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Guide to the

New York Times Company records. National Desk records

1949-1984

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Forms part of the New York Times Company records

Compiled by Philip Heslip, May 2013

Summary

Creator: New York Times Company

Title: New York Times Company records. National Desk records, 1949-1984

Size: 2.94 linear feet (7 boxes)

Source: New York Times Company, donated 2007.

Abstract: This collection contains correspondence and memoranda among the staff of *The New York Times* National Desk between 1950 and 1984. This department is responsible for the development and presentation of *The Times'* reporting on the United States. The bulk of these records involve National News Editor Raymond B. O'Neill (1951-1968), Daily Assignments Editor Harold R. Faber (1951-1971), Director of National Correspondent Harrison E. Salisbury (1962-1964), National News Director Claude Sifton (1964-1968), National News Editor David R. Jones (1972-1987), and Assistant Managing Editor James Greenfield (1977-1991).

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. National Desk records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Custodial history: This collection was originally re-housed and organized in 1989 by The Times archives staff.

Processing note: The order and folder titles, which were imposed by The Times archives staff, have been maintained.

Creator history

The National Desk, also referred to as the National News Desk or the Telegraph Desk, is the department responsible for the development and presentation of *The New York Times'* reporting on the United States. At the time of these records' creation, it was one of three main news desks at *The Times*, along with the Metropolitan Desk and the Foreign Desk. Staff members include the national-news editor who headed the department, news editors in New York City, and editors and correspondents in the various city bureaus and regional outposts around the country. Washington, D.C. has the largest and most independent bureau, while Albany, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and other cities have smaller staffs under the supervision of the National Desk. Also vital to the department's operations are regional staff reporters and the stringers (freelance contributors networked around the country that often worked for local newspapers). In the 1960s, *The Times* created the role of director of news direction (later titled National News Director), who took over most of the duties of the national news editor, including assigning stories, making final editorial decisions, and managing personnel across the country. By the 1970s, the title of national news editor was back in use. The staff members best represented in this collection are the National News Editor Raymond B. O'Neill (1951-1968), Daily Assignments Editor Harold R. Faber (1951-1971), Director of National Correspondent Harrison E. Salisbury (1962-1964), National News Director Claude Sitton (1964-1968), National News Editor David R. Jones (1972-1987), and Assistant Managing Editor James Greenfield (1977-1991).

Scope and content note

This collection contains correspondence and memoranda among the staff of *The New York Times* National Desk, particularly between the national news editor, his editorial staff in New York, and the bureau editors, reporters, and stringers (freelance reporters) around the country. While the National Desk has been in existence for most of the history of *The Times*, this collection only documents the years 1950 to 1984. The contents of the early part of the collection focus on news coverage by the bureaus, background reports for ongoing news stories, the *Times'* editorial approach to certain stories, and the transmission of news from the bureaus to New York. The files from the 1970s and 1980s increasingly relate to only administrative matters, such as staffing and office space issues.

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. 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. *The Times* archivists imposed this arrangement and drastically weeded records of this collection.

The bulk of the letters and memoranda involve the following *Times* staff members: National News Editor Raymond B. O'Neill (1951-1968), Daily Assignments Editor Harold R. Faber (1951-1971), Assistant National News Editors Clifford J. Laube (1950s), Director of National Correspondent Harrison E. Salisbury (1962-1964), National News Director Claude Sitton (1964-1968), National News Editor David R. Jones (1972-1987), and Assistant Managing Editor James Greenfield (1977-1991). Eugene Roberts, Jr., who was national news editor from 1968 to 1972, is not represented in the collection. See the series scope notes in the container list for additional description of the collection's contents.

Arrangement

The New York Times Company records. National Desk records are organized into the following series:

Series I: People, 1949-1984

Series II: Subjects, 1949-1984

Key terms

Subjects

American Newspapers -- New York (State) -- New
York
Journalism -- United States -- 20th century

Names

Faber, Harold
Greenfield, James L.
Laube, Clifford J.
New York Times Company
O'Neill, Raymond B.
Salisbury, Harrison E. (Harrison Evans), 1908-1993
Sitton, Claude

Special formats

Memoranda
Photographs

Container list

Series I: People, 1949-1984 (1.5 boxes)

This series is made up of files that contain items to, from, or concerning various individuals, primarily *New York Times* staff members and freelance reporters, with some files on politicians, and other newsmakers. Staff member files typically include letters and memoranda between the staff and National Desk editors. These items typically contain assignments and feedback on and assessments of their work. Many of these files also contain photographic portraits of the staff. Records regarding stringers are typically located in the Subject Series under the bureau or home geographic location. These contain correspondence regarding contracts, fee negotiations, and story assignments. While this series contains a small amount of external correspondence, most files on prominent figures are made up of items discussing *The Times'* reporting on these individuals. Files do not necessarily collect every letter, memorandum, or document related to the individual; subject files should also be consulted.

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

- Abel, Elie (See: Detroit Bureau)
- b.1 f.1 Alder, Julius Ochs (Maj. Gen.), 1954
- b.1 f.2 Anderson, David C., 1954
Of interest: dispute over a news story about a speech by Vice President Richard Nixon
- Ayres, B. Drummond, Jr. (See: Atlanta Bureau)
- b.1 f.3 Baker, Russell, 1954, 1961
Of interest: Memorandum regarding roving assignments both in Washington D.C. and the country at large
- b.1 f.4 Baldwin, Hanson, 1951-1964
Barrett, George (See: Roman Catholic Church)
Baum, Allyn (See: Science News)
Bernstein, Theodore M. (See: Editorial Policy: National News)
- b.1 f.5 Bigart, Homer, 1963-1964
- b.1 f.6 Blair, William M., 1951-1976 (Includes photographs)
Blauvelt Family (See: Kennedy, John F. (Pres.))
Boyd, Robert (See: Detroit Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.7 Bracker, Milton, 1960-1962
Brackett, Alma (See: San Francisco Bureau)
Broudy, Jack (See: Boston Bureau: Stringers)
Carroll, Wallace (See: Washington Bureau)
Casey, Jack (See: Detroit Bureau: Stringers)
Catledge, Turner (See: New Orleans Bureau)
Cleghorn, Reese (See: Atlanta Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.8 Curtis, Charlotte, 1963-1964
- b.1 f.9 Dale, Edwin, 1962
Davies, Lawrence E. (See: San Francisco Bureau)
Donovan, Leo (See: Detroit Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.10 Dryfoos, Orvil E., 1961-1962

Series I: People, 1949-1984 (cont.)

- Eckel, George (See: Chicago Bureau)
- b.1 f.11 Egan, Leo, 1952-1959 (Includes photograph)
- b.1 f.12 Estes, Billie Sol, 1962
Of interest: background memoranda about the coverage of the Estes fraud case by Clyde Farnsworth; readers' response to the coverage
- b.1 f.13 Evans, Charlotte, 1981-1983
Fenton, John (See: Boston Bureau)
Flint, Jerry (See: Detroit Bureau)
- b.1 f.14 Fowle, Farnsworth, 1964
Frankel, Max (See: Washington Bureau)
Ganley, Paul (See: Boston Bureau)
Gladwin, Hill (See: Los Angeles Bureau)
Gruson, Kerry (See: Miami Bureau)
- b.1 f.15 Hailey, Foster, 1954-1960 (Includes photographs)
Hanley, Wayne (See: Boston Bureau: Stringers)
Harman, Jeanne Perkins (Mrs.) (See: Virgin Islands: Stringers)
Harris, Louis (See: Public Opinion Surveys)
- b.1 f.16 Harrison, Emma, 1953-1962
Hatcher, George (See: Atlanta Bureau: Stringers)
Hillaby, John (See: Science News)
Hollingsworth, Miller (See: Detroit Bureau: Stringers)
Holmes, Paul (See: Chicago Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.17 Horne, George, 1951 (Includes photographs)
- b.1 f.18 Horne, Louthier, 1952-1956 (Includes photographs)
- b.1 f.19 Hunter, Marjorie, 1961
- b.1 f.20 Huston, Luther, 1951 (See also: Washington Bureau)
- b.1 f.21 Illson, Murray, 1952-1955 (Includes photographs)
Janson, Donald (See: Chicago Bureau; Philadelphia Bureau)
Johnson, Sharon (See: Los Angeles Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.22 Johnston, Richard J.H., 1957-1961 (Includes photographs)
Jones, David (See: Editorial Policy: National News)
Jones, Gardiner (See: Honolulu, Hawaii)
Katz, Adolph (See: Philadelphia Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.23 Kennedy, John F. (Pres.), 1960-1964
Papers regarding a *Times* investigation into claims that John F. Kennedy was once secretly married to Durie K. Malcolm (1962); correspondence regarding Kennedy's assassination. See also: Warren Commission Report
Kennedy, Joseph (See: Kennedy, John F.)

Series I: People, 1949-1984 (cont.)

- b.1 f.24 King, Seth, 1953-1954
Kovack, William (See: Washington Bureau)
- b.1 f.25 Langguth, Jack, 1963-1964
- b.1 f.26 Laube, Clifford J., 1951-1953 (Includes photographs)
- b.1 f.27 Lawrence, William H., 1951-1959
Leib, Jeffrey (See: Chicago Bureau: Stringers)
Leveroni, Charles (See: Boston Bureau: Stringers)
- b.1 f.28 Lewis, Anthony, 1952-1964
Lichtenstein, Grace (See: Denver Bureau)
- b.2 f.1 Loftus, Joseph A., 1950-1964
Malcolm, Durie Kerr (See: Kennedy, John F.)
- b.2 f.2 Matthews, Herbert L., 1957
- b.2 f.3 Mazo, Earl, 1963-1964
MacMillan, Richard F. (See: Honolulu, Hawaii)
McCarthy, Joseph (Sen.) (See: Communications (General))
Marcus, Frances Frank (See: New Orleans Bureau: Stringers)
Meinholtz, Fred E. (See: Communications (General))
Miller, Sherman (See: Washington Bureau)
Nicholson, Thomas (See: Detroit Bureau: Stringers)
- b.2 f.4 Nixon, Richard M. (Pres.), 1955
Background memorandum on the Nixon campaign's practice of linking Democrat politicians to Communists and Communist organizations
Nordheimer, Jon (See: Atlanta Bureau; Miami Bureau)
Oakes, John B.
See: Conservation and Environmental Problems
Olmstead, Fred (See: Detroit Bureau: Stringers)
- b.2 f.5 O'Neill, Raymond B. (Includes photographs)
- b.2 f.6 Osmundsen, John A., 1959-1962 (Includes photographs)
- b.2 f.7 Phelps, Robert H., 1954
- b.2 f.8 Phillips, Ruby Hart (Mrs.), 1962-1963
Primarily records about Ruby Hart Phillips' coverage of the Caribbean Islands and Florida after she returned to the United States from Cuba in 1961.
Pomfret, John (See: Labor News)
Preston, Dixon T. (Mrs.) (See: Atlanta Bureau)
Purvis, Charles C. (See: Chicago Bureau: Stringers)
- b.2 f.9 Reed, Arthur P., Jr., 1951 (Includes photographs)
Reed, Roy (See: New Orleans Bureau)
Reston, James B. (See: Washington Bureau)

Series I: People, 1949-1984 (cont.)

- Ripley, Anthony (See: Denver Bureau)
- Roberts, Gordon (See: Atlanta Bureau: Stringers)
- b.2 f.10 Rosenbaum, David, 1983-1984
- Rosenthal, Abraham M. (See: Honolulu, Hawaii)
- b.2 f.11 Ruch, Walter, 1949-1950
- b.2 f.12 Salisbury, Harrison E., 1962-1963
See also: China: Chinese Students; Kimball Union Academy
- Schmidt, William (See: Denver Bureau)
- b.2 f.13 Sharkey, Samuel M., Jr., 1957-1959
- Shatraw, Kay (See: Albany Bureau)
- b.2 f.14 Sitton, Claude, 1959-1964
Includes photographs. See also: Atlanta Bureau
- Smith, Hedrick (See: Washington Bureau)
- b.2 f.15 Spiegel, Irving, 1962
- Sterba, James P. (See: Denver Bureau; Houston Bureau)
- Stetson, Damon (See: Detroit Bureau)
- Stevens, William K. (See: Houston Bureau)
- Sullivan, Walter (See: Science News)
- Turner, Wallace (See: San Francisco Bureau)
- Waldron, Martin (See: Houston Bureau)
- Ward, Leslie A. (See: Los Angeles Bureau: Stringers)
- Watters, Pat (See: Atlanta Bureau: Stringers)
- Weart, William G. (See: Philadelphia Bureau)
- Weaver, Warren, Jr.
See: Albany Bureau; Staff: Outside Activities
- Wehrwein, Austin C. (Chicago Bureau)
- b.2 f.16 Weiman, Howard, 1952-1957
- b.2 f.17 White, William S., 1951-1954
- Whitney, Craig (See: Washington Bureau)
- Whitney Robert E. (See: Washington Bureau)
- Wicker, Tom (See: Washington Bureau)
- Williams, Percy (See: Boston Bureau: Stringers)
- Wooten, James T. (See: Atlanta Bureau; Philadelphia Bureau)
- Zalburg, Sanford (See: Honolulu, Hawaii)

Series II: Subjects, 1949-1984 (5.5 boxes)

This series is made up of alphabetical subject files that are organized (and titled) by topical keywords, city bureaus, geographical locations, or organizations. Internal correspondence and memoranda make up the bulk of these files; they consist of communications within the National Desk, between the National Desk and senior editors in other departments, and with the bureaus, reporters, and stringers around the country. Each city bureau has a file that contains memoranda on staff assignments, staff management, editorial feedback, and the system for transmitting news to New York. Stringers files include story assignments and contract negotiations. Records from 1949 to the mid-1970s primarily document news coverage (assignments and story content), editorial matters (fact checking, tone, and style), and managing and communicating with reporters. Items from the 1970s and 1980s relate to administrative issues, such as personnel and hiring, promotions, leasing office space, and the management of office finances. In this time period, exchanges about news coverage between editors and correspondents in the field are less frequent.

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

- b.2 f.18 Albany Bureau, 1951-1983
Of interest: Memorandum on how to handle stories from Albany that predominantly concern New York City affairs (1952).
- b.2 f.19 Associated Press, 1954-1963
- b.2 f.20-21 Atlanta Bureau, 1959-1984
Correspondence regarding news coverage in the South and administrative matters; of interest: memoranda from E. Clifton Daniel on the shortage of available journalists in the South and the need to report on big situations and trends rather than routine coverage (1960).
- b.2 f.22 Atlanta Bureau: Stringers, 1959-1962
- b.2 f.23-24 Awards (to *The Times*, the Publishers, and Staff Members), 1954-1964
Birth Control (See: Roman Catholic Church)
- b.3 f.1-2 Boston Bureau, 1951-1984
- b.3 f.3 Boston Bureau: Stringers, 1958-1961
- b.3 f.4 Canada, 1964
Arrangement between the National Desk and the Foreign Desk for the coverage of news originating in Canada, but with special national significance
CBS, Inc. (See: Public Opinion Surveys)
- b.3 f.5-7 Chicago Bureau, 1950-1984
- b.3 f.8 Chicago Bureau: Stringers, 1952-1984
- b.3 f.9 China: Chinese Students, 1955
- b.3 f.10 Communications (General), 1952-1962
Correspondence regarding the transmission of news stories; of interest: memoranda concerning the recording and transcription of the McCarthy hearings (1954). See also: Western Union
- b.3 f.11 Conservation and Environmental Problems, 1963
Memorandum from John Oaks on the lack of coverage of environmental issues by *The Times*
Court Coverage (See: Lewis, Anthony)

Series II: Subjects, 1949-1984 (cont.)

- b.3 f.12 Denver Bureau, 1969-1984
- b.3 f.13 Des Moines, Iowa, 1958
Correspondence regarding a proposal to open an office in Des Moines, Iowa
- b.3 f.14 Detroit Bureau, 1951-1984
- b.3 f.15 Detroit Bureau: Stringers, 1955-1962
- b.3 f.16 Editorial Policy: Elections, 1961-1984
Of interest: memoranda concerning the establishment of mini-bureaus in key cities around the country
- b.3 f.17 Editorial Policy: National News, 1949-1984
- b.3 f.18 Honolulu, Hawaii, 1954-1963
- b.4 f.1 Houston Bureau, 1965-1984
Impersonation (of a *Times* Employee) (See: Atlanta Bureau; Houston Bureau)
- b.4 f.2 Iowa State University, 1960 (Conference proposal on agriculture)
- b.4 f.3 Jews and Judaism, 1962 (Reader's mail)
- b.4 f.4 Kimball Union Academy, 1963
Correspondence regarding the participation of Harrison Salisbury in the anniversary ceremonies at Kimball
- b.4 f.5 Labor News (Story Possibilities), 1964
- b.4 f.6-7 Los Angeles Bureau, 1951-1984
Of interest: memoranda regarding the joint operations of the Hollywood Bureau and the Los Angeles Bureau (1959)
- b.4 f.8 Los Angeles Bureau: Stringers, 1958-1976
- b.4 f.9 Miami Bureau, 1977-1982
- b.4 f.10 National News: Staff (General), 1949-1984
- b.4 f.11 National News: Staff (Miscellaneous), 1951-1982
Correspondence--in alphabetical order by last name--about staff members on the National Desk
- b.4 f.12 New Orleans Bureau, 1969-1974
- b.4 f.13 New Orleans Bureau: Stringers, 1983
- b.4 f.14 *The New York Herald Tribune*, 1959
- b.4 f.15 Philadelphia Bureau, 1968-1980
- b.4 f.16 Philadelphia Bureau: Stringers, 1959
- b.4 f.17 Public Opinion Surveys (Polling), 1964
Memoranda discussing *The Times'* possible use of the CBS-Harris polling techniques
Publisher's Merit Awards (See: Awards)
- b.4 f.18 Puerto Rico, 1954-1982
- b.4 f.19 Real Estate News, 1962
Religion News
See: Roman Catholic Church; Jews and Judaism

Series II: Subjects, 1949-1984 (cont.)

- b.4 f.20 Roman Catholic Church, 1962-1963
Of interest: memoranda on a discussion regarding criticism of *The Times* in Catholic circles (1962); correspondence concerning articles by George Barrett on the attitude of the Catholic Church about birth control (1963)
- b.5 f.1 San Francisco Bureau, 1952-1983
- b.5 f.2 San Francisco Bureau: Stringers, 1958-1961
- b.5 f.3 Science News, 1961-1983
Of interest: memoranda on coverage of the United States and Soviet space programs; the problems of editing science stories; criticisms of John Hillaby's reporting on science from London
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands: Stringers (See: Virgin Island: Stringers)
- b.5 f.4 Staff: Outside Activities, 1951-1955
Correspondence about *The Times* policy against staff members serving other newspapers as stringers
- b.5 f.5 Staff: Stringers (General), 1973-1983
- b.5 f.6-11 Staff: Stringers - Miscellaneous, 1958-1962
The papers in these files are arranged alphabetically by the name of the stringer. See also: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia Bureaus; Honolulu, Hawaii; Virgin Islands; Editorial Policy: National News; Staff: Outside Activities
- b.6 f.1-6 Staff: Stringers - Miscellaneous, 1958-1962
- b.6 f.7 Style (Language and Usage), 1949-1962
Supreme Court (See: Lewis, Anthony)
United Press International (See: *Associated Press*)
- b.6 f.8 Virgin Islands: Stringers
- b.6 f.9 Warren Commission Report, 1964
Records regarding both the production and editorial aspects of the publication of the Warren Commission Report on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy
- b.7 f.1-5 Washington Bureau, 1949-1984
Of interest: report by Sherman Miller on the operation of the bureau (1951); memoranda from Max Frankel concerning the Washington Bureau's coverage of national politics (1968)
- b.7 f.6 Western Edition, 1962-1963
- b.7 f.7 Western Union, 1951-1959