

THE COMPLETE DIRECTORY TO PRIME TIME NETWORK TV SHOWS
1946-PRESENT, by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh; published
simultaneously in hardcover and trade paperback, by
Ballantine Books, First Edition, May 1979

Exact information about the television programs of the past is increasingly in demand so along comes - with incredible good timing - the publication of Tim Brook's (NBC) and Earle Marsh's (CBS) DIRECTORY - one of the best TV "pooling" of talents I've seen.

To begin with their resources for research are the incomparable program information files at their two networks. Then, they addressed themselves to the great task of prime time programs - which while limiting themselves to, say, an average of five hours out of a sixteen hour television day - they were able to publish in a book you can hold in one hand; who knows what their next task will be if they are encouraged by the reaction to this publication - Volume two: Specials, Documentaries, who knows? After all, the prime time schedule reaches most all of the country's population and has the most wide-spread recognition: BONANZA, THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW, WAGON TRAIN, PERRY MASON, WALT DISNEY, et al. So it's interesting to see how long the runs are, or were, of these series. Fourteen years for BONANZA, twenty-five years for WALT DISNEY, starting in 1954 and still going strong, twenty-three years for ED SULLIVAN with all the Broadway and vaudeville stars broadcast and fortunately recorded forever: the great skits and bits of Bea Lillie, Bert Lahr, Smith & Dale, and the singing glories of Edith Piaf, the auspicious debuts of artists - but don't let me go on, let Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh tell you and you will see how careful they are in detail as they are with the research in this DIRECTORY; for instance, in the summary of THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW, they write:

It will be noted that Elvis Presley is missing from the above list of firsts. Although he is best remembered for his appearance on THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW in the fall of 1956, Elvis actually made his TV debut in January, 1956 on Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey's STAGE SHOW.

Naturally, this kind of information is dear to my heart - I can start to track that Dorsey show of January 28, 1956 down thanks to this notation they chose to make.

But I want to mention before I go a word further, that it is in the write-ups of shows that this DIRECTORY excels. They are written with enthusiasm and affection as well as attention to detail. Read the summaries of OMNIBUS, MARY TYLER MOORE, PLAYHOUSE 90, or an essay on Boxing and you will see what I mean. They convey the spirit and style of a series and do it with admirable succinctness. Nay, in fact, with completeness in some cases. The write-up on PEYTON PLACE is all you may ever want to know about that series. Perhaps that is why its Executive Producer, Paul Monash, is given a rare production credit (I noted only

one other Producer credit citation and that was Stan Margulies for ROOTS). But all the casts are there for their 2500 TV titles and that is an impressive directory within this DIRECTORY.

There are other important and useful sections in the back of the book. Beginning on page 706 of the paperback edition, there are the nightly network schedules starting in 1946 (yes!) and running for the next 32 years - they are fascinating charts of the kind of race it has been for the "prime" candidates. So you would naturally expect to see the winners' box and indeed you do. Appendix 2 the EMMY AWARD WINNERS from 1948 through the 1977-78 season. This is important to look through because you begin to see the titles of specials presented in prime time but outside of this work. Which brings me to the reminder that, like Groucho in A DAY AT THE RACES, you will find you still need more than one "code" book to have an extensive look at network television or to find a particular program. For the serious student of television, it is still necessary to consult Terrace's two volumes: THE COMPLETE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS 1947-1976 and James Robert Parish's ACTORS' TELEVISION CREDITS 1950-1972 and its supplement; e.c. NINA DAVID'S TV SEASON, which begins program listings from the '74-'75 season and will continue each year, I hope, with each season's offerings; and our own MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING'S SUBJECT GUIDE and CARD CATALOGUE.

So as Groucho discovered there is no master code book yet, but any follower of the TV race will be fascinated to see the long distance runners Brooks and Marsh listed on pages 811-813. I wouldn't give that listing away in a million years - you will have to go and see for yourself - who the winners are. Want to bet on SUN-UP? Hey "get your tootsie-fruitsie ice-cream!"

Mary V. Ahern