

"How will I ever get the dishes done?"

Grace Karr's take on television



Grace Cronkhite Karr in the 1950s.

Grace Cronkhite Karr kept an eye out for change in her village of Cordova, Iowa (near Knoxville). And one change she watched for was television.

Between 1927 and 1967, Karr wrote a weekly column called "Cordova News" for the *Pella Chronicle*. Even though the village had only a few dozen people at most, the arrival of television in the 1950s was still something Karr noticed and wrote about, as you'll see from the following excerpts.

These are taken from *The Best of Grace Karr's Cordova News*, collected and edited by Harriet Heusinkveld (1991); dates in bold have been added. Cordova was abandoned when Red Rock Reservoir was created; its waters now cover the site of the village. But thanks to Karr's recorded observations, we can watch as television

became part of the Cordova community in the 1950s.

—*The Editor*

7/10/1952

Monday we visited at Joe and Myrtle's to see Douglas MacArthur on T.V.

1/8/1953

James Templeton and John Martin Visser have TV sets.

1/15/1953

A television set was installed at Bill's home, and are we enjoying it! Twenty-seven years ago when we lived in their home, little did we dream of such a thing as TV. Why even a radio was a luxury then.

1/29/1953

The pupils and teachers of the Red Rock school appreciated the opportunity to be able to see the presidential inauguration on TV. We also want to thank those who let us come to their homes and to the store.

2/5/1953

Between here and Monroe this morning, we counted seven TV sets. There are 18 TV sets between here and Knoxville, we counted yesterday.

Through town we counted 81, and from city limits to Croziers we counted 181. When will I get mine?

3/25/1954

Walter Cronkhite came Saturday evening and brought our TV. We are very glad to see all the good things, but how will I ever get the dishes done?

5/31/1960

Had visitors on Thursday. And what a crash of my two beautiful hand painted china plates did Roy make when he caused the TV tray to collapse! It broke the plates but not the cups. Hard for me to keep back tears.

10/20/1960

Friday night, Bill and his family, Roy and I, and Aunt Lida were supper guests in the spacious farm home of Hugh and Dorothy Templeton. First we watched the Nixon-Kennedy debate on TV and then a scrumptious supper was served. The table was very pretty with flowers, silver, and china, and of course the food was "tops." Dorothy's an experienced cook. There was Swiss steak, apple salad, jam, squash, etc. To finish, the dessert was a new one—frozen with ice cream as the base.

2/2/1961

I watched the presidential inauguration (JFK) all day Friday, January 20. We are seeing history being made. □