

National Broadcasting Company Press Releases

Part I, 1924-1950



National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2020

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsrs/mbrsrs.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020619391>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsrs/eadmbrs.rs020003>

Prepared by the staff of the Recorded Sound Section

Finding aid encoded by David Jackson, 2020

Revised 2023-03

Collection Summary

Title: National Broadcasting Company press releases. Part I,

Span Dates: 1924-1950

Creator: National Broadcasting Company

Extent: 128 volumes

Extent: 128 items

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Recorded Sound Research Center, National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020619391>

Summary: The Library holds press releases issued by NBC from 1924 to 1939 and from 1942 to 1989, and also special releases issued by AT&T (WEAF) from 1924 to 1926 in two looseleaf binders.

Provenance

The National Broadcasting Company donated the NBC Press Release books to the Library of Congress in 1991.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The NBC press release books were processed by the staff of the Recorded Sound Section.

National Broadcasting Company Press Releases: Part II, 1951-1989

The continuation of the NBC press release books, covering the years from 1951-1989 when television broadcasting dominated over the radio network, are available for viewing through the Moving Image Research Center. A description of the volumes are available through [Part II](#) of this finding aid.

Related Archival Collections at the Library of Congress

The NBC Archives at the Library of Congress include the NBC Press Releases (the subject of this finding aid) as well as the following archival NBC collections.

NBC History Files

The National Broadcasting Company History files include memoranda, correspondence, speeches, reports, policy statements, and pamphlets covering the creation of the network, its growth in the field of radio, and its subsequent expansion into television broadcasting.

Radio Log Books. Manuscript

The Library holds log books for WEAF and WNBC (1922 - 1955), for WJZ (1923 - 1941), and for WJY (1923 - 1926.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Radio Master Books. Manuscript | Program scripts, advertising copy, news copy and music master sheets (listing musical content) for programs produced at the local station are held on 2,530 reels of microfilm, from WEAf and WNBC (1922 - 84), for WJZ (1927 - 41), for WMAQ in Chicago WMAQ (May 1944 - December 1945), for KFI in Hollywood (August 1943 - December 1945), and for the International (White) Network (August 1936 - September 1948.) |
| Radio Programs Sound Recordings | Lacquer discs from the New York-based archive from the years 1927 to 1971 are being re-recorded by the Library of Congress on tape, and have been indexed by the Library in a database which is available in the Recorded Sound Research Center. |
| Radio News Collection Sound Recordings | Selected news programs recorded from 1961 to 1985 on 1300 tape reels and 340 cassettes include broadcasts from presidential news conferences and speeches, and important events, such as the first moon landing. |
| Radio Programs Index File of 5 X 8 inch Cards | Six card files maintained from 1930 to 1960 index: commercial programs; sustaining programs (without advertising); radio artists (entertainment professionals); "Negro Radio Artists" (entertainment professionals); radio personalities (guests); and the World War II – European War effort. |
| Meet the Press Text Microform | Transcriptions of programs for the years 1954 through 1984 are held on microfiche. |
| Television Log Books Manuscript Microform | The Library holds log books for May 1949 through November 1988. |
| Television Master Books Manuscript Microform | Master books for the years 1936 through 1991 are held on microfilm. |
| Television Programs Kinescopes | The collection of kinescopes recorded from 1948 to 1977 includes approximately 18,000 programs. |

Copyright Status

Restrictions may exist on copying, quoting, or publishing materials included in the collection. For additional information, contact a reference librarian in the Recorded Sound Research Center, National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 20540-4690; (202) 707-7833.

Access and Restrictions

The National Broadcasting Company press releases are open to research. Advance notice is required; contact a reference librarian in the Recorded Sound Research Center, National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 20540-4690; (202) 707-7833.

Digital Content

Digital versions of the press releases from this collection are available for viewing in the Recorded Sound Research Center, Library of Congress.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [Volume number, eg., Vol. 3], National Broadcasting Company press releases, National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Library of Congress

NBC Chronology

| Date | Event |
|------------------|---|
| 1921 | Westinghouse owned and operated WJZ radio in Newark from 1921 - 1923. |
| 1922 | WEAF radio, owned and operated by AT&T, was founded in New York. |
| 1923 | RCA, a subsidiary of Westinghouse, operated WJZ radio from 1923-46 in New York. |
| 1926 | RCA announced the formation of the National Broadcasting Company on September 13, 1926 upon the RCA purchase of WEAF radio from AT&T. |
| November 1, 1926 | NBC established with both a Blue and a Red network. |
| 1926 | NBC began radio broadcasting on November 15, 1926. |
| 1926 | NBC formed the Red and Blue radio networks, with WEAF as the flagship station of the Red network and WJZ as the flagship station of the Blue. |
| 1928 | The first permanent coast-to-coast network in the United States was established by NBC on December 23, 1928. |
| 1928 | NBC received its first television station construction permit. |
| 1936-1939 | NBC investigated the possibility of separating Red and Blue Networks (See NBC folder numbers 301-304) |
| 1939 | NBC televised the opening ceremonies of the New York World's Fair. |
| May 2 1941 | Chain Broadcasting Report stated "no license shall be issued to a standard broadcast [AM] station affiliated with a network organization which maintains more than one network." (Quoted in Sterling and Kitross, <i>Stay Tuned</i> , p.191.) |
| October 30, 1941 | Both NBC and CBS filed suit against the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its new regulations. |
| January 1942 | The U.S. Justice Department filed an antitrust suit against NBC and CBS (Sterling and Kitross, <i>Stay Tuned</i> , p. 236) |
| January 9, 1942 | RCA president David Sarnoff announced that the Blue Network had been separated from the Red Network and subsequently was wholly owned by RCA. |
| May 10, 1943 | The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the FCC right to regulations outlined in the Chain Broadcasting Report. |
| July 10, 1943 | Edward J. Noble, the owner of the American Broadcasting Company, purchases the Blue Network for \$8 million. |
| October 12, 1943 | The FCC approved the sale of the Blue Network to Noble. |
| June 14, 1945 | The Blue Network was changed to the American Broadcasting Company. |
| August 1946 | The FCC authorized CBS to change the name of WABC to WCBS. |
| 1946 | NBC changed the name of WEAF to WNBC. |

Scope and Content Note

The press releases in the NBC Collection date from January 1924 through December 1989. (The 1940 and 1941 volumes were not included in the donation and are presumably lost.) The pre-network press releases were produced by WEAF, while still under AT&T ownership. That WEAF regularly issued detailed press releases at such an early date is evidence of that station's greater wealth and sophistication in comparison to most, if not all other, early radio stations in America.

The press releases covered under this finding aid cover the years from 1924-1950 when radio broadcasting dominated over the television network. The original releases were bound in 128 hardcover volumes prior to acquisition by the Library of Congress.

Far more legible than the microfilmed master books, the press releases are an invaluable resource for aiding in the reconstruction of early, unrecorded programs. They are also useful as a supplement to the card catalog. For example, a researcher wishing to obtain biographical information about an unfamiliar actor listed on one of the program cards could consult the press releases issued shortly before the date of his performance. In addition to releases on the programs and performers, there are many relating to the network's announcers, writers, musicians, corporate staff, affiliates, and to NBC's technical achievements, particularly its early experiments in television broadcasting.

Not to be overlooked is that the press releases are simply a good read, providing tidbits of the stars and a vivid picture of day-to-day life at network headquarters. They describe: New York in the grips of a storm, as engineers rush to a top floor of Radio City to record howling gale-force winds for their sound effects library; studio audiences of the NBC Symphony being handed programs of soft, porous paper so that the musicians would not be distracted by the rustling of turning pages; and in those days when all performances were live, a weary Jack Benny deciding to move his program to Hollywood partly to avoid repeating his show late at night for the benefit of West Coast audiences. As explained in a press release on that subject, "It's all over by supper time out there."

Arrangement

The National Broadcasting Company press releases are organized in 2 series:

- [Series 1. WEAf Special Releases, 1924-1926](#)
- [Series 2. NBC Press Releases, 1924-1950](#)

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

Organizations

National Broadcasting Company.

NBC Collection (Library of Congress)

RCA Corporation.

WEAF (Radio station : New York, N.Y.)

Subjects

Radio advertising--United States--History.

Radio broadcasting--United States--Employees.

Radio broadcasting--United States--History.

Television broadcasting--United States--History.

Titles

NBC press releases. Part I, 1924-1950.

Form/Genre

Press releases.

Description of Series

| Container | Series |
|-----------|--|
| | <u>WEAF Special Releases, 1924-1926</u> Arranged chronologically. |
| | <u>N.B.C. Press Releases, 1924-1950</u> Arranged chronologically. |

Container List

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| VOLUME 2 | Exclusive Stories Special, 1925-1926 |
| | N.B.C. Press Releases, 1924-1950 |
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| VOLUME 3 | N.B.C. Press Releases, Oct. 1924-June 1925 Digital content available onsite |
| VOLUME 4 | N.B.C. Press Releases, July 1925-Jan. 1926 Digital content available onsite |
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| VOLUME 7 | N.B.C. Press Releases, Mar.-Sept. 1927 Digital content available onsite |
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