



Thomas Erwin Coffin(1916-1999) Collection 1940 - 1988

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Coffin, Thomas Erwin (1916-1999) Collection, 1940-1988.
4.5 c.f.

Psychology Professor, Television Marketing Researcher

The Thomas Erwin Coffin Collection at Hofstra University consists of the personal and professional papers belonging to Coffin. Coffin began as a Psychology Instructor at Hofstra College in 1941 and became an Assistant Professor in 1942. During World War II, Coffin was drafted as a conscientious objector and served in Civilian Public Service from 1943 to 1946. Upon his return to Hofstra in 1946, Coffin became an Associate Professor and continued to serve as the department chairman until his departure from Hofstra in 1949.

The collection, made up of six series of materials, includes biographical information, correspondence, research studies and reports, and print materials. The arrangement of the collection's contents reflect Coffin's role at Hofstra, as well as emphasize the importance of his research on Television Marketing that began before he left Hofstra and continued during and after his tenure at the National Broadcasting Company.

Thomas Erwin Coffin was born on January 30, 1916 in Richmond, Indiana. He moved, with his family, to Whittier, California in 1923. In 1936, Coffin received his B.A. in Psychology from Whittier College. Upon accepting a fellowship from Princeton University, he proceeded to earn a Master's in Psychology in 1939, followed by a Ph.D. in Social Psychology in 1941. In 1940, Coffin married Vivian Harriet Wilson, who was a student at Hofstra. He began teaching at Hofstra as a Psychology Instructor in 1941. Throughout his career at Hofstra, Coffin taught courses in experimental, child, comparative, abnormal, and social psychology, as well as courses on psychological measurements, techniques and the research schools of psychology.

In addition to teaching while at Hofstra, Coffin also developed and conducted research studies that documented and quantified the effectiveness of advertising on television. This research became known as the *Hofstra Studies* and encouraged the National Broadcasting Company, NBC, to invite Coffin to work at NBC as the network's market research specialist in 1949. His research played a vital part in understanding the role of advertising in television. From 1964 to 1972 Coffin was the Director and Vice President of Research at NBC and then became a consultant for the network until his retirement in 1988.

Coffin's first wife passed away in 1988. In 1990 Coffin moved back to California to be closer to his family and to reside at the Quaker Gardens retirement community. It was at Quaker Gardens where he met and married his second wife, Mary Ellen Kimbal on October 19, 1991. The couple lived at Quaker Gardens until Mr. Coffin's death on May 13, 1999.

The Thomas Erwin Coffin Collection is arranged in six series:

I. Biographical Information-

Biographical sketches, resume, appearances in professional publications, awards and recognition, Coffins speaking engagements, family and professional correspondence, memorial booklets and obituaries, photographs and ephemera.

II. Coffin at Hofstra-

Correspondence with publishers regarding psychology and television research, drafts of research, materials related to Coffin as a professor.

III. The Hofstra Study-

Hofstra College TV Research Bureau I.D. Card, Outline of TV Research Master Plan, Reports of Hofstra and Hofstra-NBC Study (some of which include Coffins annotations or enclosures). The studies and reports related to the Hofstra-Study are arranged chronologically.

IV. Coffin at NBC-

Television program news; coffins meeting schedules; Publicity re: Summer TV Study (1952); Coffins promotion and work history at NBC 1956-1957; NBC Interdepartmental Correspondence (1954-1963); Congratulatory letters re: promotion at NBC; Madow Report 1962; NBC Research and Findings; NBC departmental organization; Trace Model Research notes and documentation/correspondence re: Seymour Kaplan and Ron Frank; James Clakey Information, Drafts of Coffins Studies, Reports written by Coffin while at NBC.

V. Profiles and Studies-

Includes mainly NBC studies and profiles, along with one CBS report on advertising media. This series is arranged alphabetically, according to the name of the study.

VI. Print Materials-

Psychology Publications by Coffin; Publications by Coffin re: TV; TV Sales Effectiveness Chapter III: Hofstra. NBC Study (11/49); Drafts of Coffins research; Draft and Proposal of Book by Coffin (The Day the War Ended); TV Industry Magazines (some inc. Articles by Coffin); publicity and newspaper/magazine articles-not sorted yet-cut out by Coffin; Consumer Analysis and Advertisers Brochures; Ratings Tables for FCC; Nielsen Reports and Research booklet; Collected papers and studies; Misc. collected materials by Coffin.

Series I: Biographical Information

Box 1

Folder1: Biographical Sketches

- 2: Coffin's Resume; 1949
- 3: Appearances in Professional Publications
- 4: Awards and Recognition Received; 1937-1985
- 5: Coffin's Speaking Engagements; 1949-1962
- 6: Correspondence with Family; 1949-1950
- 7: Correspondence with Hadley Cantril; 1941-1948
- 8: General Correspondence; 1947-1950
- 9: General Correspondence; 1952-1962
- 10: Memorial Booklets and obituaries
- 11: Corresponds Re: Coffin and his collection
- 12: Portraits of Coffin
- 13: Photographs of Coffin's Wedding; 1940
- 14: Personal Photographs with Unidentified People; n.d.
- 15: Unidentified Photographs from NBC Retirement Party
- 16: General Photographs; 1950 and 1963
- 17: Personal Memorabilia
- 18: Correspondence Re: Contract at Hofstra 1947-1948
- 19: Coffin As Professor
- 20: Psychology Papers Written By Coffin
- 21: Research Paper Accompanied By Correspondence with publishers; 1943-1948

Series II: Coffin at Hofstra

Box 2

Folder

1. Correspondence/Contracts re: Faculty Appointment at Hofstra, 1939-43, 1948
- 2: Drafts of Psychology Research 1945
- 3 Undated Draft-"Temperament Scale" Research
- 4: Correspondence Re: Journal of Applied Psychology 1942-1949
- 5: Unsuccessful Publishing Attempts-1948
- 6: ANA Paper Delivered by Coffin-1948
- 7: TV Research Related Materials; 1948-1949
- 8: Correspondence Re: TV Research at Hofstra 1948-1949
- 9: Correspondence Re: Leaving Hofstra 1949
- 10: Hofstra College TV Research Bureau I.D. Card c.1949
- 11: NBC-Hofstra Study Publicity
- 12: Master Plan for Television Research Outline c.1948
- 13: Television's Effects on the Family's Activities-Report #1; 1948
- 14: Television's Effects on the Family's Activities-Report #1; 1948
- 15: Enclosures from Hofstra-NBC Survey of Television Sales-Effectiveness Report#1; 1949
- 16: Hofstra- NBC Survey of Television Sales-Effectiveness Report#1; 1949

- 17: Enclosures from: The Hofstra Study: A Measure of TV Sales Effectiveness
Annotated copy; 1950
- 18: The Hofstra Study: A Measure of TV Sales Effectiveness/1950/Annotated Copy
- 19: Enclosures from: The Hofstra Study: A Measure of TV Sales
Effectiveness/1950/Enclosure Copy
- 20: The Hofstra Study: A Measure of TV Sales Effectiveness/1950/Enclosure Copy
- 21: The Hofstra Study Publication: A Measure of the Sales Effectiveness of
Television Advertising c.1950
- 22: Television Today its impact on people and products; 1951

Series III: The Hofstra Study

Box 3

- Folder1: "TV Today-Report 2" Additional findings and Research Methods of the second
NBC-Hofstra Study"
- 2: List of 49 Hofstra Study Slides
- 3: 64 Hofstra Study Slides on Poster Board [c.1 of 2]
- 4: 59 Hofstra Study Slides on Poster Board [c.2 of 2]

Series IV: Coffin at NBC

Box 4

- Folder1: NBC Master tables-Summary table of Buying and Exposure 1949-1950
- 2: Coffins TV meetings Schedule; 1951
- 3: NBC Television Program News; 1950
- 4: Trade paper releases/Publicity Re: NBC Summer to Study; 1952
- 5: Coffin's promotion and work history at NBC; 1956-1957
- 6: Letters of congratulations for promotion; 1957
- 7: Interdepartmental Correspondence at NBC; 1954-1961
- 8: Interdependent Correspondence at NBC; 1962-1963
- 9: Ft. Wayne study conclusions; 1955
- 10: Madow Report/NBC research; 1962
- 11: NBC Research Reports and Findings; 1952-1962
- 12: NBC Research Reports and Findings; 1963-1965
- 13: NBC Department organization chart; c.1967

Series IV: While at NBC

Box 5

- Folder1: Trace Model Documentation; 1969
- 2: Trace Model Research and Correspondence; 1968-1969
- 3: Trace Model-Seymour Kaplan; 1969
- 4: Trace Model-Ron Frank; 1969
- 5: Materials Coffin Collected re: trace model
- 6: Color TV research at NBC
- 7: Drafts of Coffin's studies at NBC
- 8: Materials regarding James Clakey
- 9: Material regarding Mal Beville
- 10: Reports written by Coffin while at NBC

- 11: Daytime Profile research Background Materials
- 12: Consultants on Advertising and Marketing Research
- 13: Research/Studies Re: Effects of advertising and TV while at NBC
- 14: Coffin's Research and Notes on Trace Model
- 15: Reorganization; 1969

Series IV: Studies and Profiles

Box 6

- Folder1: Advertising Profiles/Studies-CBS: "Taking the Measure of Two Media"; 1962
- 2: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Dealers Sound Off on Advertising"; 1955
 - 3: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Dealers Sound Off on Advertising"; 1955
Enclosures
 - 4: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Home Electronic Magazine"
 - 5: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "How Television Turns Strangers Into Customers"
 - 6: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "How Your Customers Grow"
 - 7: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Summer Television Advertising"; 1955
 - 8: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Television Profile"; 1950
 - 9: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Television vs. Magazine Advertising"; 1952
 - 10: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Why Sales Come In Curves-Preliminary Report"; 1953
 - 11: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Why Sales Come In Curves-Preliminary Report"; 1953 Enclosures
 - 12: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Why Sales Come In Curves"; 1954
 - 13: Advertising Profiles/Studies-NBC: "Why Sales Come In Curves"; 1954
Enclosures
 - 14: Color Television Audience Profiles
 - 15: Daytime Television Profiles; "Daytime 1957-1958"
 - 16: Daytime Television Profiles; "Daytime 1957-1958" Enclosures
 - 17: Daytime Television Profiles

Series V:

Box 7

- Folder1: Daytime Television Profiles
- 2: Daytime Television Profiles
 - 3: The Effect of Television on Motion Picture Attendance Study; 1948
 - 4: Radio Studies
 - 5: Radio Studies: "NBC Sales Effectiveness Study Press kit- Measuring Radios Sales Power"
 - 6: Radio Studies: "NBC Sales Effectiveness Study Press kit- Measuring Radios Sales Power" Enclosures
 - 7: Radio Studies: "NBC Sales Effectiveness" Script for Slide Presentation- Enclosures
 - 8: Radio Studies: "NBC Sales Effectiveness" Script for Slide Presentation measuring radio sales power

- 9: Radio Studies: "NBC Sales Effectiveness" Script for Slide Presentation
measuring radio sales power
- 10: Radio Studies: "NBC Sales Effectiveness" Script for Slide Presentation
measuring radio sales power
- 11: Summer Programs-NBC TV
- 12: Television Facts Reports
- 13: Today Show Reports
- 14: Tonight Show Profile

Series VI: Print Materials

Box 8

- Folder1: [Copied From Coffin's Folder] Publicity to research Bureau
- 2: TV effects on other types of entertainment study by Coffin
- 3: Ratings and Booklets
- 4: Print Materials-Newspaper/Magazine Articles
- 5: Magazine articles
- 6: Collected material by Coffin
- 7: Ratings-Literature
- 8: Consumer analysis advertisers-Brochures

Series VI: Print Materials

Box 9

- Folder1: Psych. Publications by Coffin
- 2: Drafts and Proposal of Book by Coffin: The Day the War Ended
- 3: Publications by Coffin Re: TV
- 4: TV industry-related Magazines/same inc. articles by Coffin
- 5: TV industry-related Magazines