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Guide to the

Jim Moran papers

1911-1999 (bulk 1938-1960)

*T-Mss 2000-007

Compiled by Leslie Reyman, March 2013

Summary

Creator: Moran, Jim

Title: Jim Moran papers, 1911-1999 (bulk 1938-1960)

Size: 4.45 linear feet (11 boxes)

Source: Donated by Pamela Draper in 2000.

Abstract: James. S. Moran (1907-1999) was a press agent who was credited with creating the "publicity stunt." Some of his more famous stunts include selling a refrigerator to an Eskimo (for General Electric), finding a needle in a haystack and hatching an ostrich egg (for the book *The Egg and I*).

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying and photography will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Preferred citation: Jim Moran papers, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator history

James Sterling Moran, known as Jim, was born in Woodstock, Virginia in 1907, the third of four sons. Moran did not complete his high school education. One of his first jobs was as an airline executive with Eugene Vidal (father of Gore).

Moran began in the publicity profession sometime during the 1930s, and is credited with creating the "publicity stunt." (A publicity stunt is a planned event designed to attract attention to the stunt's organizers, product or cause). Many of his more famous publicity stunts were created in the 1940s. Those stunts include selling a refrigerator to an Eskimo for General Electric, finding a needle in a haystack after a week of searching, hatching an ostrich egg by sitting on it for 19 days (for the book *The Egg and I*), and changing horses in mid-stream (the Presidential campaign of 1944).

Some of these stunts were in conjunction with Fred Waring the popular musician and band leader of the 1940s. Moran was Waring's press agent. Two of the more memorable stunts had Waring lead a bull through a china shop (because of a lost sports bet—the shop was Plummer's in mid-town Manhattan) and the sun tan challenge. The sun tan challenge had Moran covering half of his body, leaving the other half to tan in the California sun, then flying to Florida, covering the California-tanned side and getting a tan with Florida sun. Which sun tan was better? It was a draw.

In later years, (1970s-1990s), he worked at graphic design and painted. Moran was married four times, Shirley Carrol (divorced), Dorothy Thomas (divorced), Linda Howes (1976-divorce date unknown) and another unidentified woman. Moran spent the last years of his life at the Actor's Home in Englewood, New Jersey. He died on October 18, 1999.

Source:

New York Times, Douglas Martin, 1999, Oct. 24

Scope and content note

The collection contains correspondence (mostly personal); publicity files, such as photocopied clippings and outlines of potential stunts; photographs; and personal items. There are also writings, including articles, essays, and a partial autobiography. The writings are almost entirely undated.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged alphabetically by name, subject and title.

Key terms

Subjects

Publicity

Occupations

Press agents

Names

Moran, Jim

Vidal, Eugene Luther, 1895-1969

Vidal, Gore, 1925-2012

Waring, Fred, 1900-1984

Special formats

Correspondence

Newspaper clippings

Container list

- b.1 f.1-2 Address Book, undated
- b.1 f.3 Biography, undated
- b.1 f.4 Cleveland Air Races, 1932
- b.1 f.5 Copyright Registration, 1988
- Correspondence, 1946-1999
The correspondence is mostly personal and from family and friends writing about events of their lives, politics and other world events. Some correspondents include articles and/or clippings that they wanted Moran to know about. The majority of the material dates from the 1980s and 1990s.
- b.1 f.6 1946-1959
- b.1 f.7 1960-1969
- b.1 f.8 1970-1979
- b.1 f.9 1980-1984
- b.1 f.10-13 1985-1987
- b.2 f.1-2 1988
- b.2 f.3-4 1989
- b.2 f.5-6 1990
- b.3 f.1-2 1991
- b.3 f.3-5 1992-1994
- b.3 f.6-7 1995-1999
- b.3 f.8 undated
- b.4 f.1 Designs by Naromji, undated (Naromji is an anagram of Moran's name.)
- b.4 f.2-3 Fan Mail, 1953-1959
- b.11 f.1 Flyers, undated
- b.4 f.4 Hughes, Howard, undated
- b.4 f.5 Langford Business Deal, ca. 1960
- b.4 f.6 Lists, undated
- b.4 f.7 Magic Squares, undated
- b.4 f.8 Marriages, ca. 1976
Moran was married four times. He married his third wife, Linda Howe, in 1976 in Japan. Marriage certificate and photographs.
- b.5 f.1 Miscellaneous, undated
- b.5 f.2 Passports and Other Identification, 1913-1994
- b.5 f.3 Photographs, undated
- b.11 f.2-3 Photographs, ca. 1911, undated (Photo album in box 11 folder 2 has some dry mold on the pages)
Publicity Stunts, 1938-1975
This material covers the eighty-three publicity stunts that Moran was involved in. It includes mostly newspaper clippings, the majority being photocopied. There are also notes Moran wrote in order to help him work out the stunts details.
- b.5 f.4 The 440A Recording Device, 1938
- b.5 f.5 Anna the Opera Horse's Funeral, 1940
- b.5 f.6 Bald Headed Hair Restoration, 1947
- b.5 f.7 Bandersnatch or Heads in Hatboxes, 1944

Publicity Stunts, 1938-1975 (cont.)

- b.5 f.8 Ben Hecht, 1945
- b.5 f.9 Black Bird Auditions, 1975
- b.5 f.10 The Blindfold Tour, 1966
- b.5 f.11 British Honduras Honey, 1960
- b.5 f.12 A Bull In A China Shop, 1939
- b.5 f.13 Bunker Hill and the Whites of Their Eyes, 1939
- b.5 f.14 Burl Ives at Anniversary Party, 1952
- b.5 f.15 Camels Deliver Rugs, 1953
- b.5 f.16 Caproni Tri-plane, undated
- b.5 f.17 Casino Royale Tour, 1967
- b.5 f.18 Changing Horses in Mid-stream, 1944
- b.5 f.19 Ciro's Restaurant and Prince Saud, 1947
- b.5 f.20 Clippings, 1961-1990
- b.6 f.1 Crazy Crabs, 1976
- b.6 f.2 The David Frost Show, 1969-1970
- b.6 f.3 David Merrick's Fanny, undated
- b.6 f.4 *Don't Make Waves*, undated
- b.6 f.5 Dorothy Lamour Bond-Selling Tour, 1942
- b.6 f.6 *The Egg and I*, 1946
- b.6 f.7 Eggs and Electric Fan, undated
- b.6 f.8 Fat People, 1941
- b.6 f.9 Flea Actors, 1942
- b.6 f.10 Flexi-Flyer Kites, undated
- b.6 f.11 Fred Waring's Sun Tan Challenge, 1940
- b.6 f.12 George Washington Bridge Song, 1953-1954
- b.6 f.13 A Girl As Happy As A Lark, 1959
- b.6 f.14 Gimmicks, 1983
- b.6 f.15 Gold Brick, 1952
- b.6 f.16 Hair, 1947-1949
- b.6 f.17 Harnessing Escalator Energy, 1941
- b.6 f.18 Ice, 1939, 1956
Moran Ice Expedition, 1939; Selling an Icebox to an Eskimo, 1939; Glacial Ice, 1956
- b.6 f.19 Indiana Club Speech, 1961
- b.6 f.20 Interim California Senator Campaign, 1946
- b.6 f.21 Invisible Billboard, 1941
- b.6 f.22 *Is There Sex After Death?*, 1971 (Movie role)
- b.6 f.23 Jack Paar Show, 1957-1962

Publicity Stunts, 1938-1975 (cont.)

- b.6 f.24 John Goldfarb Please Come Home, 1964
- b.6 f.25 List of Stunts and Practical Jokes, undated
- b.6 f.26 *Look Back In Anger*, 1958
- b.6 f.27 Ludington Line Aviation, 1932
- b.6 f.28 Make It Snow, undated
- b.6 f.29 Mask Tour, 1961
- b.6 f.30 Matchmaker Orangatan, ca. 1950
- b.6 f.31 Midgets and Kites, 1951
- b.6 f.32 Miserable the Book, 1960
- b.6 f.33 Modern Art, 1946
- b.6 f.34 The Mouse on the Moon, 1963
- b.7 f.1 *The Mouse That Roared*, 1959
- b.7 f.2 Needle In A Haystack, 1939
- b.7 f.3 Nevin National News, 1926
- b.7 f.4 Pete the Singing Canary, 1937
- b.7 f.5 Pigeons With Eyeglasses, 1950
- b.7 f.6 Pimm's Cup, 1949
- b.7 f.7 Professor Briggs, 1941
- b.7 f.8 Purple Cow, 1940-1941
- b.7 f.9 Pyramid Club, 1949
- b.7 f.10 Red Owl Stores, 1959-1960
- b.7 f.11 Rhubarb the Cat, undated
- b.7 f.12 Rochester, New York Advertising Club Speech, 1949
- b.7 f.13 Roney Plaza Hotel, 1966
- b.7 f.14 The Rug That Hitler Chewed, 1946
- b.7 f.15 Screwball, 1958-1966
- b.7 f.16 Sea Monkeys, 1969
- b.7 f.17 The Shah of Iran, 1953
- b.7 f.18 Sophocles, The Hyenna, 1954
- b.7 f.19 St. George Hotel, 1962
- b.7 f.20 Study of Juvenile Cabbages, undated
- b.7 f.21 Suzy, The Love-Lorn Orangatan, undated
- b.7 f.22 Swap Hop, 1949
- b.7 f.23 Tap Dancer, 1974
- b.7 f.24 Third Man Zithers, 1950
- b.7 f.25 Tomato Through a Tennis Racket, 1941

Publicity Stunts, 1938-1975 (cont.)

- b.7 f.26 Tokyo, 1970
- b.7 f.27 Trilby, 1948
- b.7 f.28 Tunic Sale, 1959
- b.7 f.29 Virtual Handshake, 1948
- b.7 f.30 Whales, 1939
- b.7 f.31 World's Worst Orchestra, undated
- b.7 f.32 Yellowbeard, 1983
- b.11 f.4 Scrapbook, 1946-1947, 1961
- b.7 f.32 Slattery's Review, 1969
- b.7 f.33 Strickland, Robert "Bob" A.G., 1989
United States Marine Corps Reserve-Retired. A former client of Moran's.
- b.8 f.1 Topics of Interest, 1934-1993
- b.8 f.2 Travels, 1957-1961
- b.8 f.3 Vidal, Gore, 1992
- b.8 f.4-8 What Not Book, undated
These are scrapbooks of sorts. Notebooks of notes, clippings, writings, lists, tickets and receipts.
Moran used this material to aid his essay writing and spurred ideas for his autobiography.
- b.8 f.9-11 Writings, 1990, undated
- b.9 f.1-8 Writings, 1990, undated
- b.10 f.1-11 Writings, 1990, undated