The Interviews: An Oral History of Television

The Interviews: An Oral History of Television
Television Academy Foundation
5220 Lankershim Boulevard
North Hollywood, CA 91601
818-509-2260

televisionacademy.com/interviews
youtube.com/foundationinterviews
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The Interviews: An Oral History of Television

Collection number: 01

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Television Academy Foundation
North Hollywood, CA
Date Completed:
2018
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Descriptive Summary
Title: The Interviews: An Oral History of Television
Dates: 1996-2018
Collection number: 01
Creator: Archive of American Television
Extent: 900 interviews (557 standard definition, 343 high definition) approximately 3,700 hours of video footage 88 TB of data
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Repository: The Television Academy Foundation The Interviews: An Oral History of Television
North Hollywood, CA 91601
Abstract: Founded in 1997, with its first interviews recorded in 1996, The Television Academy Foundation’s The Interviews: An Oral History of Television consists of over 850 videotaped oral history interviews with the legends of television, including Milton Berle, Carol Burnett, Walter Cronkite, Norman Lear, Mary Tyler Moore, Betty White, and many others. Interviewees hail from professions across the television industry, from actors and writers to executives, editors, publicists, composers, and more. Major topics discussed in interviews include Advice to Aspiring Professionals, TV’s Golden Age, Censorship, and Technological Innovation, as well as important events in American and television history, such as the Hollywood Blacklist, the Quiz Show Scandals, 9/11, and the Kennedy Assassination. The Interviews conducts up to twenty-five new interviews each year. The vast majority of the collection is available to the public through the Interviews' website (full versions) and YouTube (shorter clips).

http://televisionacademy.com/interviews

Accruals
The Interviews conducts up to twenty-five new interviews each year, which are then digitized, cataloged, and made available to the public through the Interviews' website.

Administrative History
The Television Academy Foundation was founded in 1959 as the charitable arm of the Television Academy with the goal of shaping the art of creating television by engaging and educating the next generation of television professionals. Today, the Foundation pursues this goal through scholarships, internships, career development programs, outreach to university faculty, and the in-depth oral history of television housed in The Interviews.

The Archive of American Television (rebranded in 2017 as The Interviews: An Oral History of Television) was first conceived of by television executive Dean Valentine in 1996. Inspired by Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation, which documents stories of the Holocaust through oral history interviews, Valentine set out to establish a similar project for television. Mr. Valentine was soon joined by Thomas W. Sarnoff, Chairman of the Television Academy Foundation for 17 years, Producer David Wolper and Executive Grant Tinker. The result was the Archive of American Television, established under the aegis of the Television Academy Foundation with the mission to preserve, celebrate, and share the history of the television industry. The first interviews conducted for the Archive were with Leonard H. Goldenson (founder of ABC Television), Dick Smith (television’s first makeup artist), Milton Berle (comedian and performer known as “Mr Television”), Elma Farnsworth (widow of Philo T. Farnsworth, inventor of electronic television), Sheldon Leonard (producer), and Ethel Winant (casting director). Since then, the Interviews has recorded over 850 interviews, and, since 2008, has made its interviews freely available to the public through its website.

Conditions Governing Access
The vast majority of the Interviews' holdings have been digitized and are freely available to the public for viewing through the Interviews' website (full) and on YouTube (shorter clips).

**Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use / Copyright Status**

The Interviews' footage is available to all film, television, broadband and documentary producers, and has been digitized for easy access and delivery. Licensing fees apply, but vary depending on the usage rights and territory required. Transcripts for research purposes only are available for a fee.

The Interviews owns copyright on all of its interviews, with the exception of special cases where the copyright or permission to rebroadcast must be obtained from the interviewee or their estate. The Interviews may then make this request on the researcher’s behalf.

**Preferred Citation**

Quoting from the interviews is allowed, but please contact the Interviews for exact phrasing and credit.

**Scope and Content**

The Interviews: An Oral History of Television contains over 800 videotaped oral history interviews with television industry professionals, chronicling the birth and growth of television from its earliest days in the Farnsworth labs to current stars and visionaries. The first interviews were taped in 1996, and since then up to twenty-five new interviews have been recorded each year. The interviews are available online.

Interviewees are professionals who work in front of the camera, including actors, comedians, hosts, journalists, meteorologists, and news anchors, as well as behind-the-scenes professionals, including agents, animators, directors, editors, executives, makeup artists, producers, puppeteers, writers, and more. Just a few of the notable names in the collection are: Milton Berle, James Burrows, Carol Burnett, Sid Caesar, Walter Cronkite, Michael Eisner, Michael J. Fox, Jon Hamm, Ron Howard, Quincy Jones, Norman Lear, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Mary Tyler Moore, Dick Van Dyke, Keenen Ivory Wayans, and Betty White.

Each interview follows a life-history format, starting with the interviewee’s childhood and early influences, then moving on to major television work and concluding with advice to aspiring professionals. The interviews range in length from one-hour to up to eight-hours and touch on a multitude of topics, many of historical significance, including the Quiz Show Scandals, the Hollywood Blacklist, the Kennedy Assassination, the Civil Rights Movement, and 9/11. The range of time periods discussed by interviewees stretch from the time of television’s invention in the 1920s to the present day. The Interviews contains transcripts of each interview.

The Interviews also contains two additional oral history collections: The Living Television Collection and the Jeff Kisseloff Audio Interview Collection. Living Television was a special initiative of the Archive of American Television, which collaborated with broadcast organizations, colleges, and universities across the country to videotape in-depth interviews of local television pioneers. The Living Television Collection is partially digitized, and a few of the interviews have been absorbed into The Interviews. Journalist Jeff Kisseloff conducted over 300 interviews with people involved in all aspects of early television as research for his book, *The Box: An Oral History of Television, 1929-1961*. These audio taped interviews are housed in The Interviews' collection and are not digitized.

The Interviews does not contain episodes of television shows or television ephemera.

**Related Archival Collections**

The following archival collections contain related materials:

The Academy Oral History Projects

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Oral History Collections

Margaret Herrick Library

Fairbanks Center for Motion Picture Study

333 S. La Cienega Boulevard

Beverly Hills, CA 90211

http://www.oscars.org/oral-history

The American Comedy Archives at Emerson College

Iwasaki Library

120 Boylston Street

Boston, MA 02116

http://www.emerson.edu/library/archives/american-comedy-archives

Directors Guild of America Visual History Program
Controlled Access Terms

Berle, Milton
Burnett, Carol
Burrows, James, 1940-
Caesar, Sid, 1922-2014
Cronkite, Walter
Eisner, Michael, 1942-
Farnsworth, Philo Taylor, 1906-1971
Fox, Michael J., 1961-
Goldenson, Leonard H.
Jones, Quincy, 1933-
Lear, Norman
Leonard, Sheldon, 1907-1997
Louis-Dreyfus, Julia
Moore, Mary Tyler, 1936-
Sarnoff, Tom
Smith, Dick, 1922-2014
Tinker, Grant
Van Dyke, Dick
Wayans, Keenen Ivory
White, Betty, 1922-
Winant, Ethel
Wolper, David L.
ABC Television Network
Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation
Archive of American Television
CBS Television Network
Du Mont Broadcasting Corporation
NBC Television Network
Advertising—Television programs
African Americans in television broadcasting
African Americans on television
Animators
Biographical television programs
Broadcast journalism
Broadcasting
Civil rights movement
Detective and mystery television programs
Emmy Awards
Executives
Historical television programs
History on television
Hollywood blacklist
Journalists
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963—Assassination
Mass media
Morning news talk shows
Olympics
Oral history
Presidents—Election
Presidents—United States—Election
Producers and directors
Reality television programs
September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001
Situation comedies (Television programs)
Super Bowl
Television
Television acting
Television actors and actresses
Television adaptations
Television advertising
Television broadcasting
Television—Censorship
Television commercials
Television composers
Television and culture
Television directors
Television—History
Television and history
Television journalists
Television mini-series
Television and politics
Television in politics
Television and popular culture
Television—Production and direction
Television programs
Television quiz shows
Television series
Television soap operas
Television talk show hosts
Television talk shows
Television—Technological innovations
Television writers
Variety shows (Television programs)
Vietnam War, 1961-1975
Voice actors and actresses
Western television programs
World series (Baseball)

Arrangement
The Interviews' website is searchable by keyword, phrase, post type, and category (genre, television show, topic, personal name, profession). Each interview that is available on the website has been cataloged and time-stamped, allowing users to access specific sections of interviews without scrolling through hours of tape. Additionally, the interviews are indexed within the following categories, providing multiple time-based access points:

Topics
  Bloopers
  Creative Influences and Inspiration
  Emmy Awards
  Historic Events and Social Change
    1939-40 World's Fair
    9/11
    Civil Rights Movement (c. 1960s)
  Diversity in Television
    Disabled
    Gay/Lesbian
    Minorities
    People with Disabilities
    Women
  Fall of the Berlin Wall
  Health and Medicine
  Iran Hostage Crisis
  JFK Assassination and Funeral
  Moon Landing
  Natural Disasters
  Queen Elizabeth Coronation
  War
    Cold War
    Gulf War
    Iraq War
    Korean Conflict
    Vietnam War
    War on Terror
    World War II

Memorable Moments on Television
  We Celebrated
  We Considered
  We Cried
  We Laughed

Pivotal Career Moments
  First Break
  Overcoming Adversity
Pop Culture
- Celebrities in the News
- Characters & Catchphrases
- Classic TV Series Episodes
- Fame and Celebrity
- Rock'n'Roll on TV (1950s & '60s)
- TV Theme Songs
Sports
- Coverage
- Olympic Games
- Super Bowl
- World Series
TV's Golden Age (1940s & '50s)
Technological Innovation
Television Industry
- Advertising and Sponsorship
- Advice
- Censorship/Standards & Practices
- Criticism of TV
  - 'The Idiot Box'
  - Media Bias
  - Sex & Violence
  - Trash TV
Fame & Celebrity
Industry Crossroads
- Hollywood Blacklist (ca. 1950s)
- Industry Strikes
- Quiz Show Scandals
- Runaway Productions
Interactive Technology
- Media Consolidation
- Network Creation
- New Media
- Public Television
Television and the Presidency
Professions
- Animation Professionals
- Designers
- Directors
- Executives
- Film & Video Post-Production Professionals
- Film & Video Production Professionals
- Hosts
- Journalists & News Producers
- Music Professionals
- Objects
- On-Set/Location Personnel
- Performers
Producers
Representatives
Sound Professionals
Stylists
Talent Professionals
Technology Innovators
Writers & Show Creators

Genre
Adventure/Espionage Series
Animation
Awards Shows
Children's Programming
Classic Anthology Series
Comedy Series
Commercials
Cop/Detective/Mystery Series
Daytime/Primetime Serials
Drama Series
Game Shows
Late Night
Legal Dramas
Medical Dramas
Music Shows & Variety Shows/Specials
News and Documentary
Reality TV
Religious Programming
Sci-Fi/Supernatural Series
Service Shows
Sports
Talk Shows
TV Movies/Miniseries/Dramatic Specials
Western Series