television as worthy of academic study.²⁵

²³ Spigel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive, and the Reasons for Preservation"; Kompare, *Rerun Nation*.

²⁴ Spigel's and Kompare's arguments are important contributions to promoting an archival dimension to television studies. However, a look through their references indicates that their main sources were newspaper articles, Paley's biographies, and especially the 1996 Television and Preservation Study. While these are useful sources, these sources point to an implicit intervention in this dissertation: the location of additional primary sources to further flesh out the formation of these archival spaces and the process of legitimation.

²⁵ As outlined in Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*.

We may speculate and share anecdotes about the disappearance of television or the difficulty in accessing closed-off repositories, which affect historiographies by way of absences. Indeed, one historian explains, “the study of history is necessarily confined to that part of it of which evidence can survive or can be reconstructed in the mind.”²⁶ In that respect, television histories might rely on personal remembrances (such as Newcomb’s *TV: The Most Popular Art*) or look for traces of television elsewhere (such as Spigel’s *Make Room for TV* that used magazines, ads, and other printed ephemera). We might draw on corporate histories, newspaper coverage, commercially available television programs, and other sources to fill in what we think of absences in the archive. I would like to argue that the television’s archival presence is not as scarce as I imagined in the beginning.

The case studies validated that the archival process was fraught with obstacles that prevented television from entering spaces revered as repositories of historical material. Nevertheless, these cases also exhibited the many factors that enabled the archiving of television’s material traces, even when that was not the intent. Moreover, this dissertation gestured that archivists and academics involved in the archival process were not aloof to the various ways television might be valued beyond the restrictions of present day taste hierarchies and preferred modes of historical inquiry.

The next step in this intervention into television and the archive is to call attention to the wealth of television related materials in archival settings. By turning to the archives, we gain new perspectives on a television historiography. The academic archives and the industry-initiated archives highlighted in this dissertation contain many collections and

²⁶ Elton, *The Practice of History*, 20.

programs that are yet to be woven into our histories. While not everything can be illuminating of a historical social character or an untapped aspect of television's past, it is worth the effort to identify how excavations in the archive might mitigate historiographical absences. As such, this study contributed an additional mode of analysis by addressing how and why television's materials came to the archive. Facets including institutional structures, archival principles, scholarly interests, and circulating discourses about historical value figure the archive. Rather than accept television's absences, perhaps we can interrogate its archival presence and probe the conditions of absence. The traces of television 'live' in many archival places. The case studies in this dissertation highlighted the formation of several notable archives. These archives contain a great many possibilities for television history and histories in general. The academic archives especially suggest that similar processes of accessioning television related materials occurred in many places, as was the case with the accession of the Peg Lynch collection at the University of Oregon. These sites serve as further reminders of the many places where television may be found, and counteracts the narrative of historical absences and past failures to value television.

APPENDIX

TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS NOTED IN CASE STUDIES

- 1949** Library of Congress begins accepting television programs for copyright deposit
- 1953-55** Television Project at The Museum of Modern Art, ending with Richard Griffith's "Prospect for a Television Archive"
- 1956** Ampex releases the first commercially available tape recorder
- 1958** The State Historical Society of Wisconsin opens the Mass Communications History Center, the first archival collecting effort dedicated to modern mass media
- 1959** NBC starts sending non-current materials to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, establishes the NBC Records collection
- 1960** Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research begins operation
- 1963** *Television U.S.A.* exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art
- 1965** The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (ATAS) attempts to establish three branch libraries at American University, New York University, and University of California Los Angeles
- 1967 - 1971** William Paley commissions A. William Bluem to study the current state of television preservation and whether there was an interest in establishing an institution devoted to broadcast history
- 1968** The Vanderbilt Television News Archive opens
- 1968** ATAS ends relationship with NYU, focuses attention on UCLA
- 1970** Tax Act of 1969 goes into effect, removes the generous tax incentive for the donation of self-created manuscript collections
- c. 1971** NBC ends relationship with the SHSW, stops donating materials
- 1975** WCTR renamed to the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research
- 1976** Museum of Broadcasting opens to the public

- 1976** The ATAS Television Library officially merges with the film archive, forms the UCLA Film and Television Archive
- 1976** Copyright Revision Act of 1976, establishes the American Television and Radio Archive

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