

JAMES F. MICHIE PAPERS

Mss. 5398

Inventory

Compiled by
Keerthi Chandrashekar

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2024

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SUMMARY

Size	3 linear feet
Geographic Locations	New Orleans, La.; Washington D.C.
Inclusive Dates	1960–2017, undated
Bulk Dates	1961–1998
Languages	English
Summary	The James F. Michie Papers contain materials related to the career of an award-winning journalist, investigator for Congressional committees, and media consultant/communications director. Papers include journalism articles, news scripts, Congressional hearings transcripts, and crisis management materials.
Access Restrictions	None.
Reproduction Note	May be reproduced.
Copyright	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
Related Collections	James Michie Oral History Interview, Mss. 4700.3064, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. (Available upon request)
Citation	James F. Michie Papers, Mss. 5398, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location(s)	19:4-5

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

James “Jim” Francis Michie was born in Labadieville, Louisiana in 1936 to Irene “Toby” Gantt Michie and Marcel R. Michie. One of two children alongside his older brother Robert H. Michie, he attended Labadieville elementary school until fourth grade and then finished grades five through 12 at Thibodaux College, where he met Edmonia “Edie” Marie Navarre, who was attending nearby Mt. Carmel Academy. The two married six years later, on April 24, 1957. During this time, Michie also sang and played trombone with the Rhythm Kings, a rhythm and blues band that played at popular dance halls and events for teenagers. After graduation, Michie attended Francis T. Nicholls Junior College for two years before joining the Air Force in 1956, where he volunteered to be a Russian linguist. He was sent to Syracuse University for six months of training to study Russian language and history from native Russians. He then went to work for Air Force Intelligence at Shemya Island in Alaska for one year, monitoring Russian intercontinental ballistic missile testing in the Kamchatka Peninsula and gathering intelligence for the Air Force and National Security Agency.

After leaving the Air Force, Michie returned to Francis T. Nicholls Junior College for a semester before transferring to Louisiana State University’s (LSU) journalism school in 1961, graduating in 1962 with a B.A. in journalism. Michie then began his broadcast journalism career in Sioux City, Iowa, where he worked for KTIV-TV, interviewing people such as Medgar Evars for the first Native American civil rights march in the city. Michie soon left Iowa for NBC affiliate WDSU-TV/Radio in New Orleans, where he spent six years as a news anchor covering the Civil Rights Movement in Louisiana and Mississippi and stories such as Jim Garrison’s investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination and politics in Louisiana. In 1969, Michie moved to Bethesda, Maryland, where he and Edie lived for 47 years, and began working for CBS affiliate WTOP-TV/Radio as a weekend news anchor and investigative journalist. During his tenure at WTOP, Michie covered both national and local news, including landmark moments like Watergate investigation. He won an Emmy in 1973 for his mini documentary series on interstate highway transportation hazards.

In 1975, Michie was hired as a chief investigator by Stephen Breyer, special counsel to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary under Massachusetts Senator Edward “Ted” Kennedy, kicking off a 14-year career on “The Hill.” He played an integral part in investigations ranging from biomedical behavioral research by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to illegal campaign contributions by the Civil Aeronautics Board to petroleum pricing regulations. In 1980, he moved over to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee before joining the House Subcommittee on Human Resources in 1982. In 1983, Michie became the chief investigator for the Senate Special Committee on Aging chaired by Pennsylvania Senator H. John Heinz III, investigating issues concerning the elderly and disabled such as nursing homes, defective pacemakers, and the illegal reuse of disposable dialysis filters.

In 1989, Michie began working for Rowan & Blewitt Inc., doing media consultancy and helping major companies such as Exxon-Mobile and Dow Chemical navigate public affairs crises. In 1994, CIA Director James Woolsey hired Michie to assist the agency in media, public, and Congressional response and outreach in defusing the crisis over Aldrich Ames, a CIA analyst

turned Russian spy. He then went on to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1996 where he was a senior public affairs officer before becoming a senior intelligence officer. Following a two-year stint from 1998 to 2000 as Director of Media Services for the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, he finished off his career as Director of Media Services for U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Customs and Border Protection before retiring in 2005. Michie continued working as an independent consultant in communication management until 2008.

In 2016, Michie and Edie moved back to Baton Rouge, and in 2020, thanks to a nomination by Dan Borné, the “Voice of Death Valley,” Michie was inducted into LSU’s Manship School of Mass Communication Hall of Fame.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The James F. Michie Papers contain materials related to Michie’s career as a journalist, investigator for Congressional committees, and as a media consultant and communications director. Items include news scripts, reporter’s notebooks, official Congressional hearing transcripts, official Congressional reports, agendas, handouts used to train organizations in crisis management, and news articles and published books related to stories he covered as a journalist or projects he worked on as an investigator and media consultant.

LIST OF SERIES

Series I. Journalism Career Materials, 1961–1975, undated

Series II. U.S. Senate and House Committees Chief Investigator Career Materials, 1977–2017, undated

Series III. Media Consultant and Crisis Management Career Materials, 1960–1998, undated

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Materials in the James F. Michie Papers are arranged into three series that cover each of his professional careers.

Series I. Journalism Career Materials, 1961–1975, undated

This series contains materials relating to Michie’s career as a broadcast journalist. These include articles written by Michie for LSU’s student newspaper, *The Reveille*, news scripts written by Michie for radio and television for WDSU out of New Orleans and WTOP out of Washington D.C, and reporter’s notebooks. This series is arranged chronologically starting with titled news stories that contain multiple scripts. Shorter news stories and WTOP editorials are arranged separately at the end of the series.

Notable stories covered by Michie in this series include the “Orleans Levee Board Corruption” (1968), the “Clay Shaw Trial” pertaining to President John F. Kennedy’s assassination (1969), “Watergate” (1969–1972), the “John Dowdy Trial” (1971–1972), the “Beltway” and “One Hour from the Beltway” stories on unscrupulous land deals (1973), and “Miracle Merchants” which was about fortune tellers (1974). Michie also covered the burgeoning use of illegal prescription drugs, drug use in general, prison reform, and other topics such as outdated baby formulas and Washington D.C.’s pornography industry. Other interesting items include a map of Moscow from his story “A Reporter’s Notebook: Seven Days in Russia,” when he spent a week in the Soviet Union in 1967.

Volume 1 is the book, *The Mini-Documentary: Serializing TV News* by Stanley Field, which contains chapter 6, titled “The Mini-Documentary Approach of CBS Affiliate WTOP-TV,” and discusses Michie’s reporting techniques for his series “One Hour from the Beltway” and “The Miracle Merchants.”

Series II. U.S. Senate and House Committees Chief Investigator Career Materials, 1977–2017, undated

This series contains materials relating to Michie’s career as a chief investigator for Senate and House committees and contains transcripts of hearings on topics such as the CIA using unwitting citizens in drug testing programs, the health effects of nuclear war (which includes testimonies from survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan), nursing home care, and news articles collected by Michie about nuclear freeze and arms control. Also included are 19 volumes of official reports from various Senate and House committees and a published University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics case study, *A Master Legislator at Work: H. John Heinz III and the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging*.

Of special note is an unpublished report compiled by the majority staff of the Special Committee on Aging during the 1987–1989 100th Congress outlining the failure of Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, then serving as Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission, to enforce the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. The report was squelched in 1988 by Committee Chairman John Melcher and resubmitted by Michie to Senator Edward Kennedy in 1991 to question Thomas's fitness for appointment to the Supreme Court before it was ultimately dismissed by Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Senator Joe Biden.

Series III. Media Consultant and Crisis Management Career Materials, 1960–1998, undated

This series contains materials relating to Michie's career as a media consultant aiding organizations with crisis management. These include agendas, handouts, and correspondence for training sessions with various organizations, including Exxon, the CIA, and the U.S. Department of Justice. Reports from Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) on illegal immigration, U.S. Customs Service on post-9/11 security in North America, light biographical information in the form of resumes, and Volume 21, *Crisis Prevention, Management, and Communication: A Manager's Survival Manual*, are also part of this series.

INDEX TERMS

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found in the series indicated, as represented by their numbers.

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Project MKULTRA.	II
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Reporters and reporting--Washington (D.C.)	I
Reveille.	I
Rowan & Blewitt (Business consultants)	III
Shaw, Clay, 1913-1974--Trials, litigation, etc.	I
Television scripts.	II
United States. Central Intelligence Agency.	II, III
United States. Congress. House. Committee on Education and Labor. Subcommittee on Human Resources.	II
United States. Congress. Senate. Special Committee on Aging.	II
United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary.	II
United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Labor and Human Resources.	II
Watergate Affair, 1972-1974.	I

WDSU-TV (Television station : New Orleans, La.)	I
WTOP-TV (Television station : Washington, D.C.)	I

CONTAINER LIST

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		4	“Charity Hospital,” March 2, 1966–April 14, 1966
		5	“The Kidney Transplant,” April 1967
		6	“A Reporter’s Notebook: Seven Days in Russia,” September 1967
		7-12	“Orleans Levee Board Corruption,” January 29, 1968–November 8, 1968, undated
		13	“Area C Community Mental Health Center,” Spring 1968–December 30, 1970, undated
		14	“D.C. Jail,” December 10, 1968–July 25, 1968, undated
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		18-19	“Lorton Reformatory,” August 7, 1969–Nov 16, 1972, undated
		20-23	“Watergate,” May 30, 1970–September 21, 1972, undated
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		29	“Outdated Baby Formula,” September 14–27, 1971
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		53	“Election Reform,” undated
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		3-12	News Scripts, August 11, 1965–June 14, 1973, undated
		13-14	WTOP Editorials, September 10, 1969–May 22, 1974
		Vol. 1	<i>The Mini-Documentary: Serializing TV News</i> (by Stanley Field), October 1975
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	2	15-16	CIA Human Drug Testing, August 3, 1977, September 21, 1977
		17-19	Health Effects of Nuclear War, January 10, 1982–April 9, 1982, undated
		20	Nuclear Freeze/Arms Control Articles, March 1982–Winter 2017
		21	Nursing Home Care: The Unfinished Agenda, May 1986, June 15, 1986
		22-25	Age Discrimination in Employment Act Report, 1987–1989
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		Vol. 3	<i>The Federal Energy Administration: Enforcement of Petroleum Price Regulations</i> , 1975
		Vol. 4	<i>Civil Aeronautics Board: Practices and Procedures Part 1</i> , 1975
		Vol. 5	<i>Civil Aeronautics Board: Practices and Procedures Part 2</i> , 1975
		Vol. 6	<i>Civil Aeronautics Board: Practices and Procedures Part 3</i> , 1975
		Vol. 7	<i>The Environmental Protection Agency and the Regulation of Pesticides Staff Report and Appendix</i> , December 1976
		Vol. 8	<i>Project MKULTRA, The CIA’s Program of Research in Behavioral Modification</i> , August 3, 1977
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		Vol. 13	<i>Federal Restraints on Competition in the Trucking Industry: Antitrust Immunity and Economic Regulation Report</i> , April 1980

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
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		Vol. 15	<i>FDA's Regulation of Zomax</i> , April 26–27, 1983
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		Vol. 18	<i>Pacemakers Revisited: A Saga of Benign Neglect</i> , May 10, 1985
		Vol. 19	<i>Hazards in Reuse of Disposable Dialysis Devices</i> , October 1986
19:4	2	Vol. 20	<i>A Master Legislator at Work: H. John Heinz III and the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging</i> , 2013
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		43	INS Illegal Immigration Assessment, January 15, 1998
		44	U.S. Customs Service Post-9/11, undated
		Vol. 21	<i>Crisis Prevention, Management, and Communication: A Manager's Survival Manual</i> , 1991