

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
1150 Beal Ave. Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2113



Creator: General Television Network.
Title: General Television Network records.
Inclusive dates: 1954-1997
Extent: 11 linear feet (in 12 boxes) and 3 oversize volumes
Call number: 2008179 Bb 2

Language: Material is in English
Acquisition: Donated by Joan Akers Binkow in October 2008 (donor no.10120).
Accruals: No additions to the record group are expected.
Access: The record group is open without restriction.
Photographs: Photographs are in Boxes 3 through 12.
Sound recordings: Audiocassettes in Box 11.
Digital Material: DVD in Box 11.
Copyright: Copyright is held by the Regents of the University of Michigan.
Processed By: Marc Levitt, 2008

Abstract

Television production and post-production company located in Oak Park, Michigan. The record group consists primarily of albums containing photographs, correspondence, clippings and other materials documenting GTN, its facilities, staff, and projects.

History

In 1957, Stanley Akers created Giant View Television, predecessor to General Television Network (GTN), renamed in 1960. GTN grew out of manufacturing and steel stamping, and began by producing metal casings for the first TV projectors. However, its cameras and engineers soon began to travel to cover events worldwide. After acquiring Universal Broadcast Systems, the company established a national closed circuit television network.

The company steadily grew in size; by 1990 it housed two divisions: Communication Systems Group-CSG (a company that designs telecommunication systems), and GTN (the production and post-production facility). The physical expansions occurred well into the 1990s, adding a library, Combermere Stage, and various additions to the headquarters in Oak Park, Michigan.

The company has won several awards. Joan Akers Binkow, owner of the company and chair of the board of directors, was named one of Michigan's Top 25 Business Women in 1994.

Scope and Content Note

The record group consists of five series: **Administrative Records, History/Background, Organizational Albums, Visual Materials, and Sound Recordings**. The record group primary strength lays in documenting a Detroit-based television company's daily activities.

The **Administrative Records** contains about half of the record group's paper records, and documents some of the daily operations of GTN, its staff, and contains some correspondence.

The **History/Background** series contains the rest of the paper records, much of it in the form of newspaper and magazine clippings bound in albums.

The **Organizational Albums** series comprises the bulk of the record group. The series begins with a subseries of albums maintained by GTN in roughly chronological order. These volumes are followed by albums documenting GTN social events and the production facilities of GTN. These albums include many photographs, but also transcripts of programs, clippings, and correspondence.

The **Visual Materials** includes additional photographs and snapshots of events, proofs, some original artwork commissioned by GTN, and a DVD copy of some of the company's "Historical Commercials."

The **Sound Recordings** consists of audio-cassettes of interviews with individuals discussing the history of the company.

Box No. Description

Administrative Records, 1958-1997

Box 1

Facilities
Advertisements (see also Oversize Vol. 1 and Box 12)
Rates
Invoices October 1965-September 1966
Personnel
Correspondence
 Saul Shiefman, 1958-1961
Newsletters (*Post Script* and *The Communicator*) 1982-1997
Competitors' Information

History/Background, 1958-1996

Written 1957-1996
Awards
Clippings
 Boxing 1960-1961 (expandable folder)
 Sports 1958-1959 (album)
 General 1959-1961 (expandable folder)

Box 2

1960-1962 (in binder) (advertisements, conventions, awards, etc.)
1957-1979 (in album labeled 'photographs') (closed-circuit television brochures, articles, video tape information, etc.)
1976-1983 (in album labeled 'Photos') (letters, brochures, 25 years of GTN, etc.)

Organizational Albums, 1957-1997

Chronological

Box 3

1957-1958 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1957-1958, e.g. closed circuit coverage at the National Open Golf Tournament, football games, etc.)
1959 part 1 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1959, e.g. a dental operation, a closed circuit television training course given by the Army Armor School in Fort Knox, etc.)
1959 part 2 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1959, e.g. Home Builders Association, "Juvenile Court" series, etc.)

Box No. Description

Organizational Albums, 1957-1997 (cont.)

Chronological (cont.)

Box 4

1960-1965 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1960-1965; e.g. Detroit Speedway, National Association of Hairdressers, Beauticians, and Fashion Designers, etc.)

1961-1969 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1961; e.g. Paray conducting the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the Jewish Center, filming in a classroom, etc.)

1970-1979 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1970-1979; e.g. Knuckle replacement surgery, American Health Spas, etc.)

Box 5

1985-1989” (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1985-1989; e.g. Max the Bull Ford Automotive, Get Up and Go Health Tapes, etc.)

1985-1986 “GTN Construction June 1985 to June 1986” (slides)

1984-1996 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1984-1996; e.g. Video Show, Communication Systems Group, etc.)

Box 6

1990-1994 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1990-1994; e.g. Buick Know How, construction of site, Boy Scouts of America, shoot in Miami, FL, etc.)

1995-1997 (contains photographs, transcripts, clippings, and correspondence from various programs and initiatives hosted at or filmed by GTN (or using their equipment) during 1995-1997; e.g. Lunar eclipse viewing, construction of site, urologic surgery partnership, etc.)

Box No. Description

Organizational Albums, 1957-1997 (cont.)

Social Functions

Box 7

“1978 Final Playoff Games, GTN vs. Campbell Ewald”
 1980’s Misc. Events (Retirement party, Open House, Grand Prix
 and Demo Party, etc.)
 “New Audio for Video Production Suite party,” 1991
 “The Early Works Film Fest, 1992”
 “The Early Works Film Fest, 1993”

Out. Vol.

“GTN Picnics 1975-1986” (oversize vol. 2)

Facilities

Box 8

“GTN” (photos of the inside and outside of the building)
 “Closed-Circuit Television” (various places that CCTV was
 installed or used during the 1960s)
 Internal (inside views of rooms and equipment)

Out. Vol.

“Meet the Combermere Stage” (oversize vol. 3)

Visual Materials

Clients and events (Photographs and negatives; identifications provided
 by donor)

Box 9

A.S.O.P.-Medical, 1957
 American Society of Training Directors, 1989
 American Veterinarian Medical Association, 1960
 Ampex Ado, 1983
 Boston - R. L. Colton
 Boy Scouts of America, 1991
 Briggs Stadium, 1957
 Buddy’s Appliance Store
 Cerebral Palsy Benefit, 1954
 Chevy, 1961
 Chicago Pneumatic
 Colton, Richard L.
 Delco-Remy, 1961 (Plant Tour for SAE Convention)
 Dental
 Dove (Commercial)
 Film Fest, 1993
 Football, 1958 (M-MSU, OSU-NW, OSU-IOWA)
 Franklin Hills Cocktail Party, Wrigley Stores promo, 1959
 GTN-Test Patterns
 GTN Truck Interior
 Handleman Filmworks, 1986
 Hudson’s Christmas, 1981
 Industrial Plants Corp, 1959 (Auction)
 JVS-JWS Community Workshop, 1957
 Medical, CCTV
 Meilink, 1959
 Michigan Credit Union League

Box No. Description

Visual Materials (cont.)

Clients (cont.)

Box 9 (cont.)

Michigan International Speedway, 1980
Minetola, Shelia 10/20
Misc. Production Shots, 13225 Capital
Motorama, 1956
N.A.H. B&F Shows (Hairdressers et. al), 1958
Nardin Park Church, 1955
National Association of Hairdressers, Beauticians, & Fashion
Designers, 1960
National Open Golf Tournament, Toledo 1958
Opus Ad Campaign, 1989
Orchard's Children's Services Fundraiser
Owens Corning Fibreglass, 1959
Palmer, George, 1960? (Giantview Installation)
Panacam, 1983
Pinkies Storyboard, Dow Corning Commercial, 1959
Real Time Steady Transfer, 1989 (Mark Piechan, Doug Check,
Frank Smith)
Rhode Island Auditorium, 1958
River Shots of Boats
Roberts-Neil, Inc (Before UBS)
Special Olympics, 1992
Strand Steel
Studio views, 1976-1977
System Installations, 1960's-1970's
Those Amazing Animals, 1981
Traveling Pictures Animation Company
UBS Detroit
UBS (Emerson College, Muntz TV, Pontiac/Chrysler, Yale)
UBS Premises & Equipment
Udylite, 1959
Visual Materials, Other UM, Clients, Kelvinator
Wayne State, 1960
WNTR, 1972

Box 10

Artwork (1 folder) (see also Box 12)
Proofs (contained in individually labeled envelopes; see also Box 12)
Negatives (contained in individually labeled envelopes)
Photographs
 Head Shots (contained in individually labeled envelopes)
 Celebrity Portraits (1 folder) (most signed by the person)
 Facility (contained in individually labeled envelopes)

Box 11

Loose Photographs (unprocessed: includes snapshots of holiday parties,
social functions, head shots, the facilities, etc.)
"General Television Network Historical Commercials" (DVD)

Box No. Description

Sound Recordings

Charley Abney interview about the history of GTN, 1996 (2 audiocassettes)

John Mayer interview about the history of GTN, 1997 (2 audiocassettes)

“GTN: Introducing DG Systems Network for Broadcast Advertising” (2 audiocassettes)

Box 12

[oversized materials; contents described above]