

### Antennas for TV Reception

An antenna on the roof meant there was a TV in the house. In the 1950s most families didn't own a TV set. The kids in our house, like those in many other houses, were begging their parents to buy a TV. The reply to the argument was, "we can't afford one". The antenna on the roof was a type of status symbol but it also was a sign that the kids in that house had won! My siblings and I won the battle in 1954. Our roof now displayed what most others in the neighborhood had for a long time.

The 1950's antenna came in many different shapes and sizes. They stood on the roof, about four feet tall and some were, at least ours was, strapped to the chimney. Some had several straight rods facing one direction while others had continuous circular rods or oblong ones, reminding me of a trombone. Later models had a rotor, inside the house, that could change the direction of the antenna. This became necessary as more stations came into being and the waves came from many different directions.

Eventually, rabbit ears replaced the antenna on the roof. They were an indoor antenna that sat on top of the TV set. They also came in many different designs but all had two perpendicular, adjustable rods attached to a base. When the picture was fuzzy or had shadows, one person would stand by the TV wiggling the rabbit ears up, down and sideways while another person, sitting, watching the screen, would give directions. When the picture was as good as it could be, the ok was given by the director. As soon as the adjuster walked away from the TV, the picture quality deteriorated a bit.

In the 1970s, our house, in Needham, was on a hill and about one and a half miles from the huge TV towers for Channel 5. Because of them, our TV reception was so good we didn't need any type of antenna. And now, with cable, these old antenna days are just a memory.