



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

## LIBRARY – ARCHIVES DIVISION

### MASS COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY COLLECTIONS

The Wisconsin Historical Society initiated the Mass Communications History Collections to document the importance of the mass media in contemporary American life. The program began in 1955 with the acquisition of the papers of H.V. Kaltenborn, noted American radio news commentator. Since then the Society has collected the papers of many other significant individuals, corporations, and professional organizations in the area of mass communications. Today, the Mass Communications History Collections attract scholars from throughout the United States and abroad who find these outstanding resources vital to their work.

#### **Advertising and Public Relations Collections**

The Historical Society's advertising and public relations collections provide important source materials for the study of American culture, consumer trends, marketing and product development, politics, and public opinion down to the present day. These collections include the papers of industry leaders, and the records of agencies and professional organizations. Manuscripts about political mass communications form one of the strengths of the Mass Communications History Collections. These include the papers of Bruce Barton, chairman of the BBDO advertising agency and confidant to every Republican presidential candidate from Coolidge to Eisenhower, and Rosser Reeves, creator of the first television commercials for a presidential candidate. The creative work of the successful advertising agency, Foote, Cone & Belding, Inc. and its predecessor Lord & Thomas, is reflected in an extensive collection dating from 1916. The papers of John W. Hill, founder and chairman of Hill & Knowlton, detail the rise of one of the world's largest public relations agencies, while the records of the Public Relations Society of America document the history of public relations in America through the activities of the industry's most important professional organization.

#### **Print and Broadcast Journalism Collections**

The papers of journalists, editors, producers, and news anchors are among the best known collections at the Historical Society. The Mass Communications History Collections include the papers of more than 30 Pulitzer Prize winners. Particularly strong holdings document press coverage of international diplomacy, war, and domestic political issues. Scholars of radio and television visit the Society to examine the corporate records of the nation's oldest network, the National Broadcasting Company. The origins of public television can be explored in the records of National Educational Television. Researchers interested in studying broadcast regulation have access to the papers of Newton Minow and several other FCC commissioners and chairmen.

**Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Stories Since 1846**

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Fine collections document the careers of broadcast journalists such as David Brinkley, Chet Huntley, Robert MacNeil, and Howard K. Smith, pioneering NBC News broadcast executive Sylvester 'Pat' Weaver, and producer and television host David Susskind. Excellent print journalism collections include the papers of Roland Evans and Robert D. Novak; foreign correspondents Sigrid Schultz, Louis Lochner, and Leland Stowe; Pulitzer Prize-winners Nick Kotz and J. Anthony Lukas; and *New York Times* journalists and editors such as Peter Kihss and Robert Bendiner. Important mass communications organizational collections include the records of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association and the Pew Center for Civic Journalism.

### **Wisconsin Collections**

Mass communications collections from Wisconsin provide researchers with source materials required to study the history of the media at the state and local levels. The state acquisitions program includes records documenting print journalism, radio and television broadcast journalism, and advertising and public relations. The Society preserves and provides access to a large collection of television news film from Madison and Milwaukee. The papers of William T. Evjue, the founder, editor, and publisher of *The Capitol Times*, and numerous collections documenting the staff and operations of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, provide important insights into the histories of Wisconsin's most influential newspapers. In its role as the State Archives, the Society documents the telecommunications industry by preserving the records of the Public Service Commission and other state agencies.

### **Library Newspaper Collections**

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Library maintains one of the nation's premier collections of North American newspapers, including an extensive collection of colonial, early American, and 19<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers. Holdings include one of the nation's leading collections of alternative and underground newspapers. The collection also features the nation's largest collection of contemporary African American newspapers with strong holdings of other ethnic newspapers. The Society still maintains more than 700 subscriptions to current newspapers.

### **Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research**

The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, a cooperative venture of the Wisconsin Historical Society and the University of Wisconsin, ranks as one of the top film archives in the United States. The collection includes more than three hundred manuscript collections from outstanding playwrights, television and motion picture writers, producers, actors, designers, directors, and production companies. In addition to paper records, materials preserved include fifteen thousand motion pictures and television programs, two million still photographs and promotional graphics, and several thousand sound recordings. The Center's single largest collection includes the United Artists corporate records through the mid-1960s and the pre-1949 film library for Warner Brothers and RKO.

## **Mass Communications Collecting Today**

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Archives continues to accept collections that augment our existing holdings documenting aspects of the history of mass communications that have been solicited in the past including the records of advertising and public relations firms, the papers of key leaders in these industries, and the papers of print and broadcast journalists. Of special interest going forward, are personal papers collections that build on the strengths of the Society's existing print and broadcast journalism holdings including Pulitzer Prize-winners, *New York Times* journalists, NBC reporters, foreign correspondents, opinion journalists, and individuals and organizations active in civic journalism.

## **Information for Donors and Researchers**

The Wisconsin Historical Society seeks selected archival materials on the history of mass communications, including correspondence, meeting minutes, notes, photographs, speeches, brochures, newsletters, memoranda, scrapbooks, audio and visual materials, press releases, and financial and budget files. Potential donors should confer with collection development archivist Jonathan Nelson, 608-264-6447, [jonathanr.nelson@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:jonathanr.nelson@wisconsinhistory.org) prior to sending any materials.

The Archives Research Room provides research access to the mass communications collections. Hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday and 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday. The Archives Research Room is closed on Sunday and holidays. Information about individual collections is available from the Society's Archives online public access catalog ArCat at <http://arc.library.wisc.edu/>, registers and inventories available online and in the Archives Research Room, and the WorldCat online catalog.