

**A GUIDE TO THE PAPERS OF
JOHN S. PORTER**

National Public Broadcasting Archives
University of Maryland Libraries

Processed by: Robert Koepke, Karen King
December 2002
1.5 lin. ft.

BIOGRAPHY

Television executive John Stephen Porter was born September 2, 1932 in Avoca, New York. From 1952 to 1956, he served as first lieutenant in the United States Air Force. In 1958, Porter received a B.A. in English from Rochester, New York's St. John Fisher College, and in 1959 he was awarded an M.S. in Radio/Television from Syracuse University. He followed these degrees with postgraduate work in education at the University of Rochester (New York), from 1960 to 1961.

Porter's first public television job began in 1960 as a producer of instructional television programs for the Rochester Area Educational Television Association (RAETA). These programs were broadcast to the schools via the local commercial television stations and were used as samples of what the schools might expect from a full time educational station. Porter then worked part-time in New York at the Empire State FM School of Air, from 1962 to 1964, as a producer and broadcaster of weekly news analysis. In 1964, Porter moved to WROC-FM in Rochester, New York, serving part time as a producer and narrator of a weekly series until 1965. Following this, Porter went on to serve as president and general manager of WXXI-TV, Rochester, from 1966 to 1969. During this period, Porter became a trustee of the Eastern Educational Television Network, Boston (1966-1968). Porter continued to serve the Eastern Educational Television Network, renamed the American Program Service in 1969, in many capacities: member of the executive committee, 1967-1968; executive director, 1969-1989; president and member of the executive committee, of the EEN from 1989 to 1992 and of the American Program Service from 1992 to 1998.

During his career, Porter has also been active in associations dealing with educational and public television. He is a member of the New York State Educational Radio/Television Association, for which he served as treasurer from 1962 to 1964. In addition, he was also on the advisory committee of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters and has been a member and chairman of the Public Television Station Managers of New York State.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Papers of John S. Porter span the years 1958 to 2000, as well as much undated material. The majority of material stems from Porter's time with Rochester Area Educational Television Association, Inc., from 1958 to 1969. A small portion of the files relate to the Eastern Educational Television Network and its successor organizations, the American Program Service and American Public Television. The collection includes minutes, newsletters, correspondence, speech material, newspaper clippings, program guides, applications, reports, and some published items.

The collection is divided into three series:

- Series 1: Rochester Area Educational Television Association, Inc.
 - Subseries 1: General RAETA Affairs
 - Subseries 2: Station Files
- Series 2: Eastern Educational Television Network/American Program Service/American Public Television
- Series 3: Personal Papers

PROVENANCE

The Papers of John S. Porter were donated to the National Public Broadcasting Archives, University of Maryland Libraries, by John S. Porter in January of 2001.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1: Rochester Area Educational Television Association, Inc., 1958-1976
(1.25 lin. ft.)

This series documents the functioning of the Rochester Area Educational Television Association, Inc. (RAETA) at both the general level as well as the channel level.

Subseries 1: General RAETA Affairs

Included in this subseries are the by-laws of RAETA as well as the minutes of its Board of Trustees. Additionally, the series included some proposals made by RAETA to various organizations. Also, there is an incomplete collection of RAETA's newsletter. Newspaper clippings deal with RAETA in general and with John S. Porter's role and position within in; also included are several photographs of John S. Porter.

Subseries 2: Station Files

This subseries contains materials concerning Channels 13, WXXI (21), and Channel 61. Local efforts by RAETA first focused on competing for Channel 13. These efforts are documented in the channel application, subsequent application amendments, and related newspaper clippings. These documents demonstrate the power of local community action even in a cause opposed by major corporate interests, specifically ABC, which needed Channel 13 to complete its goal of becoming a true national network. Failing to acquire Channel 13, RAETA next focused its efforts on activating Channel WXXI (21). These documents include channel applications, newspaper clippings concerning its history and operation and an incomplete run of Channel 21's Program Guide. Finally, this subseries

includes a ruling by the Federal Communications Commission denying the New York State Education Department's proposal to creating channel 61. This channel was part of an earlier statewide reservation plan, but was never put into place.

Series 2: Eastern Educational Television Network/ American Program Service/American Public Television, 1970-2000 (0.25 lin. ft.)

This series contains one publication, *Creative Regionalism in Public Television* (1970), a brochure, *Programming for America's Public Television Community* (1992), and two program catalogs from 1997 and 2000.

Series 3: Personal Papers, 1965-1976 (0.1 lin. ft.)

This series contains miscellaneous personal materials belonging to John S. Porter. Documents include speeches, conference programs, a book review in both manuscript and published form, and correspondence.

BOX INVENTORY

SERIES 1: ROCHESTER AREA EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

SUBSERIES 1: GENERAL RAETA AFFAIRS

Box	Folder	
1	1-5	Board of Trustees, Minutes, 1958-1969 (5f)
	6	By-laws, 1960-1968
	7	Ford Foundation Proposal, Project for New Television Programming, 1960, 1968-1969
	8	Proposed Operating Budgets, 1961-1969
	9	RAETA Newsletter, 1961-1966
	10	Newspaper clippings and Photographs, 1963, 1967-1968
	11	Educational Television Facilities Act Application, 1967-1969
	12	Haxton Foundation Proposal, 1968

SUBSERIES 2: STATION FILES

		Channel 13
2	1-3	Application, 1961 (3f)
	4-6	Application Amendments, 1961-1962 (3f)
	7	Newspaper Clippings, 1964-1965
		Channel 21 (WXXI-TV)
	8	Facilities Specs, 1965-1966
	9-10	Application, 1966 (2f)

