

The CRT Episode

Rauland had watched with interest as Baird Television in England perfected the cathode ray tube that was to be so instrumental in the development of commercial television. On at least one occasion, he had visited England and personally met with a young Hungarian physicist named Dr. Constantin S. Szegho [see accompanying sidebar]. Szegho was leading Baird's efforts in

CRT developments.

Again, Rauland's connections served him in good stead, this time involving a New York attorney by the name of Paul Kolisch, who just happened to be the patent attorney for Baird TV's American Division and also represented Rauland's interests. Baird TV had opened a New York office to further develop and promote large-screen, video-projection systems for use in cinemas. Wartime restrictions by the British government had curtailed these developments and, even though Baird TV had demonstrated a 20-foot-diameter video-screen image, American cinema operators faced staunch opposition from their unions and were slow to adapt to the new technology.²⁰

Realizing that Baird TV was stymied in furthering its developments of video-projection systems—at least for the duration of the war—and that the company was cash-starved, Kolisch recommended to Rauland that he seek

an acquisition. Rauland seized the opportunity that would not only expand his company's position in CRT manufacturing and video projection, but also bring him the services of Dr. Szegho. It was Rauland's observation that Szegho was a man with whom he could work well and who would make a substantial contribution to his plans. In May of 1942, he completed his purchase of Baird Television of America (aka Cinema Television Ltd.), and Dr. Szegho took up employment as director of tube engineering for The Rauland Company.

Adolph Schmidt joined The Rauland Company in 1941 as a technician in the Knox Avenue plant, where he was put to work testing tank radio transmitters. As Schmidt relates, "I was there to witness as they sectioned off a new space in the plant and started moving in some CRT and TV receiver apparatus. I was intrigued with these developments and quickly requested a transfer to the new department.

Soon there were four of us: Dr. Szegho, a glass blower, a chemist and myself. We were responsible for setting up a production facility for development and manufacturing of CRTs."²¹