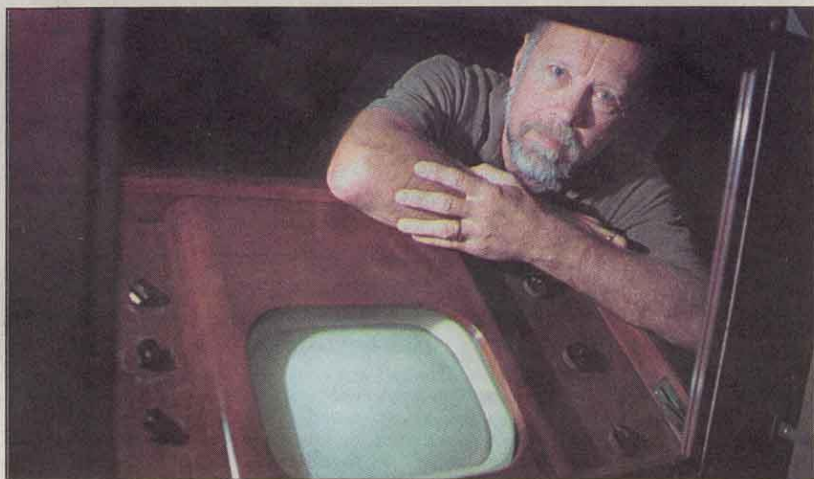


# Television museum is blast from Steve McVoy's past



By Lorie Cecl/ThisWeek

Steve McVoy, who hopes to open the first television museum in the country in the next few months, is viewed through the mirror of his 1939 RCA TRK 12 mirror-in-the-lid TV. The mirror corrects the reversed image of this particular set.

By TARA STUBBS-FIGURSKI  
*ThisWeek Staff Writer*

Steve McVoy loves televisions. He has more than 100 pieces in his television collection, including mechanical, prewar, Postwar U.S., Postwar British, Post War European and early color televisions.

McVoy fostered an interest in television in 1978 when he began working for a television repair shop.

"I had fun collecting televisions. As a kid I had a job doing TV repairs and worked on a lot of old sets. My collection kept growing," he said.

McVoy owned both Coaxial Communications and Hilliard-based Paxton Cable Television Inc. He sold Coaxial two years ago.

To date, McVoy has kept his collection in his home on Dublin Road.

"My collection keeps growing and it doesn't fit in with the decor of the house," he said. "I decided the

thing would be to open a museum."

McVoy selected a location for his museum near the beginning of the Heritage Rail Trail. His plan goes before the Old Hilliard Commission for its approval in June.

He hopes the museum will be able to benefit from foot traffic on the Rail Trail. The museum should appeal to television enthusiasts all over the country, he said.

The oldest television in his collection dates back to 1929. The first mechanical televisions were developed in the United States and England in the 1920s. But picture quality was poor, and the screens were only an inch wide.

By 1930, television was being broadcast from 12 stations in the U.S. Those first TV sets "weren't successful from a financial standpoint," McVoy said, because the mechanical television systems could

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not produce the picture quality needed for commercial success.

McVoy has four mechanical sets in his collection.

Pre-war electronic television came to England in 1936 and the United States in 1939.

Of those pre-war sets, only 400 still exist today. Before World War I, about 7,000 sets were introduced in the United States and 19,000 in England.

McVoy has three American and seven English pre-war electronic televisions.

The first color television was produced in 1958. McVoy has seven pieces in his early color collection.

McVoy finds his televisions in a variety of sources, including agents, on Web site auctions and through word of mouth.

Many of the pieces he has been able to acquire have not arrived in ideal shape. They've required some work to restore them to their original condition.

"Some parts of these things are impossible to find," he said.

"One of my other goals is to get all of them to work," he said.

A pre-war TV takes on average 200 hours to get into working order, while televisions made after World War II take an average of 5-10 hours to renovate.

Early televisions also differed from today's modern version in their appearance.

"They made these things to be a piece of furniture," he said.

Once open, McVoy's museum will be the only television museum in the United States. Major museums like the Smithsonian and Henry Ford have two or three sets each.