Guide to the Elsa Knight Thompson Papers

Collection number: BANC MSS 2004/101 c

The Bancroft Library

University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Elsa Knight Thompson papers,
Date (inclusive): 1935-1987
Collection Number: BANC MSS 2004/101 c
Creator: Thompson, Elsa Knight
Extent: Number of containers: 1 box, 8 cartons, 1 oversize box
Linear feet: 13.3
Repository: The Bancroft Library.
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Abstract: Consists of personal papers documenting the broadcasting career of Elsa Knight Thompson from World War II through the 1970s. Contains family and personal correspondence, business files, legal files related to litigation with KPFA including transcripts, a draft autobiography, calendars, photographs, and ephemera.
Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Languages Represented: English
Access
Collection open for research.
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Preferred Citation
Elsa Knight Thompson papers. BANC MSS 2004/101 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Printed materials have been transferred to the book collection of The Bancroft Library.

Acquisition Information
The Elsa Knight Thompson Papers were given to The Bancroft Library by Lincoln Bergman on December 19, 2003.

Scope and Content Note
The Elsa Knight Thompson Papers, 1935-1987, consist of Thompson's personal papers spanning her career at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the 1940s until her death in California in 1983. The collection contains family and personal correspondence, business files, legal files related to her litigation against KPFA, including trial transcripts, a draft autobiography with a series of interviews with Thompson during the 1970s and 80s, calendars, and ephemera.

Thompson, who grew up in Seattle, Washington, was a progressive journalist and one of the first women to break into international broadcasting as a news anchor and commentator during World War II. She spent a large part of her career as Public Affairs Director at KPFA in Berkeley, California. Career highlights at KPFA include the first-ever radio broadcast on what is now called gay liberation and interviews with Paul Robeson, James Baldwin, Malvina Reynolds, and Black Panther members.

Box 1; Cartons 1-3; Carton 4, folders 1-5; Oversize Box, folder 1

Series 1: Correspondence, 1935-1983
Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Divided into two subseries: Family and Personal. Family correspondence is arranged hierarchically. Personal correspondence is arranged alphabetically.

Contains extensive correspondence with family members particularly her sister Jeanne Patterson. Personal correspondence contains letters from colleagues as well as friends and contains a series of letters filed by first name at the end of the subseries.

Subseries 1.1: Family, 1935-1982

Thompson, Francis Y. 1938-44
Knight, Earle W. 1942-52
Knight, Murel 1936-67

Knight, Murel and Jeanne 1935-43

To Knight family 1936-36, n.d.
Knight, James 1935-82

Patterson, Jeanne Knight 1936-82

Patterson, Stanley n.d.
Urquhart, Patricia and family ca. 1950-60

Urquhart, Kevan 1963-64, n.d.
Knight, Raymond and Dorothy and family 1979
Knight, Raymond and Hazel F. 1968, n.d.
Knight, Emmett F. and Emily Hale 1963-72
Knight E. F. and Margie 1977
Knight, Maureen Val 1954-80
**Series 1: Correspondence, 1935-1983**

**Subseries 1.1: Family, 1935-1982**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1, 35</td>
<td>Wardall, Ray M. and Heloise and family 1946-53</td>
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<td>1, 36</td>
<td>Williams, Betty and David 1956-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, 37</td>
<td>Williams, Earle and Virginia 1964-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, 38</td>
<td>Knight, Elizabeth 1950-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, 39-40</td>
<td>Family, miscellaneous (contains photos) 1952-77</td>
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<td>Axelrod, Beverly 1961-80</td>
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<td>Baker, Frank 1945-46</td>
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<td>Bales, Richard 1951-68</td>
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<td>1, 45-52</td>
<td>Berger, Clarence Q. 1948-49</td>
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<td>Butler, William and Lindsey and family 1956-70</td>
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<td>Collinson, Nancy 1960-64</td>
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<td>D'Arcy, Lady Margaret 1945-75</td>
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<td>D'Arcy, Philippa 1950-77</td>
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<td>Ellmendorf, Alice (Katy) 1947-73</td>
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<td>Hoffman, Helene (Hella) 1971-80</td>
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carton 2,
folder 47-48
Mage, Carroll and Betty 1949-82
Mage, Allen 1962-73
Mage, Thomas 1962-79
Makins, William and Mary 1949-56
Messing, Alexandre 1946-81
Millspaugh, Frank 1965-87
Morley, Diana and family 1964-72
Nathan, Otto 1949-72
Osborne, Dede and Harry 1949-56
Orlin, Lonny and Leah 1971-80
Park, Clara 1951
Philbrooks, Marge and Floyd 1961-82
Polster, Edythe 1949-83
Poole, Jessamy and Peter 1949-77
Refn, Torben 1943-51
Savio, Mario and Lynne 1970-80
Schultz, Willard 1956-83
Steiner, John 1972-83
Stender, Fay 1968-80
Stevens, Barry 1961-63
Sundsten, John 1946-56
Swanzy, Henry V. L. 1943-81
Tigar, Michael 1962-79
Tobey, Mark 1953-61
Clippings n.d.
Wald, George 1971-80
Wald, Karen 1942-69
Wald, Ruth 1969-82
Wittmer, Helen and family 1969-82
Zilliacus, Konni and Janet 1955-66
A-Z, by last name 1937-82
A-L, by first name n.d.
M-W, by first name n.d.

Series 2: Professional Files, 1940-1983
Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically and grouped by company worked for, followed by affiliated organizations.
Contains material related to Thompson's work in radio and broadcasting including transcripts of broadcasts, correspondence, memos, and related material.

Writings and interviews
carton 4, folder 6-7
Articles ca. 1940s

Poems n.d.

Personality sketches/short stories 1950

Interview with Maggie Nolan n.d.

American Committee for the Evacuation of Children 1940-46

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Cadett, Thomas 1946-54

Pooley, Peter 1941-46

Correspondence 1941-47

Memos 1941-47

Radio Scripts 1941-49

Broadcast transcripts 1941-49

Empire News Talks 1942

Radio News Reel 1941-49

London Calling, no. 128 n.d.

Roundup of London Opinion 1943

Programing n.d.

Desk diary 1949

Miscellaneous 1945-47

Related material ca. 1940s

WCFM, Washington D.C. 1950-51

Pacifica Foundation, KPFA

Organization 1962-71

National Board Meeting Mar. 1971

Correspondence 1958-80

Speeches and presentations 1979, n.d.

Programming 1963-78

European Correspondent 1962

Fund-raising n.d.

Broadcasts

George Wald 1969-70

"The Coming Death of Caryl Chessman" Oct. 1959

HUAC, parts 1 and 2 1960

"Bobby Seale From New Haven" Mar. 1971

Miscellaneous n.d.

Interviews 1961, n.d.

Elsa Thompson interview by Cy Schoenfield 1971


Lewis Hill Award 1982

KLRN, Austin TX, E. Decklin Yoes, Jr. 1961-64

KPFK, Los Angeles 1959-71

WBAI, New York, Chris Koch 1962-68

Subject Files
Series 2: Professional Files, 1940-1983

Black Panthers 1968-78

Federal Communications Commission 1963-64

Free Speech Movement 1964

Alexander Meiklejohn 1960-61

Mexican American 1968

Prison Law Project 1971-72

Professional Association of Pacifica Radio Employees of KPFA 1961

National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) 1961-1971

KPFA strike 1954-64

Bendich, Albert M. 1964

NABET vs KPFA 1964

NABET vs KPFA 1964-65

NABET vs KPFA 1965

NABET vs KPFA, exhibits 1964-65

Pension Conflict 1971-74

KPFA Folio 1957, 1965, 1971

Brochure mockup n.d.

Address cards n.d.

Related material n.d.

Related material n.d.

Clippings 1964

Affiliated Organizations

Center to Reduce the Present Danger 1981

Friends of Fay Stender 1979-80

Media Alliance 1976-83

Washington State Press Club 1949-51

Women for Peace 1963

Series 3: Personal Papers, 1940-1987

Scope and Content Note

Arrangement

Arranged hierarchically.

Contains photos, biographical material, her draft autobiography, and miscellaneous ephemera.

Elsa Knight Thompson, photos n.d.

Photos: Elsa and J. F. Knight n.d.

Passports 1940, 1980

Biographical information n.d.
Awards and honors 1960-63
Horoscope 1982
Memorial service 1983-84
Clippings about Elsa Knight Thompson n.d.
Medical files 1948-53

Medical files 1974-81

Property, Seattle 1955


Autobiographical interviews 1978-82

Draft 2 1982

Correspondence 1983-87

Lincoln Bergman, notes n.d.

Address book n.d.

Business cards n.d.

Calendars 1973-80

Ephemera 1948-81

Ephemera n.d.

Miscellaneous n.d.

Clippings, miscellaneous ca. 1940-80