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Thompson, Ethan, Jeffrey P. Jones, and Lucas Hatlen, eds. *Television History, the Peabody Archive, and Cultural Memory*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019, 256 pp. \$34.95 (paperback).

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While it is relatively easy to find works on historical television at the national level, the realm of locally produced television has long been underrepresented in historical writing. Fortunately, the Peabody Awards Collection has, since 1941, served as a sampling of news coverage intended for local audiences. This new edited volume, *Television History, the Peabody Archive, and Cultural Memory*, delivers a series of essays that starts the conversation about the importance of local television.

Unfortunately, most of the programming created for local television has been lost. Economics forced stations to wipe videotapes and telerecordings for reuse thereby decimating local archives, and decades of live programming were never recorded in the first place. But the entries that were presented for Peabody Award consideration still exist in the archive, serving as a window into the medium's past. The examples not only represent a sample of the work, but as author Derek Kompare observes, it is also noteworthy based on what is not included (p. 35) – a good reminder when working with any archive. Kompare also notes another very important consideration: programming created for the purpose of recognition is necessarily different from run-of-the-mill offerings. The best-of-the-best examples found in the Peabody Archive are significant even if they did not claim an award simply because they looked to “advance the forward (if not always cutting) edge of media expression” (p. 41).

The book organizes material found in the Peabody Archive into three sections over 12 chapters. Susan Douglas contributes an excellent chapter, “Local Television News in the 1970s and the Emergence of Gay Visibility” within “Part 2: Looking for Media Citizenry and Subjectivity,” and Jonathan Gray offers a fascinating chapter, “Off-Screen Educational Television and the Social Value of Children's Paratexts” within “Part 1: Considering

Peabody: Media Texts, Paratexts, and Metadata.” Other noteworthy chapters include Christine Becker and Lucas Hatlen's “Broadcasting the Bicentennial” for those seeking more recent media history, and Deborah L. Jaramillo's “TV's War on Drugs: Local Crises as Public Service Crusades,” on how coverage of the drug wars in the 1980s doubled as public service broadcasting for local stations. The concluding chapter, Ethan Thompson's “Events Described Are Not Occurring (and Not Funny): Serious Fake News in the Peabody Archive,” bears a particular relevance that would be an excellent addition to a senior-level media studies course. The chapters evolved from two conferences held to analyze the overall contribution of the awards to television history, and the reader is left with a strong sense that the book faithfully reflects the issues and values raised by the participants. The editors of the work sought to reflect the flavor and areas of interest discussed at the conferences and have done that successfully.

Overall, the individual chapters are very well researched. Each of the authors took care to find additional archival materials to back up their arguments – archives that in this case support the value of the archive. At the conclusion of many of the chapters I found myself reaching for a notepad, scribbling down references that I needed to chase down later to read more on the subjects covered. For those fascinated by television history, that's the sort of rabbit hole that you don't mind tumbling down, and it's easy to do with this work.

This book will be useful to those teaching media history and/or television news history to upper-division undergraduates or graduate students. The fact that the University of Georgia has made the contents of the Archive searchable is wonderful; unfortunately, the clips themselves are not without

some amount of legwork. A student with more advanced research skills would be able to find companion pieces to the chapters to view with some time and patience; as such, the book would be a more difficult sell to younger students without an instructor armed with visual examples of the material discussed.

Overall *Television History, the Peabody*

Archive, and Cultural Memory is a needed addition to the available work in television history and useful to any scholar whose interests fall outside of the proverbial “golden age” of broadcasting. A word of caution, however: upon completion of the book, you might find yourself needing to spend some time at the library in Athens watching a little television.