



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Jack Kirkland papers

1928-1969

*T-Mss 1981-012

Processed by Elisabeth Elkind.

Summary

Creator: Kirkland, Jack, 1902-1969

Title: Jack Kirkland papers

Date: 1928-1969

Size: 3.75 linear feet (9 boxes)

Source: Gift of his widow, Nancy Kirkland Salisbury in December 1981.

Abstract: Mostly manuscripts by playwright and producer Jack Kirkland. Also a small amount of production material and legal and personal papers.

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Processing note: Processed by Elisabeth Elkind; Machine-readable finding aid created by Elisabeth Elkind.

Creator History

Playwright, producer, director and screenwriter, Jack Kirkland was born on July 25, 1902 in St. Louis, Missouri and died on February 22, 1969 in New York City. His biggest success was the play *Tobacco Road* which he adapted from the novel by Erskine Caldwell. The original production ran for over 3000 performances on Broadway, 1933-1941. Kirkland went on to produce three more revivals of the show on Broadway and various productions toured the country for seventeen years. One production with an all-black cast was banned from Chicago and Detroit but played in London.

Kirkland began his career as a journalist. His first play, *Frankie and Johnnie*, opened in Chicago in 1928 and on Broadway in 1930. Other plays written by Kirkland include *Tortilla Flat*, adapted from the novel by John Steinbeck, *I Must Love Someone*, *Suds in Your Eye*, *Georgia Boy*, *Strange Boarders*, *Mr. Adam*, *Man with the Golden Arm* and *Mandingo*. He was the producer for a number of shows including

Bright Honor, Forbidden Melody, Suzanna and the Elders, Tanyard Street and *The Moon Vine*. He also wrote or collaborated on screenplays including *Now and Forever, The Golden Coach*, with Jean Renoir, and *Fifth Avenue Folly*.

Jack Kirkland was married five times and had six children including the ballerina Gelsey Kirkland.

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of the collection is manuscripts by Kirkland including many drafts written in longhand. Includes scripts and story ideas for works that were ultimately produced and others that never were. The single box of personal and other papers includes everything else: a small amount of non-script material relating to productions, correspondence, legal papers and personal material including autobiographical writing.

Arrangement: Series I. Manuscripts by Kirkland Series II. Personal and other papers

Key Terms

Occupations

Dramatists

Subjects

Theater -- United States

Names

Kirkland, Jack, 1902-1969

Kirkland, Jack, 1902-1969. Tobacco road

Container List

Series I. Manuscripts by Kirkland 1928-1969, n.d (8 boxes)

Contains handwritten manuscripts and typescripts of plays and screenplays by Kirkland from first drafts and heavily revised versions to clean copies and publications. Includes various drafts of produced plays such as *Frankie and Johnnie*, *Man with the Golden Arm*, *Mandingo*, *Suds in Your Eye* and *Tobacco Road*, but also story ideas and manuscripts that may never have been produced.

Arrangement is alphabetical by title.

- b. 1 f. 1-3 *Afterglow* 1944 (3 folders)
Manuscript of play handwritten in pencil.
- b. 1 f. 4 *Afterglow* 1944 (1 folder)
Carbon typescript with a few handwritten pages of notes.
- b. 2 f. 1 *Angel Baby* 1958 Sept. 3 (1 folder)
Typescript screenplay called "Final Draft."
- b. 2 f. 2-3 *Bells For Your Toes* n.d. (2 folders)
Screenplay, mostly typescript with handwritten revisions, but first three pages are handwritten.
- b. 2 f. 4 *Bells on Your Toes* n.d. (1 folder)
Carbon typescript. Original story and screenplay by Jack Kirkland and Charles Greene. Earlier title for *Divorce American Style*. Additional page inserted.
- b. 2 f. 5 *Divorce American Style* n.d. (1 folder)
Carbon typescript. Original story and screenplay by Jack Kirkland and Charles Greene. Later title for *Bells on Your Toes*.
- b. 2 f. 6-8 *Best Laid Plans* n.d. (3 folders)
Handwritten manuscript.
- b. 6 f. 9 *The Best Laid Plans* 1969 (1 folder)
Typescript called original story and treatment by Jack Kirkland and Charles Greene with letter from agent to Kirkland's widow attached.
- b. 3 f. 1 Untitled new play by Jack Kirkland and Mark Druck n.d. (1 folder)
Carbon typescript with pencil revisions. Later named *The Big Bite*.
- b. 3 f. 2 Untitled new play by Jack Kirkland and Mark Druck n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript with staging directions in red. Later named *The Big Bite*.
- b. 3 f. 3 *The Big Bite* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript.
- b. 3 f. 4 *The Big Bite* n.d. (1 folder)
Typescript with few revisions in pencil.
- b. 3 f. 5 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Handwritten manuscript.
- b. 3 f. 6 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Mostly handwritten manuscript, a few typed pages inserted.
- b. 3 f. 7 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Manuscript of handwritten and typed pages.
- b. 3 f. 8 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Manuscript of handwritten and typed pages.
- b. 3 f. 9 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript. No title page.
- b. 4 f. 1 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript. An original screen treatment by Jack Kirkland and Monty Shaff.

Series I. Manuscripts by Kirkland (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 2 *The Children's Crusade* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript, photocopy. An original screen treatment by Jack Kirkland and Monty Shaff.
- b. 4 f. 3 *A Cowboy Abroad by Tom Nix* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript. [Ghost-written by Jack Kirkland] for the Fox Film Corporation.
- b. 4 f. 4 *A Dangerous Woman by George Batson and Jack Kirkland* n.d. (1 folder)
Typescript with pencil revisions and a few handwritten pages inserted.
- b. 4 f. 5 *Strange Boarders by George Batson and Jack Kirkland* 1947 (1 folder)
Published version of *A Dangerous Woman*.
- b. 4 f. 6 *Fifth Avenue Folly by Jack Kirkland and Charles Greene* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript of a screen treatment based on an original story by Jack Kirkland.
- b. 4 f. 7 *Frankie and Johnnie by Jack Kirkland* 1928 (1 folder)
Typescript with some pencil revisions for comedy drama.
- b. 4 f. 8 *Frankie and Johnnie by Jack Kirkland* 1928 (1 folder)
Typescript for the comedy drama with some pencil revisions and staging directions in red. The play opened in New Rochelle on May 23, 1929 and, with a few revisions, opened three days later in Chicago.
- b. 4 f. 9 *Frankie and Johnnie, play by Jack Kirkland, music by Eugene Bonner* n.d. (1 folder)
Mostly clean typescript for the opera.
- b. 4 f. 10 *Georgia Boy by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (1 folder)
Typescript with pencil revisions for the play by Kirkland based on the novel by Erskine Caldwell.
- b. 5 f. 1 *The Man with the Golden Arm by Jack Kirkland* 1953 November (1 folder)
Handwritten script called "First Draft." Based on the novel by ?Nelson Algren. Script is bound and inscribed: "Dear Jo, This was one of your father's works in which he took special pride. You were another. Guard both well. --M, Christmas, 1971"
- b. 5 f. 2 *The Man with the Golden Arm by Jack Kirkland* 1956 June 14 (1 folder)
Clean carbon typescript with ground plans and prop list. Based on the novel by Nelson Algren.
- b. 5 f. 3-5 *Mandingo by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (3 folders)
Handwritten script based on the novel by Kyle Onstott.
- b. 6 f. 1 *Mandingo by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean carbon typescript based on the novel by Kyle Onstott.
- b. 6 f. 2 *Mandingo by Jack Kirkland* 1961 (1 folder)
Typescript with handwritten revisions and additions taped in called "Final revision before rehearsal." Based on the novel by Kyle Onstott, contains letter, notes, scene sketches, cast list and clipping of review.
- b. 6 f. 3-5 *Rings for your Fingers* n.d. (3 folders)
Handwritten screenplay.
- b. 6 f. 6 *Rings for your Fingers* n.d. (1 folder)
Screenplay pages, out of sequence, mostly handwritten, a few typed.
- b. 6 f. 7 *Rittenhouse Square by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript.
- b. 6 f. 8 *Rittenhouse Square by Jack Kirkland* 1944 (1 folder)
Clean typescript. Differs slightly from above.
- b. 7 f. 1 *Roger Williams* n.d. (1 folder)
Handwritten story and typed article.
- b. 7 f. 2-4 *Suds in Your Eye by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (3 folders)
Handwritten script with a few typed pages based on a novel by Mary Lasswell and a play by Nathaniel Curtis.
- b. 7 f. 5 *Suds in Your Eye by Jack Kirkland* 1944 (1 folder)
Published version. Based on a novel by Mary Lasswell. Two copies, one with a few notes.

Series I. Manuscripts by Kirkland (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 6 *That's My Baby by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (1 folder)
"A sketch for use by the U.S. Army," typescript and handwritten.
- b. 7 f. 7 *Tobacco Road* n.d. (1 folder)
Bound manuscript, some pages are typed, others handwritten, all heavily revised. The play by Jack Kirkland was based on the novel by Erskine Caldwell.
- b. 7 f. 8 *Tobacco Road* n.d. (1 folder)
Typescript with handwritten revisions.
- b. 8 f. 1-2 *Tobacco Road (musical)* n.d. (2 folders)
Handwritten first draft. Book by Jack Kirkland, music and lyrics by...
- b. 8 f. 3 *Jeeter, the musical version of Tobacco Road* n.d. (1 folder)
Clean typescript called First Draft. Based on the play by Jack Kirkland and the novel by Erskine Caldwell. Music and lyrics by...
- b. 8 f. 4 *La Route au Tabac* 1947 (1 folder)
Play published in French and inscribed to Nancy and Jack, 1955.
- b. 8 f. 5 *Tortilla Flat* 1937 (1 folder)
Clean carbon typescript for play by Jack Kirkland based on the novel by John Steinbeck. Contains property plot and record of rehearsal attendance.
- b. 8 f. 6 *Untitled play, n.d* (1 folder)
Handwritten manuscript of play set in Chicago in 1938.

Series II. Personal and other papers 1932-1969 (1 box)

Contains an autobiographical manuscript (chapter 1), legal papers pertaining to Kirkland's suit against the city of Chicago for closing down *Tobacco Road*, a small amount of correspondence, various papers pertaining to productions such as telegrams, contracts, financial papers, programs and clippings, a Kirkland obituary, pilot log, and a transcript of his memorial service.

- b. 9 f. 1 *Autobiography, n.d* (1 folder)
Chapter 1 of Kirkland's autobiography is mostly handwritten, also some typed pages, heavily revised.
- b. 9 f. 2 *Transcription of memorial service and obituary, 1969* (1 folder)
for Jack Kirkland.
- b. 9 f. 3 *Chicago vs. Jack Kirkland and Sam Grisman, 1935* (1 folder)
Brief, arguments and transcription of record for court case. Kirkland and Grisman sued the city of Chicago for revoking the license of the theater where *Tobacco Road* was to play because of objections to some language and actions in the play.
- b. 9 f. 4 *Letters from John M. Wilson; 1964* (1 folder)
Tales of his father Riley Wilson of West Virginia, sent to Jack Kirkland, probably as story material.
- b. 9 f. 5 *Third party correspondence, 1961* (1 folder)
Letter to Hilda Simms Angartha from Mrs. Jude Romero discussing a Kirkland play.
- b. 9 f. 6 *The Man with the Golden Arm* 1956 (1 folder)
Opening night telegrams wishing the best to Kirkland and clippings of reviews.
- b. 9 f. 7 *Mr. Adam by Jack Kirkland* n.d. (1 folder)
Floor plan.
- b. 9 f. 8 *Mr. Adam by Jack Kirkland* 1949 (1 folder)
Clippings.
- b. 9 f. 9 *Tobacco Road* 1932-1936 (1 folder)
Contract between Erskine Caldwell and John Kirkland and royalty and box office statements.
- b. 9 f. 10 *Tobacco Road* n.d. (1 folder)
Photograph from the British production.
- b. 9 f. 11 *Tortilla Flats* 1937 (1 folder)
Contracts.

Series II. Personal and other papers (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 12 **Programs** 1940-1944 (1 folder)
For plays written and/or produced by Jack Kirkland including *The Moon Vine*, *Tanyard Street*,
Tobacco Road, *Suds in Your Eye* and *Suzanna and the Elders*.
- b. 9 f. 13 **Pilot log book** of John M. Kirkland 1933-1934 (1 folder)