

**A GUIDE TO THE ARCHIVES OF  
THE PACIFICA FOUNDATION**

National Public Broadcasting Archives  
University of Maryland Libraries

Processed by: Mary Amanda York  
November 1993  
13.5 lin. ft.

## ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

In March of 1946, Lewis Hill, Eleanor McKinney and others began discussing the need for non-commercial, educational, cultural radio in the San Francisco Bay area. Frustrated with commercial radio, which they perceived as narrow in scope and rushed in delivery, Lewis Hill and this small group of people founded the Pacifica Foundation. Nearly three years after its incorporation date, Pacifica's first station, Berkeley's KPFA, went on the air.

From the station's beginning audience support was quite strong. Volunteers and donations arrived very soon after KPFA began airing, although more volunteers and more money were always needed. Pacifica was granted tax exemption on the basis of being an educational institution, and this also helped with the problems inherent in raising funds from listeners.

As Pacifica's first station, KPFA was the first listener-supported radio enterprise. The goal behind this revolutionary ideas was to serve as a grass roots forum; to support diversity, freedom of speech, to be funded by listeners and to program according to their interests and needs, not those of a corporate sponsor. These ideals were supported by the programming style at Pacifica. Examples of this practice were allowing programs to be as long or short as would be appropriate for the subject (not cutting them off to fit into tight commercial schedules), using informal speech style in order to avoid any alienation associated with more formal speech, etc.

Much of this idealism that was so identified with Pacifica was a result of the influence of Lewis Hill, the prime mover of the organization. Hill was a pacifist, who above all else, felt that communication, especially via the arts such as music, drama and literature, could form bonds among people. He also considered discussion of science, religion and philosophy ways to form such bonds, and address the quality of the human spirit. Hill believed that open controversy concerning these and other such realms was a natural and necessary part of learning. As a result, Pacifica encouraged the broadcasting of differing points of view. Over the years, this dedication to freedom of expression created conflicts not only with the Federal Communications Commission, but with the Senate (1963 investigation concerning suspected Communist infiltration) and the FBI as well. In spite of a series of investigations and many complaints from listeners who were offended by their seeming lack of discrimination in programming, Pacifica stations did not lose their licenses. In fact, they set precedents concerning freedom of speech in broadcasting, from which communication media have benefited since.

Lewis Hill's vision set the stage for Pacifica and its open door programming policy. His time with the Foundation was not without problems, however. Between 1952 and 1954, KPFA experienced management related problems as a result of the clashing of the founding group's goals and new staff members' ideals. Hill resigned in 1952, and several other workers associated with the station's beginning left in protest of Hill's absence. The new management struggled, and in 1954, Hill returned.

Hill's suicide in 1954 shocked both KPFA staff and listeners. Because of his central role in creating the essence and style of the station, it was unclear how Pacifica would be affected. Instead of losing sight of Hill's vision, Pacifica began realizing plans to expand into other communities, and four stations have been added: KPFA, Los Angeles, 1959; WBAI, New York, 1960; KPFT, Houston, 1970; and WPFW, Washington, DC, 1977. Many affiliate stations have

signed on in addition to these core stations. As with KPFA, each of these core stations has struggled to address its audience thoughtfully. For various reasons, each has also encountered resistance from sections of the community it serves. For example, KPFT was bombed twice in its first years, and other stations have experienced internal disagreements.

Pacifica has a unique status in broadcasting history not only for being the first listener-supported radio station, but also for breaking ground in freedom of speech issues, and for taking the risk of providing controversial programming and points of view.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The dates of this collection span from 1946-1991, with the bulk of the material between 1950 and 1980. The materials in this collection trace the founding of Pacifica and the development of the listener-support system for radio. Of special interest are the FCC, FBI and Senate investigations of Pacifica, dealing mainly with freedom of speech. Also of note is the correspondence of founder and public radio visionary, Lewis Hill. Types of documents include correspondence, memos, board minutes, statistics, news clippings, Pacifica program guides, program transcripts and legal forms.

The collection consists of 12 series

- Series 1: Basic Papers
- Series 2: Minutes and Related Material
- Series 3: Administrative
- Series 4: General Correspondence
- Series 5: Personnel
- Series 6: Business/Financial
- Series 7: Programming
- Series 8: Publications
- Series 9: Mimeo Literature
- Series 10: United States Government
- Series 11: News Clippings
- Series 12: Notecards

## **PROVENANCE**

The Archives of the Pacifica Foundation were donated to the University of Maryland Libraries by Vera Hopkins in February in 1991, May of 1991, and by Adi Gevins in May of 1992.

## **A NOTE ON THE ARRANGEMENT**

The materials arrived in such disorder that it was not possible either to discern their original order, or to arrange them according to Pacifica's organizational structure, since that was, and had been for some time, in flux. A list describing the physical arrangement of the file drawers in the central office as of 1975 provided the only clue to the manner in which Pacifica itself used and maintained their files. Despite the fact that not all of the materials found in this collection are accounted for within this filing code, we have assumed that it is reasonably

representative of the central files. Pacifica has confirmed that their present filing scheme corresponds to this filing code.

We have used this filing code as a guide, and not a final structure, for arranging this collection. Some important files such as news clippings, general correspondence and press releases were not mentioned in the code. Because of this, we have created a hybrid that is based loosely on the 1975 filing code. Naturally, clustered record types, which were not accounted for, have been added. Some files have been rearranged to facilitate research access. An example of this would be combining the federal government files.

Most of the series names are typical, such as “Personnel,” but some, such as “Mimeo Literature” and “Basic Papers,” may not be immediately clear. These names are part of the 1975 filing code, and were assigned by Vera Hopkins. The series descriptions explain any ambiguities resulting from these uncommon names.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

### Series 1: Basic Papers, 1947-1978 (0.1 lin. ft.)

This series includes articles of incorporation, by-laws, tax exemption applications, and real estate related papers. Aside from the core Pacifica material, the by-laws of the Friends of KPFK, a separate support group, are also in this series. The name of this series was derived from the 1975 filing code. The files are arranged alphabetically, with the documents in each file chronologically. They include correspondence, government forms, and legal forms such as property purchase contracts and use permit applications.

### Series 2: Minutes and Related Material, 1946-1991 (1.5 lin. ft.)

This series consists of minutes of the national board of directors (also known as the committee of directors and board of directors), the executive membership, administrative council, and local station boards. Material related to the minutes include board member lists, reports from stations and from presidents and managers, resolutions submitted for consideration, and some supplementary correspondence. National board material comprises the bulk of this series. The local board material refers mainly to Pacifica’s California stations, KPFA and KPFK. These board files are arranged from national board, executive board, administrative council to local station boards. They are arranged chronologically within each board group.

### Series 3: Administrative, 1949-1977, nd (0.1 lin. ft.)

Policy concerning a variety of administrative areas such as bank loans, FCC correspondence, station identification, programming, payola, and minute taking at meetings are covered in this series. Also included are contracts and correspondence describing Pacifica’s relationship with the Fresno Free College, a special affiliate. The files are arranged alphabetically, and chronologically within each file. They consist mostly of internal memos and correspondence.

Series 4: General Correspondence, 1947-1985, nd (0.5 lin. ft.)

This series contains memos and correspondence concerning various subjects, such as fundraising, personnel issues, plans for special events, archives, and more. Of special note are letters to and from Lewis Hill, referring to Pacifica's founding and to Hill's own resignation, in 1952. Lists of awards received, as well as some information about Pacifica's annual music competition, are also included. The materials are arranged chronologically.

Series 5: Personnel, 1953-1986, nd (0.25 lin. ft.)

Subjects in this series include job descriptions and applications, staff lists, strikes, union agreements and proposals, and letters concerning resignations, hirings, firings, etc. Of special interest are the strikes of 1964 and 1974, as well as a file on controversial staff member Elsa Knight Thompson. This material is arranged alphabetically by file name, and chronologically within each file, and does include undated items. It consists mainly of memos, correspondence and contracts.

Series 6: Business/Financial, 1947-1975 (0.1 lin. ft.)

This series, made up by memos and correspondence, contains information concerning grants, bequests, loans, stocks and taxes. The material is arranged alphabetically by file name, and chronologically within each file. Information on subscription and donation matters can be found in the subscription subseries of the publications series.

Series 7: Programming, 1949-1990, nd (1.5 lin. ft.)

The bulk of this series consists of letters from KPFA listeners, which give general comments and specific programming complaints, praise and requests. Letters from Marion Wylie are filed separately because she was a regular and frequent writer, whose epistles appear to have been routinely posted on the Pacifica billboard. Letters from prisoners in the listening area requesting free subscriptions can also be found in this series. Apart from listener mail, there are memos and correspondence covering topics such as the Klu Klux Klan's right to broadcast, the recording of contemporary philosophers, and opposition to the airing of popular rather than classical music. Some programming schedules are also included. This series also contains transcripts of programs, some of which caused FCC problems for Pacifica, and in some cases include brief commentaries, probably by Vera Hopkins. The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by file name and chronologically within each file.

The 1975 filing code did have files for both programming and publications, but it is unclear which specific types of materials were filed in each. Because of this lack of clarity, this series, and the publications, have been arranged for ease of use in research.

Series 8: Publications, 1949-1991, nd (2.0 lin. ft.)

This series covers the Pacifica Tape Library (catalogs, correspondence, offer sheets, subject guides), publicity such as brochures, press releases, and KPFA intrastation newsletters. Approximately one half of this series is comprised of the subscriptions subseries, which includes copies of and clippings from the subscribers' program guide (Folio), plus memos,

correspondence and station statistics. Because of Pacifica's pioneering role in listener supported radio, the history of their subscription system is of special note. The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by file group, chronologically within each group.

Series 9: Mimeo Literature, 1946-1989, nd (0.5 lin. ft.)

Vera Hopkins assembled this file. Topics covered include the investigation by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, the early, founding days of Pacifica, obscenity charges and freedom of speech, the first mention of National Public Radio, and personal views and recollections of Pacifica. Many of these documents were created by Ms. Hopkins, while some are special papers by Gene Stebbins, Bob Schutz, and others. The information in this series provides a good introduction to the history of Pacifica. It is composed of dissertations, papers, chronologies, and brief narrative histories. It is arranged alphabetically by file name and chronologically within the files.

Series 10: United States Government, 1953-1989, nd (0.25 lin. ft.)

This series includes documents relating to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Federal Communications Commission, and the U.S. Senate. The FBI files are notes taken by Ms. Hopkins describing the contents of the files kept on Pacifica by the FBI. The FCC materials include broadcast applications, permits, correspondence, rules and regulations, and some complaints filed. Evidence of the relationship between Pacifica and the FCC can also be found throughout this collection, in such series as general correspondence, news clippings, etc. The Senate file is concerned with government regulations and freedom of speech in broadcasting. These files are arranged alphabetically by name, chronologically within files. They consist mainly of memos and correspondence, notes and hearing transcripts. In the 1975 filing code, the files for these three government institutions were kept separately, but have been combined here for research access.

Series 11: News Clippings, 1949-1981, nd (0.25 lin. ft.)

Topics covered include programming, FCC problems, Lewis Hill's resignation, awards received, and debates on the success of listener supported radio. This material has been gathered from newspapers, magazines, and other sources, and is arranged chronologically.

Series 12: Notecards, 1946-1987 (1.0 lin. ft.)

This series was created by Ms. Hopkins as a quick reference source for information relating to staff members, main points and quotes from board meetings, programs, and Pacifica's history in general. The history group includes a card which speculates on the cause of Lewis Hill's suicide, a question not specifically addressed elsewhere in this collection. The index key file provides some insight into the cards' arrangement and use. The Famous People file refers to a separate notecard group not found in this collection. The cards in this series are arranged alphabetically, except for the board minutes and history groups, which are chronological.

## **BOX INVENTORY**

## **SERIES 1: BASIC PAPERS**

Box	Folder	
1	1	Articles of Incorporation, By-laws. 1949-1978
	2	Government Reports Due. 1947-1970
	3	Property Documents. 1959-1972

## **SERIES 2: MINUTES AND RELATED MATERIAL**

	4-7	Committee of Directors. 1946-1959 (4f)
	8	Committee of Directors/Board of Directors. 1960-1964
	9-13	Board of Directors. 1965-1966 (5f)
	14-23	National Board of Directors. 1967-1979 (10f)
2	1-6	National Board of Directors. 1980-1991. (6f)
	7-8	Executive Membership. 1947-1982 (2f)
	9	Administrative Council. 1972-1975
	10-14	Local Board Meetings. 1953-1986 (5f)
	15	Agendas and Notices of Meetings. 1953-1987

## **SERIES 3: ADMINISTRATIVE**

16	Fresno Free College. 1972-1977, nd
17	Forms. 1965-1968, nd
18	Payola. 1960-1975
19	Policy. 1949-1977, nd

## **SERIES 4: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

	20-25	1947-1974 (6f)
3	1-2	1975-1985 (2f)
	3	nd
	4	Archives Correspondence. 1983
	5	Awards. 1956-1979

## **SERIES 5: PERSONNEL**

3	6	Arbitration. 1967
	7	EEOC and NLRB Problems (Jeff Echeverria Problem). 1973
	8	Elsa Knight Thompson File. 1957-1983
	9	Job Applications Received. 1968-1980
	10	Job Descriptions. 1961-1986, nd
	11-12	Memos. 1953-1980, nd (2f)
	13	Staff Lists. 1954-1980, nd
Box	Folder	

- 3     14     Strikes: Agreements and proposals. 1964-1976, nd
- 15     Strikes: Correspondence. 1964-1974
- 16     Unions. 1957-1977, nd

**SERIES 6: BUSINESS / FINANCIAL**

- 17     Fundraising: Grants. 1959, nd
- 18     Memos. 1947-1975
- 19     Stocks. 1968-1975

**SERIES 7: PROGRAMMING**

- Listener Mail
- 20-27     1960-1978, nd (8f)
- 4     1-9     1978-1980, nd (9f)
- 10-13     1981, nd (4f)
- 14-19     1982-1983, nd (6f)
- 20     nd
- 21     Summaries. 1976-1977
- 22     Marion Wylie Letters. 1977-1983, nd
- 5     1     Memos. 1949-1990, nd
- 2     Submission Rejection Letters. 1958-1959, nd
- 3-4     Transcripts. 1950-1973 (2f)
- 5     Transcripts. nd

**SERIES 8: PUBLICATIONS**

- 6     Newsletters. 1972-1979
- Pacifica Tape Library
- 7-8     Catalogs and Supplements. 1960-1975 92f)
- 9     Financial Statements. 1970
- 10     Correspondence. 1954-1979, nd
- Pacifica Tape Library
- 11     Offer Sheets. 1969-1971
- 12     Offer Sheets Memos. 1969-1970
- 13     Price List. 1966
- 14     Program Printout Manual. 1971
- 15     Subject Guides. 1972-1974
- 16     Press Releases. 1949-1975
- 17     Publicity (Brochures, etc. by Pacifica) 1951-191, nd
- 18-19     Station Tape Catalogs and Scripts. 1955-1966, nd (2f)
- 20-21     Subscriptions: Automation Memos. 1971-1978, nd (2f)

Box   Folder

Subscriptions

		<u>Folio</u> , Original Copies
6	1-4	KPFA. 1949-1963, nd (4f)
	4-8	KPFA. 1966-1981 (4f)
	9-12	KPFA. 1982-1991 (4f)
	13-15	KPFA. 1959-1962 (3f)
7	1-5	KPFA. 1963-1979 (5f)
	6	WBAI. 1966-1979
	7	Affiliates. 1970, nd
		<u>Folio</u> , Clippings
	8	KPFA Manager Reports to Listener. 1978-1981, nd
	9	KPFA Listener Survey. 1980
	10	KPFA Lemon-Aid. 1979-1981
	11	Folio Covers. 1961-1980
	12	Report from Pacifica. 1979-1981
	13	KPFA Staff Lists. 1970-1981
	14	Staff and Volunteer Biographies. 1965-1981
	15	About Programs. 1978-1981
	16	Miscellaneous. 1949-1981
	17	Form Letters. 1954-1983, nd
	18	Correspondence. 1957-1980, nd
	19	Folio Correspondence. 1954-1979, nd
		Non- <u>Folio</u> Publications
	20	<u>Annual Annual</u> 1965
	21	<u>Printed Circuit</u> . 1983
	22	Phone Project, Memos. 1976, nd
	23	Phone Project, KPFT Pledge Forms. 1977
	24	Phone Project, KPFA Survey Forms. nd
		Subscriptions
	25	Statistics

**SERIES 9: MIMEO LITERATURE**

8	1	Basic Histories. 1950-1981
	2	Burnham Dissertation. <u>The Public Interest and Freedom of Speech in Broadcasting</u> . 1972
	3	Chronologies. 1946-1977
	4	General Surveys and Reports. 1948-1989
	5	Pacifica and National Public Radio: First Mention of NPR. 1969-1974
	6	Personal Views and Recollections by Vera. 1969-1979
	7	Quotes Compiled about Pacifica. 1952-1977, nd
	8	Schutz Paper. <u>The Senate Investigation and the Satisfaction of the FCC</u> . 1964-1967
	9-10	Stebbins Dissertation. <u>Listener-Sponsored Radio: The Pacifica Stations</u> . 1969 (2f)

Box Folder

8 11 Topical Histories. 1959-1980, nd

**SERIES 10: UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

12 Federal Bureau of Investigation: File on Pacifica. 1958-1973  
Federal Communications Commission  
13 Applications and Permits. 1958-1977  
14 Applications and Permits, Correspondence. 1953-1974  
15 Complaints. 1963-1970, nd  
16 Equal Time / Fairness. 1963-1975  
17 FCC Exhibits Prepared in 1970. 1959-1970  
18 Memos on Radio, General. 1954-1987  
19 Memos on Rules and Regulations. 1953-1989  
20 Rules and Regulations. 1969-1978, nd  
Senate Internal Security Subcommittee  
21 Correspondence. 1962-1979, nd  
22 Hearings. 1963

**SERIES 11: NEWS CLIPPINGS**

23-24 1949-1981, nd (2f)

**SERIES 12: NOTECARDS**

Group

9 A Administrative. 1960-1977  
B History. 1946-1987  
C National Board Minutes, 1954-1977, and Quotes, 1946-1975  
D Programming. 1964-1967  
9 E Staff File, Stations Intermixed. 1949-1974  
F Staff Files, KPFA, KPFK, WBAI. 1960-1964

Folder

1 Famous People. 1980  
2 Index. Key. 1977