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KAUFMAN, GEORGE S. (1889-1961). PAPERS, 1912-1958. 0.8 c.f. (2 archives boxes) and 4 reels of microfilm (35mm).

Abstract

Papers of a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and director, consisting primarily of correspondence, scripts, and microfilmed biographical scrapbooks. The correspondence contains originals or copies of letters from Fred Allen, Winthrop Ames, George Arliss, Eleanor Belmont, Walter Damrosch, Joseph E. Davies, Robert H. Davis, Theodore Dreiser, James A. Farley, Arthur Hopkins, Otto Kahn, Groucho and Harpo Marx, Adolph Menjou, William Saroyan, Alfred E. Smith, Henry L. Stimson, John Steinbeck, Booth Tarkington, Oswald Garrison Villard, William Allen White, Alexander Woollcott, and others. There are scripts (some annotated) for seventeen produced and unproduced plays and motion pictures including The Butter and Egg Man (1925), The Late George Apley (1944), The Man Who Came to Dinner (1939) and several other works on which Kaufman collaborated with Marc Connelly, Ruth Goodman Goetz, Leueen MacGrath, Morrie Ryskind, Howard Teichmann and others. The remainder of the collection consists of notes pertaining to Of Thee I Sing (1931); scrapbooks (available only on microfilm) concerning Dulcy (1921), The Man Who Came to Dinner, and The Senator Was Indiscreet (1947); and other miscellany. The entire collection is also available on microfilm.

Loaned by Mrs. Irving Schneider, October 18, 1961

Prepared for microfilming (CJM)-1990

Location: 3M/31/K3

## Biography

Noted playwright and director George S. Kaufman was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on November 16, 1889. He did not at first seek his career on the stage: after graduation from high school he studied law for a short time, then became a journalist, writing for New York and Washington, D.C. newspapers. Kaufman served as drama critic for the New York Times and was credited with establishing its standards for liveliness, variety, and readability. During this period Kaufman also tried his hand at writing for the theater. His unproduced farce, Going Up, brought him to the attention of producer George C. Tyler. In 1918 Tyler commissioned the new playwright to work on a play, and the result was Some One in the House, a collaboration with Larry Evans and Walter Percival. Though the play was not a success, the association with Tyler was a fruitful one, and in 1921 Kaufman was commissioned to collaborate with Marc Connelly on Dulcy. The play, which starred Lynn Fontanne, ran for 246 performances.

Kaufman worked well with collaborators. He was well known for his sharp wit and could develop characters skillfully, though he was less adept at creating plots. Of all his plays only The Cocoanuts (1925), The Butter and Egg Man (1925), and Hollywood Pinafore (1945) were solo efforts. Among his collaborators were the leading playwrights of the American theater--Marc Connelly, Edna Ferber, Moss Hart, Morrie Ryskind, and Howard Teichmann. More than fifteen of Kaufman's plays passed the 200-performance mark. Talented as a director as well as a writer, Kaufman staged many of his own plays and such other memorable theatrical events as The Front Page (1928), Of Mice and Men (1937), and Guys and Dolls (1950).

A list of Kaufman's work is a chronicle of almost four decades of American theater history: Dulcy (1921), To the Ladies (1922), Merton of the Movies (1922), Beggar on Horseback (1924), The Cocoanuts (1925), The Butter and Egg Man (1925), The Royal Family (1927), Animal Crackers (1928), The Channel Road (1929), Once in a Lifetime (1930), Of Thee I Sing (1931), The Band Wagon (1931), Dinner at Eight (1932), The Dark Tower (1933), Let 'em Eat Cake (1933), Merrily We Roll Along (1934), First Lady (1935), Stage Door (1936), You Can't Take it With You (1936), I'd Rather Be Right (1937), The Fabulous Invalid (1938), The American Way (1939), The Man Who Came to Dinner (1939), George Washington Slept Here (1940), The Land Is Bright (1941), The Late George Apley (1944), Hollywood Pinafore (1945), The Solid Gold Cadillac (1953), and Silk Stockings (1955). Of Thee I Sing and You Can't Take It With You both received the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Kaufman also worked in Hollywood, receiving credit for nineteen screenplays and adaptations of his own work. Among these were Cocoanuts (1929), Animal Crackers (1930), You Can't Take It With You (1938), and Solid Gold Cadillac (1956).

Kaufman died on June 2, 1961.

Scope and Content

The Kaufman Papers held by the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research are a small collection consisting of correspondence, scripts, and biographical clippings. This paucity of material is apparently due to Kaufman's purposeful destruction of his correspondence. In recent years Kaufman biographer Scott Meredith unearthed some correspondence and other material concerning the playwright's life and career which he donated to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Researchers are urged to consult this collection, as well as the Kaufman material in the papers of Howard Teichmann.

The collection is organized as BIOGRAPHICAL SCRAPBOOKS, CORRESPONDENCE, PLAYS, SCREENPLAYS, and TELEVISION SCRIPTS AND OTHER WRITINGS. The collection is also available on microfilm.

The CORRESPONDENCE is entirely incoming and quite fragmentary, although there are letters from many prominent individuals including Walter Damrosch, Adolph Menjou, Oswald Garrison Villard, Joseph E. Davies, John Steinbeck, Groucho Marx, Harpo Marx, William Saroyan, Booth Tarkington, and Alexander Woollcott. Of these, only the correspondence with Woollcott concerning his appearance as himself in The Man Who Came to Dinner is of biographical interest. The correspondence consists only as photostatic copies, and the location of the originals is unknown, although other evidence in the collection suggests they may have been sold at the time of Kaufman's death.

The SCRIPTS are arranged chronologically by genre, as PLAYS, SCREEN PLAYS, and TELEVISION SCRIPTS AND OTHER WRITINGS, with works for the stage being the most numerous. A large number of the scripts are for unproduced works. Most of the titles are represented by unannotated typescripts and only the drafts of In the Money, on which he worked with Howard Teichmann, and an untitled play contain materials suggesting Kaufman's playwriting processing.

The remainder of the collection consists of BIOGRAPHICAL SCRAPBOOKS containing clippings and photographs. After filming, the original prints from The Senator Was Indiscreet album were removed to the WCFTR Stills File.

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Reel</u>	<u>Frame or Segment</u>	
				BIOGRAPHICAL SCRAPBOOKS
		1	1	1912-1921
			2	1918-1932
		2	1	1938-1939
1	1	3	1	CORRESPONDENCE, 1923-1943
				PLAYS
				<u>Dulcy, 1921</u>
		2	2	Clipping scrapbook
				<u>To the Ladies, 1922</u>
			3	Clipping scrapbook
				<u>Beggar on Horseback, 1924</u>
			4	Clipping scrapbook
				<u>The Deep-Tangled Wildwood, 1923</u>
	2	3	159	Mimeo script (anno.) by GK and Marc Connelly
				Blue print of stage set
				<u>The Butter and Egg Man, 1925</u>
	3		292	<u>Le Gentleman de L'Ohio</u>
				(French translation) ca. 1927
				<u>Bring on the Girls, 1934</u>
	4		312	Typescript by GK and Morrie Ryskind
				<u>Fabulous Invalid, 1938</u>
	5		445	Playbill
				<u>The Man Who Came to Dinner, 1939</u>
	6		454	Dutch translation (bound)
	7		577	Trial memorandum, n.d.
	8		610	Notes, clippings, and anecdote, 1939, n.d.
		2	5	Clipping scrapbook, 1939
				<u>George Washington Slept Here, 1940</u>
	9	3	622	Article, 1951
				<u>The Land Is Bright, 1941</u>
	10		625	Playbill
				<u>Dream on, Soldier, 1943</u>
	11		634	Published script
				<u>The Late George Apley, 1944</u>
	12		637	Typescript by GK and John P. Marquand
				<u>Hollywood Pinafore, 1945</u>
	13		751	Typescript by GK

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Reel</u>	<u>Frame or Segment</u>	
				PLAYS, Continued
1	14		839	<u>Exile, 1954</u> Typescript (annotated) Typescript
2	1	4	1	<u>The Lipstick War, 1956</u> Typescript by GK and Alan Campbell
	2		102	<u>The Same as Before Only Worse, 1958</u> Typescript by GK and Ruth Goetz
	3		209	<u>Big Casino Is Little Casino, n.d.</u> Typescript by GK
	4		225	Untitled play, Drafts, n.d.
				SCREENPLAYS
	5		324	<u>Sleeper Jump, 1942</u> Typescript by GK and Herman J. Mankiewicz
		2	6	<u>The Senator Was Indiscreet, 1947</u> Microfilm copy of photograph album
	6	4	471	<u>And Baby Makes Two, 1952</u> Typescript by GK and Leueen MacGrath
	7		574	<u>Story of a Woman, 1954</u> Typescript (anno.) by GK and Leueen MacGrath
	8-9		717	<u>In the Money, 1954</u> Miscellaneous draft acts and a motion picture outline by GK and Howard Teichmann
				TELEVISION SCRIPTS AND OTHER WRITINGS
	10		1110	<u>The Hat, 1953</u> Typescript by GK and Leueen MacGrath
	11		1193	<u>Amicable Parting, 1957</u> Typescript by GK and Leueen MacGrath
	12		1215	Miscellaneous speeches, notes, n.d.
	12		1248	"Life's Calendars," by GK and Marc Connelly, n.d.