sions but the Farvolden exit from Norway in
the years following 1922 must have been a
major operation. It seems that nothing was
left behind and the numerous large crates
that came with them contained not only the
useful things needed to start a new life but
family treasures and memorabilia of all
kinds. What remains has now been given to
the Alberta Provincial Museum in Edmonton
and as most pieces have good documenta-
tion they provide a valuable resource for
those interested in Norwegian decorative arts
and costume. Disappointingly, nothing is
recorded concerning the Farvolden's produc-
tion after arrival in Alberta. David Goa, in his
introduction, tells of a baptismal blanket
woven by Nona Farvolden, donor of the col-
collection to the Museum and to whom this vol-
une is dedicated, but in Schweger's article
there is not a word of description and no pic-
ture—possibly the article is not photogenic
but it was a bit of a let down that this piece
of documented Norwegian-Canadian weav-
ing was ignored.

In spite of this last small criticism, this is
an excellent and interesting publication and
one that deserves a wide distribution.

Paul Rutherford,
When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952–1967
JOHN E. TWOMEY


At long last students and scholars in the field
of Canadian communications have an in-
depth historical analysis of Canadian televi-
sion programming even if limited to the
prime time hours (7 pm to 11 pm) and the
monochrome years (1952–67).

With the exception of the study of Canadi-
an television drama by M. J. Miller, Tune
Up The Contrast: CBC Television Drama
Since 1952 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1987)
and F. B. Rainsberry's A History of Children's
Television in English Canada, 1952–1986
(Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1988) insights on television programming had to be
fathomed from the published reminiscences
and biases of on-air personalities such as
Knowlton Nash, Peter Trueman, Alex Barris,
Warner Troyer, and Roy Bonisteel.

Paul Rutherford, chairman of the Univer-
sity of Toronto's history department and
author of several books on Canadian media
history, states his book is an amalgam of
tree distinct subjects: 1. the story "of the
noble experiment of a national programming
service...that strove to supply viewers with a
made-in-Canada brand of entertainment,
news and views;" 2. the "art of television ...
broadly defined to include both the styles
and the messages programmers and produc-
ers offered viewers;" and 3. the answer to the
"McLuhan Question ... what happens to
society when a new medium of communica-
tion enters the picture?" (pp. 5, 6).

Rutherford further tells us that his book is
"a viewer's history" focused on "what people
saw in the way of home-grown shows when
they tuned in the TV set" (p. 6). The
first three chapters are on the struc-
ture of the Canadian system of television and
how it was shaped by CBC/Radio Canada,
CTV and other private broadcasters. The
richness of detail in these chapters indicate
that Rutherford and his team of researchers
thoroughly mined the lode of historical
materials on broadcasting found in periodi-
cals of the time, government documents and
CBC archives. More data was gathered via
personal interviews and by monitoring
recently created oral history tapes of public
and private broadcasting decision makers.
The larger second part of the book con-
sists of seven chapters on the genres of prime
time programming. They are reviewed in
chronological order as each genre attained
prominence. Rutherford labelled his five
genres: Information (newscasts, panel discus-
sions, talk shows, etc.) where the viewer is
provided data about reality. Display (variety, the arts) where performers demonstrate their talents; Contests (sports, games, quizzes) where rules govern the performance of the participants; Storytelling (all fictional drama); and Commercials.

He calls his method of reviewing each genre “close readings,” a technique of viewing analysis based on the semiotic technique described in Fiske and Hartley’s “Reading Television” (London: Methuen, 1980). A research protocol on the “viewing analysis” technique is provided in an appendix.

Some readers will be disturbed by Rutherford’s approach to his subject. Carefully measured terms of traditional historians are not to be found here. Paul Rutherford’s style of exposition is personal, provocative, opinionated, unequivocal, and colloquial. For this reader, admittedly once involved as a CBC middle manager in the events Rutherford describes, his approach proved totally engaging. There simply are no dull moments.

In his opening chapter, “A Personal Journey,” readers are given a hint that Rutherford’s personal views will play a significant part in his book.

Readers will detect my sympathy for the CBC, especially the English service, which struggled to meet an impossible mandate as well as to satisfy public demands. I didn’t begin with that view— but the evidence was convincing: while CBC made mistakes, its stubborn persistence and efforts in the realm of programming were impressive (p. 8). I trust that I’ve avoided the dangers of nostalgia, even if this book has the taint of a personal journey through my past. There’s definitely a particular kind of pleasure, rare for a historian, in being able to talk about one’s own experiences (p. 9).

A prime example of Rutherford’s pointed rhetoric is found in his chapter “Expectations,” which sets the scene for the beginning of television in Canada. Here a dozen pages headed “McLunacy?” contain a scathing critique of Marshall McLuhan.

McLuhan’s gospel was too flawed to deserve favour. His letters show he never understood why... Perhaps more important, though, students and the fashion-minded public just got bored with a person whose insights, however outrageous, were no longer novel. He suffered, in short, the fate that awaits any pop star whose image becomes too stereotyped in the minds of the fickle audience (p. 37).

This is an important and timely book, as the future of CBC’s television programming is once more the centre of debate. Paul Rutherford’s encyclopedic work, 637 pages supported by dozens of charts, tables, and photographs, should be a major resource for anyone hoping to make a meaningful contribution to defining CBC’s future role in Canadian television.

Garth Clark, Robert Ellison, and Eugene Hecht,
The Mad Potter of Biloxi: The Art and Life of George E. Ohr

American Craft Museum,
George Ohr: Modern Potter (1857–1918)

Canadian Museum of Civilization,
The Turning Point: The Deichmann Pottery (1935–1963)

JOHN B. COLLINS


George Ohr: Modern Potter (1857–1918). American Craft Museum, New York City; funded in part by the National Endowment for the New York State Council on the Arts, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Dillenberg, mounted at the Everson Museum of Art of Syracuse and Onondaga County, Syracuse, New York, 15 February to 14 April 1991. Curator: Dr. Martin Eidelberg.