



Guide to the Clay Felker Papers, 1945-1996

This collection guide was produced in .

This PDF version was created on **April 2, 2026**.

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Summary

Collection Title:

Clay Felker papers, 1945-1996

Creator:

Felker, Clay

Abstract:

Clay Felker (1925-2008) was an editor and publisher who edited magazines such as New York Magazine (which he founded in 1968), New West Magazine, Village Voice, and Esquire. Collection includes materials from Felker's journalism career, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1968 through 1981. The majority of the materials relate to Felker's publishing and editorial work on New York Magazine, New West Magazine, Village Voice, Esquire, and Daily News Tonight. Included are story ideas and correspondence with various writers and editors; drafts of articles and columns; contract and legal negotiations; correspondence from Felker's fans and friends; budgetary materials; press clippings and news coverage; and other miscellaneous materials. Also includes copies of Duke University Chronicle, 1948-1952, dating from Felker's years as a writer and editor; copies of The Blue Jacket, 1944-1945, dating from Felker's years as a sports editor; some personal correspondence and materials from Felker's friends and family; and some other miscellaneous material.

Extent:

14 Linear Feet
9000 Items

Physical Location:

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Language:

English

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.00386

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/felkerclay/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Clay Felker Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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Background

Scope and Content

Collection includes materials from Felker's journalism career, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1968 through 1981. The majority of the materials relate to Felker's publishing and editorial work on *New York* magazine, *New West* magazine, *Village Voice*, *Esquire*, and *Daily News Tonight*. The collection contains the publications' annual reports, financial projections and budgets, circulation and advertising plans, and materials from stockholder questionnaires and meetings. Also included are story ideas and correspondence with various writers and editors, as well as drafts of articles and columns. Many materials are anonymous and undated, because the author's name is missing from Felker's version of the draft. Some writers and journalists represented in the collection include George Dennison, Benjamin Sonnenberg, Gail Sheehy (Felker's third wife), Aaron Latham, Robert Karen, Thomas Thompson, Arnold Beichman, Jimmy Breslin, Jane O'Reilly, Andrew Tobias, and many more.

Other magazine-related materials include contract and legal negotiations, particularly regarding Felker's launch of *New York*; his loss of *New York* and *Village Voice*; his acquisition of *Esquire*, *The Advertiser*, and *AdWeek*; and his subsequent loss of *Esquire*. Correspondence between Felker and various law firms involved in these sales and mergers is also included. There are also many letters, both congratulatory and condoling, reacting to his various career changes. Many of his friends and fans were powerful figures in the publishing world, including George Lang, Marianne Partridge, Peter Derow, Felix Rohatyn, Tom Wolfe, Gloria Steinem, Herb Goro, and Malcolm Forbes.

Press clippings covering Felker's career are also present in the collection, beginning with his early journalism career in the 1960s, but heavily covering his various publication acquisitions and activities as editor of *New York*, *New West*, *Village Voice*, *Esquire*, and *The Daily News Tonight*. Besides reporting on the acquisitions, these clippings also include profiles of Felker as well as evaluations and criticisms of his work. One subcomponent of the clippings

includes coverage of the 1976 CIA press leak by Daniel Schorr to the Village Voice and the subsequent Congressional investigations.

The collection also includes files and materials from Felker's years as a producer at 20th Century Fox, where he proposed and developed story ideas for television and movies. The files include synopses of proposed scripts as well as expense reports for some of the research and travel he undertook.

The remainder of the collection is somewhat miscellaneous in content. There are issues of The Blue Jacket, 1944-1945, dating from Felker's years as a sports editor. Also represented are Felker's years at Duke, including his articles and editorials in a few issues of The Archive and Duke 'n' Duchess, as well as bound copies of the Duke University Chronicle, 1948-1952, dating from Felker's years as a writer and editor. There are also small amounts of correspondence and reports from some of Felker's other interests and ventures, many of which never went past the planning stages. There is some personal correspondence and materials from Felker's friends and family, dating largely from the 1970s, and some other miscellaneous material.

Biographical/Historical

Chronology List

Date	Description
1925 October 2	Born, Webster Grove, Mo.
1942	Entered Duke University
1943	Left Duke University to join the Navy
1948	Editor, Duke Chronicle newspaper
1948	Expelled from Duke for staying out with his date, Leslie Blatt, past the Women's College curfew
1949	Married Leslie Blatt
1950	Re-enrolled at Duke University
1951	Graduated Duke University

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Date	Description
1950-1951	Worked as a statistician with New York Giants broadcasting
1951-1954	Sports writer for Life magazine
1954	Helped develop Sports Illustrated
1954-1957	Political reporter in Washington for Life magazine
1957-1962	Features editor, Esquire
1962	Married Pamela Tiffin, an actress and fashion model
1963-1967	Editor, New York, the Sunday supplement magazine of the New York Herald Tribune
1966	Herald Tribune, World-Telegram and Sun, and Journal-American merged into the World Journal Tribune
1967	World Journal Tribune folded; Felker purchased naming rights to New York
1969-1976	Editor, New York magazine
1969	Divorced Pamela Tiffin
1971 December	New York issue included an insert of selections from Ms. magazine
1972 January	Funded first stand-alone issue of Ms. magazine
1974	New York Magazine Company merged with The Village Voice;

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Date	Description
	Felker became editor of The Village Voice
1975	New York spin-off, New West, began publishing in California
1976	Lost control of New York Magazine Company to Rupert Murdoch; resigned as editor of New York
1977 August	Purchased Esquire magazine; became Esquire editor
1979	Sold Esquire magazine; resigned as editor
1980-1981	Editor, The Daily News Tonight, a division of The New York Daily News
1980-1981	Producer, 20th Century Fox
1981-1982	Editor, AdWeek
1984	Married Gail Sheehy, a writer
1987-1990	Editor, Manhattan Inc. magazine
1994	Lecturer, University of California at Berkeley
2008 July 1	Died, New York City, New York

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

All or portions of this collection may be housed off-site in Duke University's Library Service Center. The library may require up to 48 hours to retrieve these materials for research use.

Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The Clay Felker Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 2010.

Processing Information

Processed by Meghan Lyon, November 2010

Encoded by Meghan Lyon, November 2010

Materials may not have been ordered and described beyond their original condition.

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Names and Subjects

- Editors -- United States
- Nonfiction novel -- History and criticism
- Journalism -- United States -- History -- 20th century
- Periodicals -- Publishing -- United States
- Periodicals -- Editing -- United States
- Editors -- Correspondence
- Men's magazines -- Editing
- Felker, Clay
- Felker, Clay
- Murdoch, Rupert, 1931-
- New York Magazine Company
- 20th Century-Fox
- Duke University -- Periodicals

Collection Inventory

Accession (2010-0207), 1944-1996

Physical Description: 10 boxes

Blue Jacket, July 1944-March 1945

Box 1

Physical Description: 2 folders

Scope and Contents note

Military newspaper with issues featuring Felker as Sports Editor.

The Archive (Duke University), February 1948-
April 1948

Box 1

Scope and Contents note

Magazine issues with articles written by Felker.

Duke 'N' Duchess (Duke University), September 1948-December 1948	Box 1
Scope and Contents note	
Magazine issues featuring Felker as Assistant Editor.	
<hr/>	
Correspondence, Duke-related, 1948	Box 1
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Article drafts by Felker, 1956 and undated	Box 1
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Casey Stengel's Secret, 1961	Box 1
Scope and Contents note	
Book written by Felker.	
<hr/>	
Felker News Service reports, 1962	Box 1
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Teen magazine plans, undated	Box 1
<hr/>	
International Intelligence Report, 1962-1963	Box 1
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Scope and Contents note	
Memos, plans, correspondence, etc.	
<hr/>	
Research and Reportage, Inc., 1963-1968	Box 1
<hr/>	
"The Girl of the Year" movie plot, 1965	Box 1
<hr/>	
Correspondence, miscellaneous, pre-1967	Box 1
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Miscellaneous stories edited by Felker, undated	Box 1
Physical Description: 3 folders	
<hr/>	
World Journal Tribune, 1967	Box 1
Scope and Contents note	
Regarding the shut-down of its Sunday feature, New York Magazine.	
<hr/>	
Capital, 1967	Box 1
Scope and Contents note	
Correspondence between Felker and Adolph Theobald about setting up an independent magazine.	

Cheetah magazine venture, for people under 30, 1967	Box 1
Duke University, 1967-1976	Box 1
Scope and Contents note Alumni affairs and donations.	
Correspondence, re: Felker family, 1968-1977	Box 1
Scope and Contents note Includes condolence letters following the death of Felker's father, and recommendation letters for Felker's nephew.	
Scheduling and invite lists, 1967-1975	Box 1
Scope and Contents note Guest lists for events, including New York Magazine and Village Voice programs.	
Clippings and press coverage, 1960s-1975	Box 1
Physical Description: 9 folders Scope and Contents note Coverage of Felker, his career, and his various publications.	
Clippings and press coverage, 1975-1977	Box 2
Physical Description: 4 folders	
Phone log books, 1977-1979	Box 2
Physical Description: 4 folders	
Battle, Fowler, Stokes, and Kheel, 1968-1977	Box 2
Scope and Contents note Includes correspondence and transcripts with Felker and Theodore Kheel, a lawyer who worked with Felker and the New York Magazine Company.	
Summer house, 1969-1975	Box 2
Scope and Contents note Leases, etc., for house rentals on Long Island, N.Y.	

Miscellaneous article by George Dennison, undated	Box 2
Correspondence and articles by Benjamin Sonnenberg, undated	Box 2
Correspondence and articles by or about Lally Weymouth, 1976 and undated	Box 2
Pamela Tiffon/Clay Felker divorce, 1967-1975	Box 2
Correspondence and clippings by Gail Sheehy, 1972-1976	Box 2
"The Colonel," undated Physical Description: 4 folders Scope and Contents note Draft by Marge Crumbaker and Gabe Tucker.	Box 2
Herald Tribune's New York magazine (Sundays), 1965	Box 3
New York magazine Founding and planning, 1968	Box 3
Annual reports, 1969-1975	Box 3
Budgets and budget projections, 1967-1974 Physical Description: 4 folders	Box 3
Stockholder meetings, 1970-1973	Box 3
Annual issues, 1971-1972	Box 3
Editorial memos, 1974-1976 Scope and Contents note Internal correspondence between Felker and his editors, including discussions of the magazine's news coverage, etc.	Box 3
Flow of Reading study, 1975	Box 3
Bonuses/salaries, 1975	Box 3

Circulation, 1971-1975	Box 3
Physical Description: 2 folders	
Legal guidelines, 1975-1976	Box 3
Stockholders Questionnaire, 1976	Box 3
Board of Directors, 1971-1976	Box 3
Copyright, 1973-1976	Box 3
Agreements between Felker and Carter Burden, 1975	Box 3
Advertising reports, 1975-1976	Box 3
Drafts of articles, 1970s and undated	Box 3
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Scope and Contents note	
Reporters and writers represented include Arnold Beichman, Paul Gardner, Robert Karen, Aaron Latham, Barth Schwartz, Charles Sopkin, and Thomas Thompson.	
Story ideas and other drafts, 1968-1976	Box 3
Physical Description: 4 folders	
Scope and Contents note	
Reporter, writer, editor, and agency correspondence with Clay Felker for New York Magazine articles and ideas, including Ken Auletta, John Berendt, Jimmy Breslin, John Bryson, Jon Carroll, Rasa Gustaitis, Anthony Haden-Guess, George Harris, Judith Kipper, Joan Kron, Aaron Latham, Leonard Mosley, Jane O'Reilly, Richard Reeves, Edgar Scherick, Gail Sheehy, Andrew Tobias, and John Walsh.	
Draft of Abraham Michael Rosenthal/New York Times profile, undated	Box 3
Correspondence, with Tony Mayer, 1976	Box 3
Ms. magazine, Felker's personal finances, 1972-1975	Box 3
MAC/Jim Kelly, 1973-1975	Box 3

Felker's employment contracts, 1972-1976	Box 3
Scope and Contents note	
Includes negotiations and contracts for New York magazine and Village Voice.	
<hr/>	
Village Voice stockholders, 1974	Box 4
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Clippings and coverage of the Village Voice's CIA leak with Daniel Schorr, 1976	Box 4
Physical Description: 3 folders	
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New West finances and advertisements, 1975-1976	Box 4
Physical Description: 2 folders	
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New West clippings and coverage, 1976	Box 4
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New West story ideas, 1976	Box 4
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New West Magazine, 1980	Box 4
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Research reports, New York Magazine Company, 1975-1976	Box 4
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Murdoch's purchase of New York Magazine Company, 1976	Box 4
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L'Express, 1977	Box 4
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Stigwood Group, 1977-1978	Box 4
Scope and Contents note	
Includes contracts, correspondence, and other materials from the joint venture between Felker and Stigwood Group for literary and movie projects.	
<hr/>	
The American Lawyer, 1978-1979	Box 4
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Esquire	
Felker's purchase of Esquire, 1977	Box 4
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Congratulatory letters, 1977	Box 4
Scope and Contents note	
Includes correspondence from Dorothy Monet, George Lang, Marianne Partridge, Peter Derow, Richard Wald, Felix Rohatyn, Terry Gwyn, David	

Brown, Barrett Gallagher (includes photograph portfolio), Herb Goro, Albert Goldman, and Malcolm Forbes.

Press clippings and coverage of Esquire, 1977-1979 Box 4

Physical Description: 3 folders

Reports and finances, 1978-1979 Box 4

Board of Directors reports and finances, 1977-1979 Box 4

Sale, 1978-1979 Box 4

Purchase of N.E. Corporation, 1979 Box 4

Mail about Esquire, 1977-1979 Box 5

Scope and Contents note

Includes general fan mail as well as condolence notes for Felker after losing Esquire; writers include Gary Trudeau, Geoffrey Norman, Gloria Steinem, and Ted Hearne.

Felker Communications Inc., 1979-1982 Box 5

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence regarding the purchase of other papers.

Winslow Maxwell and Partners, invoices and correspondence, 1978-1981 Box 5

The Advertiser, 1978-1981 Box 5

Physical Description: 3 folders

Scope and Contents note

Includes materials from its purchase by Felker, insurance papers, content, advertising, profits, and employees.

AdWeek, 1981-1982 Box 5

Physical Description: 2 folders

Scope and Contents note

Includes materials on its columns and finances.

East Bay Newspapers, Inc., 1981-1982 Box 5

Travel expenses, 1979-1982 Physical Description: 2 folders	Box 5
Expenses, 1967-1978 Physical Description: 13 folders	Box 5
Duke Chronicle clippings, 1948-1951	Box 6
Broadside Art, Inc., 1967-1968	Box 6
Clay Felker Publications, 1967-1969	Box 6
London magazine project, 1972-1974	Box 6
New York magazine office furniture, 1974-1976	Box 6
Riverdale Press acquisition, 1977	Box 6
Speeches and articles by Felker, 1968-1979 Physical Description: 3 folders	Box 6
Village Voice Thesis on its history, 1973	Box 6
Correspondence and reports, 1974 and undated	Box 6
Promotions and advertising, 1974	Box 6
Subscriber surveys and lawsuit, 1973-1975	Box 6
Los Angeles Herald Examiner, 1980	Box 7
Daily News Tonight Employment, 1980-1981	Box 7
Congratulatory letters, 1981	Box 7
Press clippings and coverage, 1980-1981 Physical Description: 2 folders	Box 7
Focus groups, editorials, and plans, 1980	Box 7
Operations, 1980	Box 7
Promotions and advertising, 1980-1981	Box 7

Name files, A-F, 1980-1981	Box 7
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Scope and Contents note	
Name files include correspondence, story ideas, notes, clippings, and drafts from Felker's time at Daily News.	
Name files, G-Z	Box 8
Correspondence, Mike O'Neill, 1980-1981	Box 8
Correspondence, Liz Smith, 1980-1981	Box 8
Stigwood Group story, 1981	Box 8
Expenses, 1980-1981	Box 8
20th Century Fox producing	Box 9
Active story numbers, 1980	Box 9
Submissions, 1979-1980	Box 9
Rejections, 1979-1980	Box 9
Untitled Brazilian Rock and Roll (Rio), with Aaron Latham	Box 9
Physical Description: 2 folders	
"Hip Capitalism," with writer Jack Nessel	Box 9
Jacques Mesrine story, with writer Harry Stein	Box 9
Lisa Lyon, body building	Box 9
"Mob Lawyer," with Steven Brill	Box 9
"Preppie," 1980	Box 9
"Redneck Riviera," with Geoffrey Norman, 1980	Box 9
"Super Thief," with Tom Zitto, 1980	Box 9
"Woman of the Year," undated	Box 9

"Woman Who Has Everything," 1967	Box 9
Weekly advance to producer reports, 1979-1980	Box 9
General correspondence and miscellaneous movies, 1980-1981	Box 9
Movie studio funding, undated	Box 9
Los Angeles to New York trips, 1980	Box 9
Correspondence, personal, 1980	Box 9
Correspondence, Richard Berger, 1980	Box 9
Correspondence, Claire Townsend, 1980	Box 9
Correspondence, Dennis Stanfill, 1980	Box 9
Notebooks, 1993 and undated	Box 9
Exclusive right to sell, New York apartment, 1996	Box 9
Duke University Chronicle, 1948-1952	Box 10

Scope and Contents note

Oversize bound issues from Felker's career at the Chronicle.

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