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## **CITIZENS LEAGUE AGAINST THE SONIC BOOM**

Records, 1967-1978

Manuscript Collection – MC 12

### **EXTENT**

19 cubic feet

### **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

19 records cartons

### **ACCESSION NUMBERS**

1979-8, 1981-9

### **CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS**

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

### **PHYSICAL ACCESS**

The collection is stored off-site.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY**

The Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom was founded on March 9, 1967, by Dr. William A. Shurcliff, physicist and senior research associate at the Cambridge Electron Accelerator, and Professor John T. Edsall, Harvard biochemist. The incentive to form Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom derived from Dr. Shurcliff's concern over government publications concerning the acceptability of sonic boom. Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom operated out of Dr. Shurcliff's home in Cambridge, and he conducted most of the campaign.

The purpose of the League was to oppose sonic boom and to halt the construction of all commercial supersonic transports, both in the United States and abroad. To this end, a massive information dissemination campaign was launched, directed primarily at the taxpayer, the media, and Congress. Dr. Shurcliff's aim was to change public policy through public outrage. By demonstrating the potential damage to property and health caused by sonic booms, the economic inefficiency and unfeasibility of supersonic transportation, and the strain placed on the tax dollar by the increase in government funding of Boeing's SST, Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom hoped that supersonic travel would be prohibited in the United States.

Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom's principal activities consisted of gathering newspaper and magazine articles, books, and reports related to the SST and using this information to prepare fact-sheets, newsletters, and handbooks to influence the opinions of individuals and institutions. One of the major results of the League's efforts was the publication of Dr. Shurcliff's book, *SST and the Sonic Boom Handbook*, a book issued in 1970 based on earlier Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom handbooks. This book is an especially helpful secondary source of information and should be consulted by those using the Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom collection.

The media was originally identified as the most expedient means of reaching and influencing the public. Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom initially focused its campaign on newspapers, radio, and television. Between 1967 and 1968, the attitude of the press changed from pro-SST to anti-SST.

Congressmen and other government officials, especially those connected with the Federal Aviation Agency and the Department of Transportation (two agencies directly involved with the development of the SST), were also contacted. Some members of the Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom lobbied in Washington against the appropriation of additional funds for Boeing's SST.

Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom had 5,000 members from all parts of the country, and Dr. Shurcliff made a deliberate point of maintaining personal contact with them. Bureaucratic methods of communication were conscientiously avoided. No dues were required and financial support of Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom derived from periodic requests for contributions. The members' activities are represented in the collection by newspaper and magazine clippings, which they sent to Dr. Shurcliff. It is important to realize that while Dr. Shurcliff and Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom were responsible for taking up the anti-SST cause, making it visible, and involving

various environmental groups in the struggle, others had pioneered in the opposition to the harmful effects of the sonic boom. In Sweden, Bo Lundberg, Director General of the Aeronautical Research Institute, had published many articles and reports discussing the hazards of supersonic travel as early as 1960. Much of Dr. Shurcliff's scientific information is based on these accounts. Senator William Proxmire (Democrat-Wisconsin) was also an early opponent of the SST and its noise pollution.

On March 24, 1971, Congress voted against the bill that would have provided the funds necessary for the continuation of Boeing's production of a commercial SST. With this decision, Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom felt it had achieved a major goal and decided to concentrate its energies on prohibiting the British-French Concorde from landing at airports in the United States.

In December 1971, Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom, at Dr. Shurcliff's request, went into "hibernation." However, the League did not formally terminate until November 15, 1978, when the papers of the group were turned over to the MIT Institute Archives. As a result, the bulk of the collection contains material from 1967-1971, but there is additional information covering subsequent SST-related issues from 1971-1978.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom collection (1967-1978) documents the attempts of a small, grass-roots citizens' movement to sway public opinion and influence the decision-making process of Congress. The collection consists of correspondence, newsletters, fact-sheets, reports, books, articles, clippings, pamphlets, bibliographies, and photographs.

When Dr. Shurcliff founded the League, he formulated a classification scheme for his files, and a copy of this scheme is included in the inventory. The collection has been maintained in this order, and folder headings reflect Dr. Shurcliff's original numbering system. In some cases the numbers for specific categories do not appear in the final folder list as these categories were never actually used. The inventory includes the symbol (in parentheses) originally designated by William Shurcliff in his classification system.

### **SERIES LIST**

- I. Administrative Material
- II. Group Information
- III. Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom Literature
- IV. Magazines
- V. Reports
- VI. Technical material
- VII. Books
- VIII. Membership cards
- IX. Newspaper Clippings

These categories are divided by subject and the material in each folder is arranged in chronological order.

In 1977, Dr. Shurcliff weeded the collection and disposed of 1/5 of the material. In processing the collection, numerous duplicates have also been discarded, reducing the size by four linear feet.

Dr. Shurcliff's correspondence is located in the G-10 folders and is arranged chronologically. This section contains only the outgoing mail. Incoming correspondence is found in the appropriate subject categories.

The following list is a guide to major correspondents.

G-12	Elizabeth Borish
G-12-F	Ping Ferry
G-12	Bo Lundberg
G-110	Congressmen
G-120	Federal Aviation Agency
G-121	Department of Transportation
G-121-a	Volpe Committee
G-202	National Academy of Sciences
G-209	Coalition Against the SST
G-419	Anti-Concorde Project

In addition to the correspondence, the Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom collection includes an extensive series of magazines and newspaper articles and reports accumulated by Dr. Shurcliff. Clippings of articles were often sent to the League by members from diverse geographic locations, this establishing a core of reference material. And, as Dr. Shurcliff has noted, "most reports were highly specialized, issued by small little-known groups, written by little known people; hard to index, hard to file properly and virtually impossible to find elsewhere."

Books, theses and college papers examining the issues of the sonic boom, noise pollution, and supersonic transportation represent another valuable series of information that might otherwise be lost.

The collection of newspaper clippings is arranged by country, and within the United States, by state, subdivided alphabetically by paper then by date. For preservation, this section has been recorded on 35 mm microfilm and is available only in this form. The inventory contains a list of the newspapers, complete with frame numbers, to facilitate access.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
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1	2	(A-2) Termination of Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom
1	3	(A-5) Charter of Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom
1	4	(A-6) Officers of Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom
1	5	(A-7) History of Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom
1	6	(A-8) Key addresses, non-members
1	7	(A-9) Joining forms
1	8	(A-10) Members of Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom
1	9	(A-10) Members by state
1	10	(A-10) Miscellaneous additional members list
1	11	(A-11) Contributors to Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom
1	12	(A-20) Potential Members, forms
1	13	(A-26) Policy re acceptable boom
1	14-15	(A-30) Meetings, minutes, agendas, 1967-1973
1	16	<i>Brief History of the Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom from Start (March 3, 1967) to Finish (November 15, 1978) by William Shurecliff</i>
1	17-24	Checkbook registers
1	25	Exemption status, federal taxes
1	26	Federal taxes
		folder numbers 27-31 not used
1	32	(A-199) Congress in general
1	33	(A-200) Senate: analyses

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
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1	35	(A-202) Senate Commerce Committee
1	36	(A-210) House: analyses
1	37	(A-211) House Appropriations Committee
1	38	(A-212) House Science and Astronautics Committee [House Ways and Means Committee]
1	39	(A-214) House, other
1	40	(A-295) Movie-makers and movies
1	41	(A-300) Foundations – possible contributors
1	42	(A-310) Museums
1	43	(A-333L) List of National Academy of Sciences members
1	44	(A-333T) N.A.S. Members who signed Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom petition
1	45	(A-333-CO) Letters to N.A.S. members
1	46	(A-333-NR) [Letters to: Bauer, Dunning, Governing Board, Seitz, N.A.S. petition signers, N.A.S. other]
1	47	(A-410) T.V. and radio lists
1	48	(A-420) Powerful newsmen
1	49	(A-484) Cruising clubs [letters, petitions against SST]
1	50	(A-485) Ocean groups

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3	98-129	(G-10) Correspondence, Shurcliff, November 1969 – 1979

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3	135	(G-12) Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom Members, correspondence, Bardin
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3	139-140	(G-12) Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom Members, correspondence, Ferry, 1967-1968
4	141	(G-12) Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom Members, correspondence, Ferry, 1969-1970
4	142-143	(G-12) Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom Members, correspondence, L-Ly, 1967-1973
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4	155	(G-110-C) Correspondence, Congressmen, Clifford P. Case, 1967-1971
4	156	(G-110-C) Correspondence, Congressmen, 1967-1971
4	157	(G-110-D) Correspondence, Congressmen, 1967-1971
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4	165	(G-110-K) Correspondence, Congressmen, Robert Kennedy, 1967-1968
4	166	(G-110-K) Correspondence, Congressmen, 1967-1971
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4	177-178	(G-110-P) Correspondence, Congressmen, William Proxmire, 1967-1971
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5	197	(G-120) Federal Aviation Administration, Correspondence, Maxwell to Representatives, 1967 to 1969
5	198	(G-120) Federal Aviation Administration, Correspondence, Maxwell to Shurcliff, 1967 to 1969
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5	200	(G-120) Federal Aviation Administration, Maxwell Speeches
5	201	(G-120) Federal Aviation Administration, Comments on "Misleading Statements", November 12, 1967
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14	582	Dwiggens, Don. The SST: Here it Comes, Ready or Not. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1968.
14	583	Edwards, Chris, and Edwards, Liz. Concorde: Ten Years and a Billion Pounds Later. London:
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