

“A Look Back at My Time as an Archival Fellow for The New Mexico Public Media Digitization Project” by Rachel Snow



Rachel Snow, New Mexico Public Media Digitization Project Fellow

Cataloging over 3,000 items in about a year and a half takes endurance and focus! Sometimes I felt like the spreadsheet created to describe items in the collection stretched on and on and on . . . into some distant abyss, far in the future. When I finished my last cataloging entry today, it almost seemed like a mirage. Have my eyes deceived me? Scrolling up and down....could this actually, really be . . . THE END?! And yet, it was true, the job was finally done! My efforts represent only a fraction of the 8,291 assets that were also cataloged by colleagues David Saiz, Jessica Cummins, and Angelica Bernaert.

One of the most enjoyable and rewarding parts of this work was viewing thousands of hours of public broadcasting content created in New Mexico by five different stations spanning over a half century. I have learned so much from that experience – about New Mexico’s rich and complicated history, about the incredible diversity of this state, about the political leaders whose policies and actions, for better or worse, left their mark.

I have learned about (and from) community activists and everyday citizens in New Mexico who have stepped up to play key roles in shaping that history, too - by sharing their stories, challenging the status quo, questioning history as it is taught, and by holding power accountable.

One of my favorite examples is Wilhelmina Yazzie’s interview on *New Mexico in Focus*.
<https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-019a1c60d5c?start=87.76&end=1164.52>



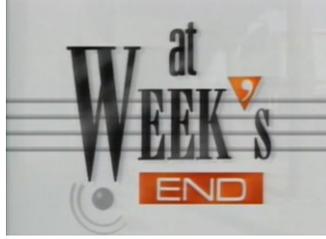
Wilhelmina Yazzie lives in Gallup on the edge of the Navajo Nation, and her son, Xavier, attends a Gallup-McKinley school. She filed a lawsuit against the state of New Mexico claiming the state was not sufficiently funding public education, which lead to poor student outcomes. She asserted that the State of New Mexico fails to provide students from disadvantaged economic backgrounds, those who are Native American, those who are English-as-a-second-language learners (ESL), and students with disabilities, an adequate and equitable education to prepare them for college and careers. The Yazzie case eventually merged with another lawsuit brought forward by Louise Martinez who also claims inadequacy in New Mexico's funding for education, thus becoming the "Yazzie/Martinez" lawsuit. The case was decided in her favor and is a landmark ruling in the state of New Mexico and has been an important impetus for change and progress to this day. Source: [What is "Yazzie vs. The State of New Mexico" and Why You Should Know \(billtrack50.com\)](#). **Wilhelmina Yazzie, *New Mexico in Focus*, episode 1204; "Plaintiff and Attorney in Education Lawsuit" (2018)**

The New Mexico Public Media Collection is truly a treasure trove of programming. I like to think of it as a kind of map from the past, revealing many twisting and intersecting paths that have brought us to the future we now inhabit. From this bird's eye perspective, looking at materials spanning over 50 years, we can see how much and how little has changed.

Sometimes that experience was disheartening and frustrating, to see that New Mexicans are still struggling with so many of the same systemic problems over decades. Other times, it was inspiring to see how far we had come, and steps taken in the direction of progress and growth.

I was amazed by the strength of the journalism and in-depth public policy reporting in this collection. I have a whole new respect for the importance of public broadcasting and for the people who created the content in this collection through the years. Stellar examples of high-quality journalism in the archive abound, but for me this is best represented in several long-running series: *New Mexico in Focus*, *At Week's End*, *On Assignment*, *Illustrated Daily* and *Public Square*.





I think a particularly fun aspect of collection are the handful of programs that offer a glimpse into the culture and history of public media in New Mexico, and the personalities who helped create it. Here are a few examples from a variety of stations to explore:

[Illustrated Daily; 3128; 25 Years of Channel Five - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[Illustrated Daily; 5037; Jon Cooper - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[KNME-TV 25th Anniversary presentation for Mark Russell dinner, dub - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[Early Days Tour Of KRWG-TV - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[This is KNME - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[Mike Wolf, KUNM General Manager - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[Narration of KUNM History to 1987 by Claude Stephenson - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[Coverage of Protest at UNM Against Ending KUNM as a Free Form Station. - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)

[KENW-TV 10th Anniversary Special - American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#)



KNME Cameras and Production Booth



KRWG Station Tour, Production Equipment and Tapes



KRWG TV Camera



KNME, Joyce Marron, from TV Kindergarten



KNME Exterior Photograph of Station

I started working on this project in early 2021, in a time shaped by uncertainty and change, by the COVID pandemic, protests demanding reckoning with racism in all forms, and an attempted coup following a contentious election. Most of my work was done remotely from home in relative isolation. I found it especially enlightening and riveting to be transported back in time through the programs in this archive to moments from the past half-century where reporters and the public were also experiencing momentous – seeing programs addressing 9-11, police brutality in Los Angeles and subsequent riots and protests across the nation, the early days of the Aids epidemic, protests against Vietnam, and struggles for racial justice in the 1960s and 1970s. This collection teaches many lessons. For me, those include the notion that endurance is possible, collaboration in the pursuit of justice is necessary, and that change is still needed.

A sizable portion of the collection is raw, unedited footage that is available for the first time ever for public viewing. Some of it offers a chance to take an unprecedented deep-dive into topics and themes. Among my favorite examples are the full-length interviews with writer Sabine Ulibarri, including footage of him teaching at UNM, and the extensive interviews of the friends, family, and colleagues of artist T.C. Cannon.

T.C. Cannon [American Archive of Public Broadcasting Search Results](#)

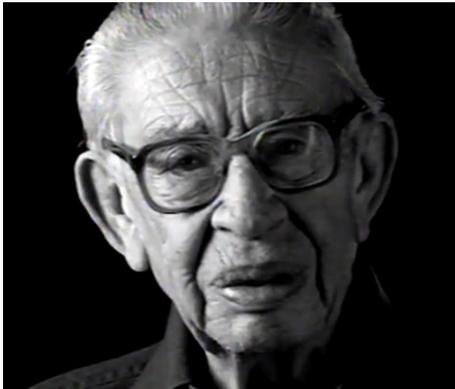


T.C. Cannon



Painting by T.C. Cannon

Ulibarri: [American Archive of Public Broadcasting Search Results](#)



Poet, Writer, Teacher, US Veteran - Sabine Ulibarri

Other bodies of raw footage that are equally important, though far more difficult to experience, include footage of the Penitentiary of New Mexico Riot, audio files documenting the American Indian Movement's takeover of the Fairchild Electronics Plant near Shiprock, New Mexico, and student-created audio recording of protests Vietnam in 1970s.

Penitentiary of New Mexico Riot [American Archive of Public Broadcasting Search Results](#)



National Guard moves in to stop the Penitentiary Riot in 1980.

Fairchild Electronics Plant Takeover, Bill Reichert interviews AIM activist Frosty Forensborne: <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-207-68kd578c?start=0&end=2594>

Compilation of Raw Footage for Report on American Indian Movement take-over of Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation on Navajo Nation: <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-207-483j9gpk?start=0&end=2698>

UNM Student audio recordings of Vietnam Protests: [American Archive of Public Broadcasting Search Results](#)

Many times, I encountered difficult content that was hard to watch and describe in words. While this footage may be challenging viewing, it offers a rare and important look at lived realities often hidden from view or edited and polished for easy consumption in mainstream commercial media.

One of the most challenging aspects this project from my perspective was navigating questions around privacy, cultural sensitivity, violent content, and trying to avoid harm, while also valuing transparency, accuracy, and making content open and accessible.

Standards, terminology, and public opinion about making and consuming media change significantly over time. One of the key responsibilities of archivists today is balancing access to materials with the responsibility of providing appropriate contextualization. It is also critical to consider the many possible impacts of new technological modes of viewing and sharing archival content online.

Throughout the cataloging process we tried to be diligent and careful about respecting individual privacy and cultural protocols. One way we did this is by providing content warnings and notes in descriptions to help people make informed choices about viewing. We kept, but acknowledged, outdated terminology and offered the preferred terms as identified by certain groups and communities as contemporary alternatives in an effort not to normalize harmful language.

I would like to close by highlighting the countless programs and series in the archive that feature the vibrant creativity that is a defining feature of life in New Mexico. Of these, the *¡Colores!* series, is my favorite because of its variety and pacing: [American Archive of Public Broadcasting Search Results](#).

From the many episodes I watched, I can't stop thinking about Anne Noggle's amazing life and bravery as a pilot, her fierce ownership of her ideas and creative process, and her countering of societal norms about beauty, aging, and sensuality. *¡Colores! Anne Noggle: Capturing the Character of Aging* <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-191-49g4f9db>



Anne Noggle, Self-Portrait After Facelift

Art everywhere is inseparable from the production of culture, history, and identity. But, somehow, I think artists from New Mexico, and those who were drawn to live and create in this place, connect with that understanding of art very intensely. It is a lifeline to the past and a path to the future. It is a means of not only surviving but thriving in New Mexico.

It would be hard to think of a better example of this than artist than Michael Naranjo, who is featured in the episode of *¡Colores! Michael Naranjo: A New Vision*: <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-191-407wm76g>



Michael Naranjo interacting with Michelangelo's *David*

Along with my other project collaborators, we invite you explore the collection on the American Archive of Public Broadcasting website at:

[American Archive of Public Broadcasting Search Results](#)

Also watch for the online exhibition celebrating this collection titled: “Witnessing New Mexico: The New Mexico Public Media Digitization Project 1960-2022.” When it launches **in early October of 2022**, you will find it here:

[Exhibits \(americanarchive.org\)](#)



Coming in October 2022, Witnessing New Mexico Online Exhibition

I hope you find this newly digitized archive inspires you to participate in your own creative endeavors, to learn about this state and its history, to teach and learn from the collection, and to amplify the array of views it represents, to listen to the stories of people that are different from yourself, and to continue to enjoy and support the work of public broadcasting in New Mexico and beyond.

Further Resources:

Those interested in a more in-depth history and analysis of this project, including all aspects of cataloging, and preparing the online exhibition, please download the following two pdfs of my master's thesis that was completed in May of 2022 at the University of New Mexico in the Museum Studies Department.

Acknowledgements -

I would like thank Michael Kamins for always supporting creativity and for envisioning the importance of preserving this archive and for authoring the grant that made this project possible. His contributes to the collection as a creator and producer are nothing short of astounding and is a testament to his love for New Mexico. I would also like to thank archivist Megan Rose Kilidjian. Her dedication, vision, organization, and collaborative energy inspired everyone with confidence. Finally, my deepest gratitude to David Saiz. David possesses a rare brilliance and impressive work ethic. He advanced this project through some of its most critical challenges, while holding our work to high professional and ethical standards. It has been a privilege and a joy to work with him.