

**A GUIDE TO THE PAPERS OF
RALPH W. STEETLE**

National Public Broadcasting Archives
University of Maryland Libraries

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2.5 lin. ft.

BIOGRAPHY

Ralph W. Steetle was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1912. He grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and attended schools there, graduating from Collinwood High School in 1930. Steetle then enrolled in Cleveland State University's cooperative education plan studying electrical engineering. In 1934, he transferred to Louisiana State University, and graduated in 1936 with a major in radio broadcasting. He continued his studies at Louisiana State, receiving a master's degree in linguistics in 1938. As a graduate fellow, Steetle taught broadcasting and produced university programs on local stations and the state network. During this time, he participated in a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in the Humanities, in which he interacted with various networks and educational institutions in New York City. After completing his studies, Steetle remained at Louisiana State as the first director of broadcasting in the extension division and as instructor of broadcasting in the Department of Speech.

In 1941, Steetle left Louisiana State University for war service leave to the Department of State in Washington, DC. There, he served as officer in charge of exchange programs in the Division of Cultural Relations, helping to set departmental policy governing production activities of emergency war agencies. Then, from 1942 to 1944, he accepted a commission in the United States Navy, participating in the Navy's Fleet Training Command. Upon conclusion of the war, Steetle returned to Louisiana State University and helped build WLSU, one of the first educational FM stations in the south. At this time, he also became the regional director of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters.

In 1949, Steetle participated in the Rockefeller-sponsored Allerton House conference on the status and future of educational broadcasting. During this conference, he became interested in the possible reservation of television channels for education. The next year, Steetle went to Washington, DC to attend the first strategy planning session of institutions, organizations, agencies and individuals interested in presenting to the Federal Communications Commission the case for reserving educational television channels. In 1951, Steetle was appointed executive director of the Joint Committee on Educational Television, having been given leave from Louisiana State University. In this capacity, he worked to preserve television channels for educational uses and assisted groups planning to build educational television stations. He remained executive director of JCET for almost ten years.

Upon leaving JCET, Steetle became an active part of Oregon public television. In 1960, he was appointed Associate Dean and Director of Educational Media for the Oregon State System of Higher Education. There he built the state educational network and served as an administrator for higher education with an emphasis on continuing education.

Ralph W. Steetle retired in 1974 and currently resides in Waldport, Oregon.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Papers of Ralph W. Steetle cover the years 1942 to 1981 with the bulk of material between 1950 and 1958. The collection chronicles the early history of the Joint Committee on Educational Television, as well as Steetle's involvement in this organization. Types of documents include awards, clippings, correspondence, interviews, minutes, newsletters, notes, publications, reports and speeches.

The collection is divided into two series:

Series 1: The Joint Council on Educational Television (JCET)

Series 2: Broadcasting Miscellaneous

PROVENANCE

The Papers of Ralph W. Steetle were donated to the National Public Broadcasting Archives, University of Maryland Libraries by Ralph W. Steetle in October and November of 1992 and June of 1993.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1: The Joint Council on Educational Television (JCET), 1950-1973 (2.0 lin. ft.)

This series contains minutes, reports, speeches, publications and other documents collected by Ralph W. Steetle. Most of the series focuses on JCET's promotion of educational television and its involvement with educational broadcasting legislation.

Subseries 1: Minutes, 1950-1960

This subseries contains the minutes of JCET's meetings from 1950 to 1960. In 1956, the Joint Committee on Educational Television changed its name to the Joint Council on Educational Television. The minutes outline who attended each meeting and the topics of discussion. This subseries is arranged chronologically.

Subseries 2: Legislation: Educational Television, 1953-1960

This subseries contains information on state and federal legislation on educational television. Legislative initiatives are present in a state-by-state breakdown. The materials are arranged alphabetically by folder heading.

Subseries 3: Speeches-Articles-Papers, 1951-1973

This subseries contains various speeches given by Steetle on educational television, mostly given while he was Executive Director of JCET. Topics include: television programming, educational television, adult education via television and television plans in cities.

Other materials include articles on similar topics, a statement by Steetle to the United States Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, and a chapter on the formation of JCET. The materials are divided into two different folder headings and then arranged chronologically.

Subseries 4: Reports, 1954-1958

This subseries is a collection of various JCET reports on educational television. A four year progress report on educational television and a brief of the JCET to the Federal Communications Commission are also included. The subseries is arranged chronologically.

Subseries 5: Publications, 1951-1961

This subseries contains various educational television publications including JCET Factsheets. The materials are arranged in chronological order.

Series 2: Broadcasting Miscellaneous, 1942-1981 (0.5 lin. ft.)

This series contains miscellaneous materials concerning public broadcasting and Ralph Steetle. Materials include information about Oregon Public Broadcasting, an honorary degree given to Steetle from Syracuse University, as well as an oral history of Steetle conducted by James Robertson in 1981. Memoranda relating to Steetle's wartime service are also included in this series. The series is arranged chronologically.

BOX INVENTORY

**SERIES 1: THE JOINT COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION (JCET)
SUBSERIES 1: MINUTES**

Box	Folder	
		Joint Committee on Educational Television
1	1	Special Meeting on TV Allocation Hearings, October 16, 1950 [JCET's first meeting]
	2	December 7, 1950
	3	April 23, 1951
	4	May 13-14, 1951
	5	June 4-5, 1951
	6	June 20, 1951
	7	July 16, 1951
	8	September 10, 1951
	9	November 3, 1951
	10	January 21, 1952
	11	March 31, 1952
	12	April 22, 1952

Box	Folder	
		Joint Committee on Educational Television
1	13	May 12, 1952
	14	June 16, 1952
	15	August 2, 1952
	16	September 24, 1952
	17	November 6, 1952
	18	December 4, 1952
	19	January 21, 1953
	20	March 4, 1953
	21	April 13, 1953
	22	May 4, 1953
	23	June 3, 1953
	24	July 15, 1953
	25	September 9, 1953
	26	October 22, 1953
	27	December 16, 1953
	28	February 14, 1954
	29	April 9, 1954
	30	May 14, 1954
	31	July 7, 1954
	32	August 18, 1954
	33	September 29, 1954
	34	November 10, 1954
	35	January 5, 1955
	36	February 16, 1955
	37	March 30, 1955
	38	June 27, 1955
	39	August 31, 1955
	40	November 2, 1955
	41	January 20, 1956
	42	March 28, 1956
	43	June 20, 1956
	44	July 16, 1956
	45	December 14, 1956
	46	May 22 and March 18, 1957
	47	January 23, 1958
	48	April 30, 1958
	49	September 12, 1958
	50	November 2, 1959
	51	February 8, 1960

SUBSERIES 2: LEGISLATION: EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

Box	Folder	
		[Educational Television Legislation 1953]
2	1	Summary, Alabama-New York
	2	Summary, North Carolina-Wyoming
	3	State Legislative Actions and Educational Television, May 1960
	4	United States Senate, 86th. Congress, 1st Session, Report 56, <u>Educational Television</u> February 26, 1959

SUBSERIES 3: SPEECHES-ARTICLES-PAPERS

		[Speeches/Articles-Educational Television]
3	1	1951-1954
	2	1955-1956
	3	1957-1960
	4	1967, 1973
	5	[Speeches, Conferences re: Educational Television 1954-1967]
	6	Steele, Ralph W. Chapter II: "Formation of the JCET" (1973)

SUBSERIES 4: REPORTS

		"Brief of the JCET"[Before the FCC]
4	1	Parts 1 and 2
	2	Parts 3 and 4
	3	Parts 5 and 6
	4	Part 7
	5	Part 8a
	6	Part 8b
	7	"Reports: Action for Educational Television"
	8	"Suggested Readings on Television" January 1954
	9	"Two Years of Progress in Educational Television, September 1954
	10	[Miscellaneous 1954-1958]
	11	"Direct Teaching by Television: An Interim Report, July 18, 1956
	12	"Four Years of Progress in Educational Television, Dec. 1956" [JCET Report]
	13	"Educational Television Today. A Status Report" January 1959 [JCET Report]

SUBSERIES 5: PUBLICATIONS

- 5 1 [Information Papers], 1951
Television Digest
- 2 March 24, 1951
- 3 "The Final Television Allocation Report", April 14, 1952
- 4-5 Educational Television Resources [1952] (2f)
Educational Television: Factsheet and Box Score
- 6-9 December 1953 - December 1958 [incomplete] (3f)
- 10 January 1959: The 1959 Educational Television Directory
- 11-12 February 1959 - May 1960 [incomplete] (2f)
- 13 "Programs Presented...August 1954"
- 14 Television in Our Schools August 1955
- 15 "Checklist for Planning Educational Television Stations, March 1959"
- 16 Educational Television Directory - January 1960
- 17 Current Developments in Educational Television - January 1961

SERIES 2: BROADCASTING MISCELLANEOUS

- 6 1 The Journal of the AERT, November 1954
- 2 [Honorary Degree, Syracuse University, 1960]
- 3 News Release, The Fund for Adult Education, April 12, 1962
- 4-5 Window [Reports 1963-1964] (2f)
- 6 [Oregon Public Broadcasting, 1962-1973]
- 7 [Robertson Interview with Steetle, May 8, 1981]
- 8 Department of State - Memoranda, 1942-1944