



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Citizens for a Quieter City records

1950-1980 [bulk 1966-1978]

MssCol 552

Compiled by John D. Stinson.

Summary

Creator: Citizens for a Quieter City

Title: Citizens for a Quieter City records

Date: 1950-1980 [bulk 1966-1978]

Size: 36.0 linear feet (36 boxes, 1 container)

Source: Donated by Robert Alex Baron, 1976

Abstract: Citizens for a Quieter City was a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to the reduction of urban noise. Founded by Robert Alex Baron, its objectives were to develop information about the injurious effect of noise; research methods of controlling and reducing it; and educate the public on the importance of its abatement. The Citizens for a Quieter City records (1950-1980) document the work of the organization through correspondence with government and private sector officials; sound and video recordings; meeting minutes; records of noise complaints; scrapbooks; financial records; posters; and published research and information on noise pollution. The collection also holds the records of the Upper Sixth Avenue Noise Abatement Association and Robert Alex Baron's files regarding his job as general manager of Theatre Tours.

Access: Advance notice required.

Conditions Governing Access:

Audio and moving image recordings are unavailable for use pending preservation transfer.

Preferred citation: Citizens for a Quieter City records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled by John D. Stinson.

Creator History

Citizens for a Quieter City, Inc. was a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to the reduction of urban noise. Its objectives were to develop information about the injurious effect of noise; research methods of controlling and reducing it; and educate the public on the importance of its abatement. The organization was founded in New York City in September 1966 by Robert Alex Baron (1921-1980), a theatrical manager and general manager of Theatre Tours. In 1965, he founded the Upper Sixth Avenue Noise Abatement Association, a predecessor organization.

Scope and Content Note

The Citizens for a Quieter City (CQC) records, dating from 1950 to 1980, document the work of the organization to raise general awareness of noise pollution and advocate for government and industry policies to mitigate it. The records contain Robert Alex Baron's correspondence; his datebooks and notebooks; CQC minutes and by-laws; noise complaints and reports; financial records; noise pollution inquiries; photographs; printed matter; scrapbooks; posters; unsorted papers; and sound and video recordings. The collection also holds the records of the Upper Sixth Avenue Noise Abatement Association and Robert Alex Baron's files regarding his job as general manager of Theatre Tours.

The Correspondence (1966-1974) consists of a subject file and a smaller chronological file. It includes Baron's correspondence with city, state, and federal officials; civic and community organizations; and manufacturers of construction equipment and noise abatement devices. Much of the correspondence relates to Project Quieter City, a program conducted by CQC which sought to survey the urban noise problem in the Lincoln Square area of Manhattan; there are also letters regarding the New York Conference on Urban Noise Control.

Minutes and by-laws document meetings of the CQC board of directors and technical committee, and the structure of the CQC.

The Datebooks and Notebooks (1970-1973) contain four desk diaries reflecting daily appointments of Baron and 10 notebooks of his memoranda.

The Noise Complaint Reports (1969-1972) contain complaints received from the public, organized by type (traffic, aircraft, siren, etc.).

The Financial Records contain invoices, petty cash accounting, balance sheets, audit reports, payroll tax forms, bank statements and cancelled checks.

The Noise Pollution Inquiries contain forms summarizing the nature of correspondence inquiries received.

The Upper Sixth Avenue Noise Abatement Association records (1965-1966) including correspondence, minutes, and reports by Baron.

The Photographs contain images of Baron alone and in groups, mainly at construction sites in New York City.

The Theater Files (circa 1950-1960s) were generated by Baron during his job as general manager of Theatre Tours.

The Sound and Video Recordings (1965-1978) document CQC meetings, conferences on noise

pollution, public service announcements, radio and television news broadcasts about noise pollution, and public events in which CQS participated. They also hold recordings of different types of noise pollution in New York City. Some video content was produced by other organizations. Also present is a speech by Mayor John Lindsay on the state of New York City in 1942.

Key Terms

Subjects

City noise -- New York (State) -- New York
Concorde (Jet transports)
Noise control
Noise pollution
Theater management

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)
Financial records
Letters (correspondence)
Minutes (administrative records)
Motion pictures (visual works)
Photographs
Posters
Scrapbooks
Slides (photographs)
Sound recordings

Occupations

Social activists.
Theatrical managers.

Names

Baron, Robert Alex
Lindsay, John V. (John Vliet)
Citizens for a Quieter City
Theatre Tours
Upper Sixth Avenue Noise Abatement Association

Container List

- Robert Alex Baron Correspondence
Subject File 1966-1974
- b. 1 A-Bar
 - b. 2 Ben-Con
 - b. 3 Con-E
 - b. 4 F-His
 - b. 5 His-Mai
 - b. 6 Mai-New York City
 - b. 7 New York Conference - Pro
 - b. 8 Pro-Sit
 - b. 9 Siv-Vol
 - b. 10 Vol-Z
 - b. 10 Chronological File 1971-1974
 - b. 10 Minutes and By-Laws
 - b. 11 Datebooks and Notebooks 1970-1973
 - b. 12 Noise Complaint Reports 1969-1972
 - b. 13-15 Financial Records
 - b. 16 Noise Pollution Inquiries 1970-1972
 - b. 16 Upper Sixth Avenue Noise Abatement Association records 1965-1966
 - b. 17 Photographs
 - b. 17-19 Theater Files 1950-1960s
 - b. 20-22 Unsorted Papers
 - b. 23-36 Printed Matter
Includes technical and scientific monographs, reports, brochures, and other printed matter regarding the field of technology of noise control, acoustics, noise pollution, and the behavioral effects of noise; and clippings.
 - o. package Scrapbooks and Posters 1966-1970
Two scrapbooks of clippings and two publicity posters. Also present is a plaque of merit awarded to Robert Alex Baron.
Sound and Video Recordings 1965-1978
Audio and moving image recordings are unavailable for use pending preservation transfer.
Sound Recordings
- 217407 Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting 1971 October 4
01307
- 204890 Alandos, John 1972 August 25
01280 (00:12:00)
An interview that took place at the Bar Cara-Cara Restaurant with John Alandos, owner. Questions on the mimeograph are asked. Individuals: Sam Collins, Robert Baren, Vikki Bagel, John Alandos,; Miss Baren.
- 204919, 217396 Anti-Noise Pollution Advertisement
01332 (00:05:25)
New York Jets. Concert in the Park. Sounds of Silence.
- 217391 Band 1, "Sounds of Silence" 1970 March 4
01314

Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)
Sound Recordings (cont.)

- 204898 **Biofeedback**
01288 (00:30:00)
Procedures to biofeedback response. Individuals: Dr. Sidlaticr.
- 217394 **Cement**
01329
01329B
217395
- 227802, 227804,
227805, 227806,
227807, 227808,
227809, 227810,
227811, 227812 **City Noise Conference 1971 March 27**
- 204893 **Concorde Noise Hearing 1971 September 9**
01283 (01:03:00)
Discussion on the decision to let the Concorde land in New York. Henry Kissinger's thoughts on the matter are mentioned. Talks on why the Port Authority of New York City made a decision to not allow the Concorde to land in New York. Individuals: Terry Walker, Hugh Scanland, Governor Carey, Richard Wiggs, Clinton Davis, and Sir Peters Rasbottom.
- 204889 **Concorde (WOR Program)**
01279 (00:57:10)
Radio station WOR interviews with people in England on how they feel about the Concorde airplane landing in New York, and if they think the plane is too noisy. Discussion on what is the maximum decibel noisy level swallowed by airports in the United States. Recordings levels of an airplane's jet at Howard Beach. Mr. Freer of the FAA answers questions on noise meters that are placed on airport sites.
- 204902 **Discussion of Auditory Effects on Animals 1974 November 26**
01292 (01:34:49)
Discussion between members of Citizens for a Quiet City and doctors on the effects of auditory stress on animals such as rats and mice. Individuals: Dr. Arthur M. Seckler, Mr. Crimms.
- 204907 **Europe Trip**
01318 (00:67:55)
Recordings of street construction in Switzerland, Zurich. Robert Alex Baron makes a recording 50 feet away from a pile driver. Recording of an air compressor 25 feet away. Baron attends the International Congress on Noise. Discussion on the noise a battle makes in London. Different news coverages on noise pollution and interviews with Mr. Baron.
- 217393 **Final of Noise 1967**
01328
- 204904 **Forward Presents The Noise Menace 1968**
01313 (00:30:00)
The problem created by noise in New York City. Individuals: Robert Alex Baron; Barnett Billdacy; Robert Allen Brown; Congressman Theodore R. Kauffman; Dr. Robert Rubin.
- 204897 **Goddard College Discussion 1972 March 29**
01287 (00:18:20)
Discussion of the possibility of having one or more students work with Citizens for a Quiet City. Discussion of students' attitudes towards issue relating to the environment. Individuals: Mathew Philipoloski.
- 204922 **How To Measure Noise**
01335 (00:38:30)
Speaker discusses noise and what it is, and . Speaker demonstrates different tones at different frequencies.
- 204896 **Hospital 1976**
01286 (00:45:00)
The speaker on this tape is recording himself at a hospital. Speaker is admitted to the hospital for surgery. Recording of a sanitation truck across from the hospital. Speaker discusses his daily activities at the hospital. Speaker mentions the donation of the collection to the New York Public Library. Speaker recommended that Robert Alex Baron be awarded a civil citation for his accomplishments.

Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)

Sound Recordings (cont.)

- 204909 **K and L School Tape**
01320 (00:16:14)
Recordings of tones and explanation of what sounds are and how they are made. Individuals: Robert Alex Baron.
- 204912 **Mayor John Lindsay**
01323 (00:31:10)
Mayor Lindsay highlights what was going on in 1942 in New York.
- 204913 **The Media on Noise Pollution 1965 January 8**
01324 (00:48:35)
News coverage of noise pollution. Discussion on helicopters and the excessive noise pollution they creates. Interview with film producer on how he got involved with anti-noise pollution issues. Speaker reads a letter Mayor Lindsay wrote concerning the Pan Am Heliport. Individuals: Robert Alex Baron, Edwin Newman, Ruth Kaye Hill. Organizations: New York Illustrated, NBC-TV News, NBC-Radio News.
- 217406 **Meeting**
01305
- 217405 **Meeting and Awards**
01306
- 217404 **Meeting and Larson**
01304
- 204921 **Noise Discussion 1965**
01334 (00:31:15)
Discussion on new noisy city buses, sanitation trucks, and jack hammers. Robert Alex Baron compares the United States to other countries in enforcing noise pollution laws.
- 204920 **Noise Discussion**
01333 (00:11:43)
Baron explains what a decibel is and discusses his feelings about the government being able to spend money for the Vietnam war, but doesn't spend anything on noise pollution. Baron also discusses his feelings about how private corporations don't take responsibilities in building quieter products.
- 204901 **Noise Hearing**
01291 (01:31:30)
A doctor discusses experiments that were conducted to find out peoples' noise tolerance. Speaker gives examples of where the government is responsible for noise pollution.
- 204915 **Noise Pollution News**
01326 (01:23:00)
Robert Alex Baron reads the New York laws relating to noise. Recordings of street noises. Baron discusses the tests scientists have made on noise pollution causing hearing damage. News reel on the cause of grouchiness in Caracas, Venezuela. Noise pollution at airports.
- 204918 ***Now Hear This, If You Can***
01331 (00:24:48)
Sunday news close-up. The psychological effects of noise pollution. News report on noise pollution. Interrupted sleep by outside noise. Individuals: Mike Stein (Writer, Producer), Jack Munsey (Executive Producer), Howard Epstein (technical supervision).
- 204899 **Operation Horn Blower - Marcy /Quiet 1972 April 7**
01289 (00:21:10)
A discussion on getting people to stop blowing their car horns in the Lincoln Center area. Individuals: Keith O'marcus.
- 204906 **Pavement Breaker**
01316 (00:05:05)
Recording of a construction tool used to break pavement.
- Project Quiet City**

Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)

Sound Recordings (cont.)

Project Quiet City (cont.)

- 204895 **Recordings of Noises** 1970 November 15
01285 (00:21:45)
Recordings of different noises heard daily. Road Construction site - Attenuator setting 100 db; Sound level 90db. Building Construction site - Attenuator setting 90 db? Sound level 85 db. Inside a boy's school class room with window open and construction going on outside - Sound level 75 db. Outside boy's school with construction going on - Attenuator setting 100 db; Sound level 92 db. Garbage truck outside from an 8th floor motel room - Attenuator setting 60 db; Sound level 55db. Garbage truck at curbside, 30 feet away - Attenuator setting 90 db; Sound level 82 db. Water fountain in Lincoln Center, mike 25 feet away - Attenuator setting 80 db; Sound level 72 db. N. Y. Police scooter, 15 feet away - Attenuator setting 90 db; Sound level 82 db. Quiet Police vehicle, 30 feet away - Attenuator setting 80 db; Sound level 60 db. Subway ventilation grill - Attenuator setting 100 db; Sound level 97 db. Inside a N. Y. subway car - Attenuator setting 90 db; Sound level 95 db. Ambulance siren - Attenuator setting 90 db; Sound level 92db. Vehicle traffic, Aircraft flyovers - Attenuator setting 80 db; Sound level 78 db. Aircraft flyovers from side walk - Attenuator setting 70 db; Sound level 72db. Apartment ventilator from side walks - Attenuator setting 80 db; Sound level 62 db. Traffic noise on Broadway on a weekday - Attenuator setting 70 db; Sound level 42-60 db. Air compressor for construction - Attenuator setting 90 db; Sound level 82 db. Railroad switching yard 80 db; Sound level 85 db. Church bells, traffic intersection - Attenuator setting 80 db; Sound level 68 db. Toilet from a high rent apartment, mike is non living room - Attenuator setting 60 db.
- 204894 **Discussion of Noise Pollution** 1972 June 28
01284 (01:03:00)
Nicholas Kremenic, an acoustical engineer, discusses the different noises and levels to which people are being exposed. Pamela Henry, a certified balloonist/pilot, expresses her feelings towards what Project Quiet City is working for. There is a discussion on noise pollution problems in the Lincoln Square area. One main complaint is emergency vehicle sirens.
- 204888 **Advertisement to Ban Noise Pollution**
01278 (00:04:20)
- 204891 **Interviews with People About Noise Pollution**
01281 (00:15:25)
Interview with people walking by on 72nd street about noise pollution. The types of noises that are the most annoying. One of the interviewees is Donald McCormick of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
- 204905 **Public Service Announcements** 1971
01315 (00:04:00)
"One man's music", "History of noise", "Noisy prisoners", "Sound symphony", and "A world of noise."
- 204892 **Quiet Week** 1971 August
01282 (00:11:06)
Sponsored by Project Quiet City endorsing agencies. An attempt to get people in the community to make some gestures for quiet in the neighborhood.
- 217409 **Recording on Nutrition**
01309
- 204908 **Robert Alex Baron Recordings of City Sounds** 1965 December 24
01319 (00:52:00)
Recording of a sanitation truck which awoke Baron from sleep. Recording of a chainsaw 100 feet away. Recording of a steam shovel. Recording of a bus at the airport. Recording of a conversation in a bar at Cincinnati.
- 204914 **Robert Alex Baron Discussion**
01325 (00:29:00)
Baron explains how his concern about noise pollution came about, and discusses his experience with city officials in trying to get them to stop noise pollution. Baron discusses an MTA meeting he attended, and other meetings he organized with the community.
- 217408 **The Role of the Mind in Cancer Therapy** 1976
01308
- 217402 **Roosevelt Hospital**
01302

Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)

Sound Recordings (cont.)

- 217410, 217411 **Rozhinkes mit Mandlin and "Raisins and Almonds"**
 01310
 01311
- 217403 **Second Part**
 01303
- Street Noises**
- 204917 **1966 February 16**
 01330 (00:21:28)
 Robert Alex Baron interviews the owner of a cleaners about the noise that is made because of the construction outside his store. Baron interviews a customer who walks into the store and asks him how he feels about the noise. Baron recorded construction work from his 7th floor apartment.
- 204916 **1970**
 01327 (00:27:40)
 Robert Alex Baron records a laundry truck outside in the street from a 7th floor apartment. Baron records other loud street noises.
- 204910 **Street Sounds**
 01321 (00:33:00)
 Recordings of different sounds and noises. Different techniques used for recording noises.
- 204903 **Sound Pollution Discussion 1972 May 30**
 01312 (00:12:50)
 Discussion on sound pollution and its effects. This aired on "Perspective New York" unedited. Individuals: Hill Edell, Dr. Rosen.
- 217400 **Staff Meeting 1972 June 14**
 01300
- 217401 **Staff Meeting Side 2 Quiet Bike**
 01301
- 204917 **Store Interview**
 01330
 Baron interviews a store owner and customer about construction noise.
- 204900 **Town Forum 1971 September 15**
 01290 (01:35:30)
 Discussion of reposed noise code. The neighborhood meets with the people representing Citizens for a Quiet City to ask questions about the rights they have.
- 204911 **WCBS-TV Report 1966 September**
 01322 (00:11:05)
 Discussion on damages to the ear caused by excessive noise. Dr. Samuel Rosen, an ear surgeon, discusses what excessive noise levels can do to the ear. Discussions on noise pollution near the airports.
- 217399 **Unlabeled 1977 October 30**
 01295
- 217398 **Unlabeled**
 01294
- 217397 **Unlabeled**
 01293
- 217392 **Unlabeled**
 01317
- Moving Images**
- Dalton Street Fair 1978 May**
- 217388 **Part I**
 00002 (00:09:25)
 Contains a group of outtakes from a screen test offered to those who attended the Dalton Street Fair.

Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)

Moving Images (cont.)

Dalton Street Fair (cont.)

- 210551 **Part II**
 00004 (00:26:30)
- 210555, 210556 *Dangerous Noise: The Importance of Ear Protection*
 00191
 00192 (00:15:00)
 A film produced and filmed in The Netherlands (in English). The film documents the high level of noise that occurs in industrial work and its impact on those who are exposed to it. It also offers methods for individuals to protect themselves from high noise levels. The film was apparently produced by Rijksoverheidsdienst (RVD) or Polygon Profilti Production. Directed by Nol Bolingino.
- 210559 *Death Be Not Loud 1970*
 00194 (00:31:00)
 A segment of the ABC show "Now" which documents the increasing noise levels in modern cities, such as the sound of traffic, airplanes, and construction work. Includes persons interviewed about noise pollution on the streets of Manhattan, rats reacting to high levels of noise, and efforts to enforce noise regulations against loud cars in Connecticut. The segment then looks at methods of mitigating loud noises, such as muffling devices, and discusses the possibility of laws that would enforce noise limits. The segment was written and produced by James Benjamin for ABC News.
- 210552 *It Can Be Done 1971*
 00188 (00:30:00)
 A United Nations television film concerning the destruction of the environment, which includes a segment on noise pollution. Includes considerable footage of construction in New York City. Dr. Rosen discusses way of muffling sounds and creating quieter equipment. Includes footage of a rock band called "Koala". Another segment focuses on mercury poisoning of the water supply in a city in Japan. A third segment focuses on an attack of gypsy moths in Cornwall, Connecticut, and an attempt to eradicate them with DDT. Executive Producer was Peter Hollander.
- "Larm" (Noise) 1980 March 3 (00:12:00)
 Doctor Mac Truong moderates this debate dealing with the issue of women and the draft. Other panelists include; Edith Wynner, consultant to the Schwimmer Llovd Collection and editor of the World Peace News; Betsy West of the National Consumer Coalition; Gara La Marche of the American Civil Liberties Union; Doris Watson of the Women's Prison Association; Margery Coffey of the New York Coalition Against the Draft and Martha Baker of the Women's Strike for Peace.
- 210557 **Film**
 00193
- 210558 **Print of Optical Soundtrack**
 00193b
- 493996 **Negative**
 00193c
- 210553 *The Noise Boom 1968*
 00189
 A segment of the WNBC program *New York Illustrated* entitled "The Noise Boom." The program documents noise pollution in New York City caused by construction work, airplanes, and traffic. The situation is compared with Europe, where there is a noise abatement movement that has required quieter construction equipment. Dr. Samuel Rosen, of Citizens for a Quieter New York, is interviewed. Footage is shown of a trip he took to rural areas of Africa to test the hearing of persons not exposed to urban noise. There is also footage of a rock music club, an interview with the FAA's noise abatement office at Kennedy Airport, and a discussion of devices that can mitigate noise pollution. The segment was written and produced by William Tuque.
- 210562 **Noise Spot**
 00198 (00:01:00)
 A television spot advocating for quieter home appliances machinery. Produced by PCS Film Productions.

Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)

Moving Images (cont.)

- 210550, 217390 *Quiet!* 1972
00001 (00:23:50)
Robert Alex Baron, in conjunction with the Chalet Club's Balloon Ascension Division, takes a hot air balloon 400 feet above Central Park to measure the ambient noise to determine "what the birds were hearing."
- 210554 *Quiet Please*
00190
A documentary film presented by the Jacobs Manufacturing Company, Engine Brake Division, examining the effects of high levels of sound from machinery, appliances, traffic, and other sources on human hearing. It links loud noise to nervousness, high blood pressure, headaches, fatigue, sleeplessness, and accidents. The film argues for standardized noise levels for trucks, automobiles, and machinery. It also suggests mitigation measures: quiet zones in cities, noise barriers around freeways, and designing quieter machinery.
- 210560, 493992 *Quiet Please Spot*
00196
See also 00198.
- 210561 *Quiet Please Spot*
00197
See also 00198.
- 217389 Robert Alex Baron in Central Park 1972 June 28
00003
- 220974 Unidentified
00195
Contains two very brief scenes: a man in his bathrobe, and man in a raincoat in a shower or in the rain.