

TNS – The TV Collection

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The Making of a Treasure Trove of TV History

Television began to invade the American home during the 1950s. During the early 50s, there were only a few major networks—NBC, CBS and ABC—joined later by PBS. And television neither had the resources nor content to become the 24-hour medium that it is today. The networks used their limited resources and early sponsors to develop and produce programs like *I Love Lucy* and *Leave It To Beaver*. The networks would assemble press releases with photo stills, background materials and an episode synopsis, to media channels for publication, and distribute them to media channels for publication.

At that time, TV guides as we now know them were nonexistent. In the early 1960s, Al and Polly Vonetes started a small business to assemble and produce a Television Guide insert for newspapers in Virginia and North Carolina. The TV channels, networks, studios and producers provided the Vonetes family companies, Press Features and later Television Newsfeatures Syndicate, with information that is now included in their files along with the interviews, features and articles they produced. Also included are materials produced by the Vonetes themselves who conducted their own interviews with many stars, and wrote original reviews of shows and features.

In much the same way as today's "traditional media" viewed the early onslaught of the Internet, newspapers first looked upon television as a threat with a negative impact on their advertising revenues. With ever increasing success, by 1980 the company founded by the Voneteses was operating in eight states servicing more than 70 daily newspapers with a combined household circulation in excess of 2.5 million. The rapid expansion caught the attention of newspaper giant Scripps-Howard. United Media, a Scripps-Howard Company, acquired the family enterprise in 1982.

The Voneteses have continued to maintain this archive since 1960, even as the existing networks grew and new networks emerged. Al and Polly Vonetes later launched Television Newsfeatures Syndicate, which provided interviews and content to national publications, syndicates, and international television networks showing syndicated American programming. After four decades, the Vonetes family's magnificent and unequalled collection is now being offered for sale.