

[Digital Archive of 1950s Radio Broadcasts on Health and Medicine](#)

Discussion published by Carsten Timmermann on Tuesday, November 11, 2014

I came across this announcement on a different list (MERSENNE) and thought it might be of interest to list members.

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New York Public Radio and The New York Academy of Medicine Recapture a Piece of American Medical and Broadcast History

Digital Archive of 1950s Radio Broadcasts on Health and Medicine

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) and New York Public Radio (NYPR) have digitized and released a treasure trove of [1950s WNYC radio broadcasts](#) that feature significant voices from the past and provide a unique view of the medical and health concerns of American in the 1950s. The broadcasts brought lectures from the groundbreaking NYAM series *Lectures to the Laity* and *For Doctors Only* out of the halls of the Academy to a broad public audience, offering a new form of access to timely discussions on medicine, health, and culture.

The 40 digitized lectures and talks are part of a collaboration between NYAM and WNYC, which was then owned and operated by the city. Highlights include talks featuring Leona Baumgartner, New York City's first woman health commissioner; cancer pioneer Sidney Farber; American microbiologist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author René Dubos; acclaimed anthropologist and social critic Margaret Mead; Norbert Wiener, father of cybernetics; and discussion of the Freud Centenary and Lincoln's doctors.

"NYAM's innovative partnership with WNYC in the 1950s brought important medical discussions out of the Academy's rooms and into the public's living rooms," said Lisa O'Sullivan, PhD, Director of the NYAM Center for the History of Medicine and Public Health. "Today, NYAM remains committed to making the history of medicine accessible to broad public audiences, and we are extremely pleased to partner with New York Public Radio to release this digital collection."

"The combination of expertise has made for a project with perfect synergy," said Andy Lanset, Director of Archives, New York Public Radio. "We're thrilled to make such important recordings available to both the scientific/medical community, and the public at large."

These lectures are drawn from the more than 1,500 original lacquer discs transferred from NYAM to the NYPR Archives in 2008. The digitization and cataloging resulted from a joint project between NYAM's Center for the History of Medicine and Public Health and the NYPR Archives, with a grant from METRO, the New York Metropolitan Library Council.

NYAM and WNYC began their radio relationship in 1946 with the launch of *The Laity Lectures*, later to become *Lectures to the Laity*, a popular series of Academy lectures and talks on culture and medicine that had started in 1935. By mid-1950, this series was joined by *For Doctors Only*, which aimed to bring “the best of the meetings, conferences, roundtable discussions held at the academy” to the medical profession. On its debut broadcast of July 27, 1950, *The New York Times* called it “an epochal advance in the educational use of radio.” *The New York World-Telegram and Sun* referred to it as a “bold venture” and “enterprising” in the interest of good health for millions of people. *For Doctors Only* also addressed critical analysis of issues of society and medicine, as well as the application of the social sciences to medicine, and provided academic presentations in the history of medicine.

The lectures are available on [WNYC's website](#). Individual titles are also available through [NYAM's library catalog](#).

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