



**John F. Beck Papers
(C4360)**

Collection Number: C4360

Collection Title: John F. Beck Papers

Dates: 1952-1998

Creator: Beck, John F., 1916-2007

Abstract: Correspondence, research material, CBS scripts, reports, transcripts of television productions and videotaped interview of a CBS Television producer, writer and director of the 1960s.

Collection Size: 1.7 cubic feet
(55 folders, one video cassette tape)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at research@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *John F. Beck Papers* (C4360); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-City].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by John F. Beck on August 10, 1999 (Accession No. 5824)

Processed by: Processed by John Konzal on July 2, 2018.

Historical Note:

John Frederick Beck was born on May 7, 1916, to John and Kathryn Beck. In the 1930s, he attended the University of Missouri-Columbia, School of Journalism, graduating in 1938. For a short while he worked as an assistant news editor for the *St. Louis Star-Times*.

In 1941 he moved to California, where he met veteran journalist Edward R. Murrow, and for a time rewrote wire copy for the United Press (U.P.) Sacramento Bureau. Beck later worked at the U.P. Chicago Bureau writing radio wire copy and doing general newswriting. He joined CBS Radio in 1941.

Beck enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force in 1943, under limited service due to an eye problem. After six months he went to work for the United Press (U.P.) in New York and stayed there until the end of World War II. In 1949 he worked with Edward R. Murrow and Fred W. Friendly, who was President of CBS News and with Murrow, created the documentary television program *See It Now*. In 1951 he began producing CBS television programs as a producer, director and writer for CBS Television in Los Angeles. During the course of his career he worked with journalists such as Daniel Schorr, Eric Sevareid, and Walter Cronkite.

While at CBS, John Beck, who went by Jack during his career, produced a series of programs during the 1960s entitled "CBS Reports," which included programs such as "The Space Lag: Can a Democracy Compete?," 1960; "The Year of the Polaris," 1960; "Why Man in Space?," 1961; "Barry Goldwater-The View from the Right," 1962; "Death in the City Room," 1962; "109 Days to Venus," 1962; "The Teenage Smoker," 1962; "The Flight From Hollywood," 1964; "Watts, Riot or Revolt?," 1965; "The Poisoned Air," 1966; "The Supersonic Race," 1966, and "UFO:Friend, Foe or Fantasy?," 1966.

John Beck died on May 16, 2007, in Encino, California.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following five series:

- CBS Reports
- Correspondence
- Research Material
- Scripts
- Audio/Visual

Scope and Content Note:**CBS Reports**

This series contains materials related to a series of programs produced in a special CBS News series dealing with leading national and international issues. Subjects include, Watts: Riot or Revolt? The Poisoned Air, the Teen-age Smoker, and UFO: Friend, Foe or Fantasy? 1960-1969.

Correspondence

This series consists of correspondence between CBS and various news sources regarding various permissions, authorizations, or plans for scheduled projects. One example is correspondence with the Department of the Navy regarding coverage of the U.S. Navy's newly developed Polaris ballistic missile, 1958-1968.

Research Material

This series contains pamphlets, reports, fact sheets, press releases, statistics, newspaper articles and newsletters used for upcoming television stories and programs, 1952-1968.

Scripts

This series contains edited copies and notes for scripts used in CBS television productions. Subjects include, "Great Holiday Massacre, Labor Day Holiday," (traffic safety issues); "Cities," (The planning of new cities); "Smother's Brothers" Comedy Show, 1960-1968.

Audio/Visual

This series contains one VHS videocassette of an March 30, 1998, interview with John F. Beck, discussing his career with CBS, mainly focusing on the individuals he worked with, including the President of CBS, Fred W. Friendly, and journalists Edward R. Murrow, Eric Sevareid, and Daniel Schorr. Beck also discusses behind the scenes issues with controversial programs and his opinion of current television programming, 1998.

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