television

july 3
but first.... Radio recap

1901: Marconi experiments with wireless communication.

1919:

1920:

1926: RCA

1933: NBC Blue Line sold and turned into ABC

1943:

1951: More people tuning into TV than radio.

Radio Networks, Advertising, and Programming Are Developing...
“the story of television” as told by.... RCA / NBC

does this figure into how the story of tv is told? who is left out?
what is the dominant narrative?
If there are any historians about 50 or 100 years from now... they will find recorded in black and white, or color, evidence of decadence, escapism and insulation from the realities of the world in which we live... This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise it is merely wires and lights in a box...

-- Edward R. Murrow, 1958
people
networks
tv’s integration in the home
red scare: mccarthy era context
1950s sponsorship
post-quiz show scandal
highlight: TV / POLITICS
highlight: TV / CONFLICT (domestic)
highlight: TV / WAR
the people:

- Vladimir Zworykin
- David Saranoff
- Philo T. Farnsworth
- William S. Paley
THE THREE NETWORKS FROM THE START TILL NOW...
the forgotten network ....
TV happiness shared by all the family!

It makes no difference what brand in Odyssey can help. As the following string of letters from our first contest will testify...

Now they can enjoy their television sets without any assistance from CBS, ABC or NBC. Odyssey makes a picture on your TV set at home. It lets you play hockey, tennis and a game called Switch. The score even flashes on the screen. Perfect entertainment for your family.

Magnavox... a showpiece inside and out!

There are two "tails" to every television set, and both should be considered before you buy. The inside is important when you set is turned on, but the outside is what you live with 24 hours a day. All things considered, no television receiver shows your taste and judgment to better advantage than Magnavox. For inside and out, Magnavox is magnificent. Magnavox is available in many sizes, from the smallest to the largest. Prices start at $138.50, and easy-payment plans are usually available. Magnavox dealers in your community are listed in the white pages section of your classified telephone directory. The Magnavox Company, Fort Wayne 4, Ind. Magnavox television-radio-phonograph.

MAKE ROOM FOR TV
Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America

Lynn Spigel
Recommended by America's fine stores for its Vivid Realism.

The Highbee Company, Cleveland, Ohio, imports TV realism in special display, above, in their stores. Model shown is the beautiful 21" Sparten C.

for its Quality

Sparton cosmic eye television

HOW TELEVISION BENEFITS YOUR CHILDREN

Motorola, leader in television, shows how TV can mean better behavior at home and better marks in school!
The Red Scare: Context

- House Committee on UnAmerican Activities Investigation
  - 1st Round - Concerned with finding communist influences in Hollywood (1947)
  - Support came from anti-Communist & some religious groups; opposition from the arts and Committee for the First Amendment

  - Not involved in 1947 hearings
  - First anti-Communist speeches in 1950
  - Came to epitomize the “red scare” of this era
  - 1951: some of most prominent entertainers subpoenaed
    - Orson Welles, Lucille Ball, many others
  - McCarthy demanded “the naming of names”
blacklisting

- American Business Consultants
- RED CHANNELS: Listed 115 individuals
- Institutionalized blacklisting within networks and agencies
News Develops; McCarthy Goes Down

From the CBS documentary series, "Dawn of the Eye."
how to fund tv?
1950s - sponsorship model
kids programming....
TV networks had more than 2 dozen quiz shows

Sponsor of first one saw its sales go up 200% in 2 months

Highly formulaic --- lots of similar shows (sound familiar?)

High stakes = producers started manipulating contestants

- Supplied contestants with questions and answers
- Prescribed on-air dress and mannerisms

Scandal with “Twenty One” (1956-1958)
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OUTCOME:

1959 – Congressional hearing on the quiz show scandal. Congress getting involved in TV:

- Contributes to the end of one company sponsorship model (too much control from advertiser on show’s content); reorganized advertising on TV

- So-called end of innocence about what they saw on TV – “Trust no one”
Eisenhower: Madison Ave. ad man proposed that the campaign include 20 sec TV spots during *I Love Lucy*

- also - staged debate as 3-part act; plays up war hero

**Nixon - Checkers Speech - 1952**

**Kennedy - Nixon debate - 1960**
"The idea that you can merchandise candidates for high office like breakfast cereal is the ultimate indignity to the democratic process."
- Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson, 1956

"Television is no gimmick, and nobody will ever be elected to major office again without presenting themselves well on it."
- Television producer and Nixon campaign consultant Roger Ailes, 1968
CIVIL RIGHTS

- impact of sound AND visuals?
- Emmitt Till, 1955 - 1st media event of civil rights movement
The traditional myth was that the “livingroom war” proved too horrible for sensitive Americans and had a morale-sapping effect.

But detailed studies of TV and public opinion show a far more complex picture.

- Karnow & Hallin: public opinion and news media reaction were intertwined; media coverage tended to follow public opinion (not direct it)
1972: “319 hours of television were amassed, a record covering a single event. All three commercial television networks then in existence--NBC, CBS, and ABC--devoted an average of five hours per day covering the Watergate hearings for their first five days.”......
“The non-commercial Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) aired the videotaped version of each day's Watergate hearing testimony during the evening. Many PBS station managers who were initially reluctant to carry such programming found that as a result of the carriage, station ratings as well as financial contributions increased.” - Museum of Broadcast