Summary

**Creator:** New York Times Company


**Size:** 2.52 linear feet (6 boxes)


**Abstract:** Theodore M. Bernstein (1904-1979) was a longtime editor at *The New York Times*, a professor at the Columbia University School of Journalism, and the author of several books on editing and journalism. This collection primarily documents Bernstein's tenure as assistant managing editor at *The Times* between 1952 and 1969. Present are letters, memoranda, and clippings, the bulk of which deal with Bernstein's views on style, language, and the appearance of *The Times*. The papers also contain photographs of Bernstein and his family, a scrapbook of news-related cables he received from the government during World War II, a small amount of writings from his early career, and some correspondence from the end of his career.

**Access:** Apply to Manuscripts and Archives Division for access at http://www.nypl.org/mssref.

**Copyright information:** Copyright for documents created by New York Times Company principals and staff has been transferred to The New York Public Library.

**Preferred citation:** New York Times Company records. Theodore M. Bernstein papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

**Custodial history:** This collection was originally re-housed and organized in 1989 by Charles G. St. Vil of The Times archives staff. The collection was originally 10 boxes (approximately 3.5 linear feet).

**Processing note:** The order and folder titles, which The Times archives staff imposed on the collection, have been maintained.
Creator history
Theodore (Ted) Menline Bernstein (1904-1979) was a longtime editor at The New York Times, a professor at the Columbia University School of Journalism, and an author of several books on editing and journalism. As assistant managing editor, he had great influence on The Times' editing process, particularly around establishing uniformity of English language usage, improving the readability of news stories, and improving the appearance of the paper.

Born in New York City, Bernstein graduated from Columbia University in 1924 and from the Columbia University School of Journalism in 1925. Later that year, he joined The Times as a copy editor for the City Desk, the department that reported on the New York City region. In 1932, he worked as editor for the Foreign Desk, and became the head of the Foreign Desk in 1939, just before the outbreak of World War II. In this role, Bernstein edited all of the stories related to the war, assigned stories to reporters throughout Europe and the Pacific, created headlines (including many of the most important of the war), and expanded the use of maps and graphics in the paper. Bernstein was next promoted to assistant night managing editor in 1948; in this position he not only took on greater responsibility editing news stories, but he also became more involved with the style and appearance of the paper. His influence increased again in 1951 when he became the assistant managing editor, a title he held from 1951 to 1969 under Managing Editors Turner Catledge and E. Clifton Daniel. During this time, Bernstein determined the daily content and visual display of the The Times' front page. He was the unofficial enforcer of stylistic standards, and guided the staff on reporting on, writing, editing, illustrating, and presenting the news. In 1951, he created "Winners and Sinners," a one-sheet publication, distributed to the staff in New York and around the world, which disseminated rules on style by highlighting mistakes and exemplary headlines and passages in recently run stories. Bernstein was also responsible for establishing the International Edition of The Times, which was published in Paris, and was closely involved with changes to typography and layout of the paper. In 1969, he left news editing to become the editorial director of the book division. He retired from The Times in 1972.

In addition to his work at The Times, Bernstein also taught copyediting as an assistant professor (1925-1939) and associate professor (1939-1950) at the Columbia University School of Journalism. He wrote seven books on grammar, style, general editing, and journalism, including Headlines and Deadlines: A Manual for Copy Editors, which he coauthored with Robert E. Garst in 1933.

He married Beatrice Alexander in 1930. He died in 1979 at age 74.


Scope and content note
The Theodore M. Bernstein papers primarily document Bernstein's tenure as assistant managing editor of The New York Times from 1951 to 1969. The collection contains correspondence, internal memoranda, and clippings that reveal Bernstein's impact on news coverage as a senior editor and his influence on style, English language usage, typography, and layout of The Times. The collection contains only a few records from Bernstein's early career as copy editor, foreign news editor, or assistant night managing editor, including a scrapbook of news-related cables he received from the government during World War II and a small selection of writings and letters to the editor from the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Also present are photographs of Bernstein and his family, and some letters and memoranda created during his time as editorial director of the book division from 1969 until his retirement in 1972.
These papers are made up of Bernstein's extant working files, the bulk of which are communications with staff members, both reporters and editors, which concern his views on style. Other topics discussed include complaints from writers about changes in their stories by the editing staff in New York, staff assignments, and discussions with other senior editors and the publishers regarding staff performance and the coverage of specific news stories.

The collection is divided into two series: I. People and II. Subjects. The People files consist of records pertaining to individuals, while the Subjects files contain items on specific topics and departments. Items germane to two or more people or subjects are often cross-referenced in the finding aid; documents related to specific issues are generally located in subject files rather than the people folders of those involved.

For more of Bernstein's internal memoranda and writings, researchers should see the papers of his fellow executive editors, such as E. Clifton Daniel and A.M. Rosenthal.

Arrangement
The New York Times Company records. Theodore M. Bernstein papers are organized into the following series:

Series I: People, 1948-1971
Series II: Subjects, 1924-1984

Key terms
Subjects
Journalism -- United States -- 20th century
Newspapers -- Language
World War, 1939-1945 -- Censorship

Names
Bernstein, Theodore M. (Theodore Menline), 1904-1979
New York Times Company

Special formats
Memorandums
Photographs
 Scrapbooks
Series I: People, 1948-1971 (2 boxes)

This series is made up of files that contain items to, from, or concerning various individuals, primarily New York Times staff members. Many letters are between Bernstein and foreign, national, and New York City-based correspondents. The majority of these contain discussions of style and correct language usage, often accompanied by clippings from The Times or the Winners and Sinners bulletin that illustrated Bernstein’s point. Notably, many of his responses take the form of personal advice, rather than directives of Times official policies.

Files for executive editors, E. Clifton Daniel, Max Frankel, and A. M. Rosenthal, and for publishers Arthur Hays Sulzberger and Arthur Ochs Sulzberger contain memoranda assessing news coverage and the performance of employees and entire departments. These files also include personal notes. The file for Sunday Editor Lester Markel is particularly extensive and consists of short notes that discuss English language usage and the presentation of news.

Files are arranged alphabetically by name. Entries without box and folder numbers cross-reference related material in other files.

b.1 f.1 Alden, Robert, 1952-1962
Correspondence about editing, staff members in the Paris Bureau, and his own prospects at The Times

b.1 f.2 Atkinson, Brooks, 1953, 1960
Atlee, Clement (See: United Feature Syndicate)

b.1 f.3 Baker, Russell, 1955-1966

b.1 f.4 Baldwin, Hanson, 1950-1962
Berger, Meyer (See: About New York (Column))

b.1 f.5 Bigart, Homer, 1962

b.1 f.6 Blair, William M., 1955-1958

b.1 f.7 Callender, Harold, 1953-1958
Castro, Fidel (See: Matthews, Herbert L.)
Chapin, Emerson (See: Callender, Harold)

b.1 f.8 Churchill, Winston (Prime Min., Sir), 1948-1955
Copies of letters between Bernstein and Churchill (1948, 1955); correspondence regarding the Churchill memoirs which Bernstein edited for The Times; correspondence regarding an oil portrait of Churchill by Bernstein

b.1 f.9 Cortesi, Arnaldo, 1954-1959

b.1 f.10 Cowan, Edward, 1966-1967

b.1 f.11 Dale, Edwin, 1957-1968
Of interest: correspondence about the need to explain economic terms for the average reader

b.1 f.12 Daniel, E. Clifton, 1953-1967
Exchange of notes between Bernstein and Daniel regarding the operation of the News Department. Of interest: Daniel’s comments about the foreign news operation (1953); notes about style, typography, pictures, and the presentation of news. See also: Elections; Women’s News

b.1 f.13 Doty, Robert C., 1952-1965

b.1 f.14 Dryfoos, Orvil, 1956-1963
Of interest: memoranda on mechanical problems at The Times. See also: Sulzberger, Arthur Hays
**Series I: People, 1948-1971** (cont.)

b.1 f.15 Dulles, John Foster (Sec.), 1957
Bernstein’s comments on a letter from Arthur Hays Sulzberger to Dulles concerning freedom of the press and United States foreign policy

b.1 f.16 Frankel, Max, 1963-1965

b.1 f.17 Garrison, Lloyd, 1964-1965
Garst, Robert E.
See: Articles and Books by Bernstein: *Headlines and Deadlines*

b.1 f.18 Gould, Jack, 1952-1954

b.1 f.19 Gruson, Sydney, 1954-1964

b.1 f.20 Hamilton, Thomas J., 1955-1962

b.1 f.21 Hess, John, 1968-1969

b.1 f.22 Hill, Gladwin, 1954-1969

b.1 f.23 Hoffman, Michael, 1955

b.1 f.24 Janson, Donald, 1951-1967

b.1 f.25 Jorden, William J., 1952-1958

b.1 f.26 Kenworthy, E.W., 1961-1971
Kihss, Peter (See: Raymond, Allen)

b.1 f.27 Krock, Arthur, 1953-1969

b.1 f.28 Lewis, Anthony, 1955-1968
Of interest: comments and report about coverage of Supreme Court decisions
Loftus, Joseph A. (See: Raskin, Abraham H.)

b.2 f.1 McHale, John L., 1959
McHale’s proposal to improve the news editing system at *The Times*

b.2 f.2 Markel, Lester, 1954-1968

b.2 f.3 Matthews, Herbert L., 1958-1967
Memoranda discussing *The Times’* policy of not assigning a correspondent to a story in which he has personal involvement. The background of this discussion is the coverage of the Cuban revolution by H.L. Matthews

b.2 f.4 Middleton, Drew, 1954-1964
Middleton was the chief of the London Bureau

b.2 f.5 Mooney, Richard E., 1958-1966
Morehead, Albert H. (See: Bridge Column)
Oakes, John B. (See: Editorial Page)

b.2 f.6 Phelps, Robert H., 1966

b.2 f.7 Raskin, Abraham H., 1952-1959
Of interest: records about an incident involving a conflict in news assignments between Abe Raskin, Joseph Loftus, and James Reston

b.2 f.8 Raymond, Allen, 1957 (Report from Peter Kihss on Allen Raymond)

b.2 f.9 Raymond, Jack, 1955-1966

b.2 f.10 Reston, James B., 1951-1967
Series I: People, 1948-1971 (cont.)

b.2 f.11 Rosenthal, Abraham M., 1956-1969
Of interest: Bernstein’s notes and Rosenthal’s memorandum regarding authority over news operations (1969); correspondence about Rosenthal’s new role as head of the Metropolitan Desk (1963); correspondence about news coverage in India (1956). See also: Editorial Policy (General)
Salisbury, Harrison (See: Western Edition)

b.2 f.12 Shanahan, Eileen, 1964-1968

b.2 f.13 Sulzberger, Arthur Hays, 1951-1967
Of interest: confidential memo from Arthur Hays Sulzberger about Orvil Dryfoos (1967). See also: Type, Size, and Design

b.2 f.14 Sulzberger, Arthur Ochs, 1959-1971

b.2 f.15 Sulzberger, Cyrus L., 1952-1963
Of interest: memoranda on staff assignment in the foreign field; coverage of Africa and the Middle East

b.2 f.16 Sulzberger, Iphigene Ochs, 1957

b.2 f.17 Topping, Seymour, 1964
Primarily private and personal correspondence

b.2 f.18 Truman, Harry S. (Pres.), 1955, 1956
Records regarding the publication of the Truman Memoirs

b.2 f.19 Trumbull, Robert, 1955-1962

b.2 f.20 Walz, Jay, 1959-1968

b.2 f.21 Welles, Benjamin, 1957-1968

b.2 f.22 Wicker, Tom, 1965-1968
Primarily letters about the handling of news stories in New York
**Series II: Subjects, 1924-1984** (4 boxes)
This series is made up of subject files that are organized (and titled) by topical keywords, columns, departments, or outside organizations. These files touch on almost every aspect of the operations of the News Department, from news coverage and editorial decision making, to the appearance and mechanical production of the paper. Present are Bernstein's frequent communications with editors E. Clifton Daniel, John B. Oakes, Turner Catledge, and Harrison Salisbury, and with publishers Orvil Dryfoos, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, and Arthur Ochs Sulzberger. These consist of discussions related to personnel, staff member performance, promotions, and retirements. The series also contains Bernstein's exchanges with specific departments, including the Cultural News, Make-Up Desk, Picture Desk, Science News, Sports News, and the Sunday Department. Files also contain communications with staff members concerning Bernstein's views on style and proper usage. Other topics discussed include complaints from writers about changes in their stories by the editing staff in New York, staff assignments, and issues regarding news coverage.

The following are some of the most extensive and information-rich files: the Editorial Policy file contains notes from Bernstein commenting on the daily presentation of the news; the Headlines file documents Bernstein's views on word choice and the appearance of headlines; the Style folder consists of Bernstein's directives establishing newspaper-wide standards; and the Type, Size and Design files include memoranda concerning the size of columns and presentation of maps and feature many notes from Arthur Hays Sulzberger. Also of note are the International Edition files. Bernstein served as the founding editor of the International Edition from 1960 to 1961. This edition, which ran out of Paris, used stories sent from New York by cable and reproduced by teletypesetter. Present is correspondence that concern the creation of the edition and the operation of getting the news from New York to Paris, along with samples of mock-ups for the edition.

Of special interest is the file labeled World War II, which contains a scrapbook, compiled by Bernstein, of cables from Director of Censorship Byron Price in Washington to members of the press. These communications debriefed the press on what information was permissible to print. Cable topics range from guidelines on the types of information that is safe to report on, and what details could be useful to the enemy, such as locations of attacks or raids and troop movements. They also warn against expressing optimism on the outcomes of battles in news stories.

This series also contains a folder of photographs of Bernstein and his family, and files relating to articles and books written by Bernstein.

Files are arranged alphabetically by file title. Entries without box and folder numbers cross-reference related material in other files.

b.2 f.23  “About New York” Column, 1953-1954
Advertising (General) (See: News Content)

b.2 f.24  Afternoon Newspaper (New York Times Project), 1967
Bernstein’s memoranda on the project to develop an afternoon newspaper

b.2 f.25  Art News, 1952
Memoranda about The Times’ coverage of the arts
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Includes many of Bernstein's letters to the editor under the pseudonym Theodore Winner |
| b.3 f.2  | Articles and Books by Bernstein: *Headlines and Deadlines*, 1933-1962 |
| b.3 f.3  | Articles and Books by Bernstein: *Reading Your Newspaper*, 1959-1971 |
| b.3 f.4  | Awards, decorations, Honors, and Tributes to Bernstein, 1925-1963  
Bay of Pigs Invasion (Invasion of Cuba) (See: Cuba)  
Biography (General) (See: Articles and Books About Bernstein) |
| b.3 f.5  | *Book Review*, 1968-1970  
Memoranda regarding ideas and suggestions about the *Book Review* |
| b.3 f.6  | Bridge Column, 1959  
Caribbean (See: Reston, James B.)  
Censorship (See: World War II) |
| b.3 f.7  | *Chattanooga Times*, 1954-1958  
Primarily letters regarding the typography of the *Chattanooga Times*  
China (See: United Feature Syndicate) |
| b.3 f.8  | Circulation (General), 1955-1956  
Bernstein's memoranda concerning problems of expanding circulation to New York City suburbs  
Civil Rights (See: Negros)  
Code, Use of (See: World War II) |
| b.3 f.9  | Columbia University, 1946-1949  
Profiles, including Bernstein's, of faculty members of the Graduate School of Journalism (1946);  
anniversary publication of the class of 1924 that features a picture and brief biography of Bernstein (1949)  
Committee on the Future (See: News Department Planning)  
Composing Room (See: Production Department)  
Conflict of Interest (See: Matthews, Herbert L.) |
| b.3 f.10 | Consumer Column, 1971-1972  
Bernstein's proposal to create a consumer column  
Court Coverage (See: Lewis, Anthony) |
| b.3 f.11 | Crossword Puzzles, 1968 |
| b.3 f.12 | Cuba, 1968  
Bernstein's memorandum on whether the story on the Bay of Pigs invasion, if handled differently,  
would have caused President Kennedy to cancel the invasion. See also: Matthews, Herbert L.;  
Reston, James B. |
| b.3 f.13 | Cultural News, 1965-1968  
Memoranda between Bernstein and staff members on the cultural news department. Of interest:  
memorandum concerning an effort to have Clive Barnes shorten his review articles  
Economic News (See: Dale, Edwin) |
| b.3 f.14 | Edition Times, 1957-1967  
Records regarding deadlines and closing time |
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New York Times Company records. Theodore M. Bernstein papers
Series descriptions and container list
Series II: Subjects, 1924-1984 (cont.)

b.4 f.12 Lotteries, 1967
Memoranda regarding coverage of the state lottery

b.4 f.13 Los Angeles News Bureau, 1959
Memorandum from Turner Catledge on the future of the Los Angeles and Hollywood bureaus

b.4 f.14 Make-Up Desk, 1952-1968
Memoranda and notes regarding the make-up (layout) of the pages of the paper. Of interest:
problem of placement of the continuation of articles from page one; position of the radio-television
program listings (1955)

b.4 f.15 "Man-in-the News" Column, 1957-1966
Maps (See: Type, Size, Design)
Men’s Fashion (See: Women’s News)
Miranda Project (See: Science News)

b.4 f.16 Negroes, 1957-1968
Memoranda regarding a possible survey to find out how much of an upheaval the passage of the
Civil Rights bill would create; a proposal by Bernstein for coverage of "Negro news;" a proposal by
Bernstein for conducting an opinion survey of the Negro community in New York

b.4 f.17 New York Herald Tribune, 1958-1961

b.4 f.18 New York Times Editions, 1951-1969
Notes and memoranda regarding the production of the various editions of The Times, particularly
the earliest edition

News Analysis
See: Editorial Policy (General); Headlines

b.5 f.1 News Broadcasts, 1953-1963
Listeners’ mail regarding the broadcasts on WQXR by Bernstein during the 1962-1963 New York
Newspaper Strike

b.5 f.2 News Content
Memoranda concerning the problem of space usage in terms of balancing news, advertising, and
white space

b.5 f.3 News Department (General), 1951-1968
Memoranda on the operations of the News Department

b.5 f.4 News Department: Planning, 1965-1968
Memoranda on plans and proposals for the News Department made by The Committee for the
Future

News Department: Staff
See: Staff: Rosters; Staff: Miscellaneous

b.5 f.5 News Editors, 1956-1973
Of interest: correspondence regarding the idea of a Pulitzer Prize for editors (1956); discussion of
the problem of staffing on the News Desk
News Editing System (See: McHale, John L.)

b.5 f.6 North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA), 1954

b.5 f.7 Obituaries, 1953-1969
Policies and procedures about obituaries
Series II: Subjects, 1924-1984

Obituary of Theodore M. Bernstein (See: Articles and Books about Bernstein)

Off-the-Record Meetings (See: Washington Bureau)

b.5 f.8 Ombudsman, 1971

b.5 f.9 Op-Ed Page, 1967-1970

Paris Bureau (See: Alden, Robert)

b.5 f.10 Personal and Private Papers, 1963-1968

b.5 f.11 Picture Desk, 1953-1968

Memoranda on rules and directives for use of pictures in the paper; discussion on the selection and editing of pictures; memoranda on the need to use the United Press picture service as a supplement to the Associated Press’s photo coverage (1955)

b.5 f.12 Pictures of Bernstein and Family, 1951-1968, undated

b.5 f.13 Poetry and Music, 1924, undated

Political Coverage (See: Elections)

Press Criticism (See: Ombudsman)

Pressroom (See: Production Department)

b.5 f.14 Production Department, 1952-1967

Memoranda and reports regarding the operations of the production side of The Times (composing room and pressroom)

b.5 f.15 Pulitzer Prizes, 1966

Notes about the value of the Pulitzer Prize’s announcement as a news story

b.5 f.16 Radio and Television Programs, 1954-1968

Of interest: policy document regarding staff appearances on television and radio programs; memoranda on Times correspondents coverage of television shows. See also: Make-Up Desk

b.5 f.17 Science News, 1958-1959

Of interest: confidential memorandum on whether to publish a story on Project Miranda, which was a United States government project to develop a system to deflect, neutralize, or destroy attacking ballistic missiles

b.5 f.18 Second Front Page, 1952-1968

Suggestions from Bernstein to improve the front page of the second section of The Times

b.5 f.19 Sports News, 1952-1969

b.5 f.20 Staff (General), 1953-1969

Records on staff problems: size of the staff, numbers of copy editors, staff assignments, personnel policies, and other topics

b.5 f.21 Staff: Miscellaneous, 1954-1969

Bernstein’s correspondence with members of the staff. Subjects discussed are usually related to style. These items are ordered alphabetically by name.

b.5 f.22 Staff Rosters, 1966

List of employees on the News and Communication departments

Strikes (See: News Broadcast)

b.6 f.1 Style, 1954-1970

Memoranda, notes, and letters to the staff establishing and directing the correct style of The Times
Series II: Subjects, 1924-1984 (cont.)

b.6 f.2 Sunday Department, 1952-1969
Of interest: Bernstein memorandum on the effort to minimize the division between the News Department and the Sunday Department (1954); printers’ demands regarding the Sunday Department operations; Memoranda regarding the typography of the Sunday paper (1965)

b.6 f.3 Surveys and Series of Articles, 1953-1957
Correspondence regarding surveys as basis for news articles. See also: Foreign Policy Survey; Elections

b.6 f.4-6 Type, Size, and Design, 1951-1971
Discussions of typographical style involving changes in types, presentation of maps, size of columns, problems of typographical errors, and other related topics. This file contains several memoranda from Arthur Hays Sulzberger and notes on meetings of the Committee on Typography. See also: Headlines

Typography
See: Editorial Page; Editorial Policy (General); and Type, Size, and Design

b.6 f.7 United Features Syndicate, 1954
Correspondence regarding negotiations to purchase a series of articles on China by Clement Attlee

United Press International (See: Picture Desk)

b.6 f.8 Washington Bureau, 1953-1968
Of interest: memorandum discussing the functions of the Washington news editor (1953); complaints of changes in news stories by the New York editing staff; background rules on off-the-record sessions with prominent officials (1955); memorandum discussing the functions of the representative of the city desk in Washington (1962)

b.6 f.9 Weather, 1954-1970
Primarily suggestions and comments about weather reporting

Weather (See: Reston, James B.)

b.6 f.10 Western Edition, 1962-1963


b.6 f.11 Winners & Sinners, 1953-1973
Of interest: Memoranda regarding the future of Winners and Sinners

b.6 f.12 Women’s News, 1952-1972
Of interest: exchange of notes between Bernstein and the staff of the Women’s News Department regarding the layout of the women’s news page, typography, style, space allotment, and fashion coverage; exchange of notes between Bernstein and Clifton Daniel on men’s fashion coverage; surveys on men and women’s reading habits (1953)

b.6 f.13 World War II, 1942
A scrapbook with clippings and copies of dispatches about United States governmental permissions and guidelines for the publication of information on war operations. Of interest: a memorandum on a code for disseminating news from the United States government to newspapers on advance tips on an enemy invasion

WQXR (See: News Broadcasts)