



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Garry Simpson papers**

1930-1979

\*T-Mss 2013-101

Processed by Em Longan in 2022.

## Summary

**Creator:** Simpson, Garry, 1914-2011

**Title:** Garry Simpson papers

**Date:** 1930-1979

**Size:** 2.24 linear feet (4 oversize folders, 6 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by John Simpson in 2013 and 2014.

**Revision History:** Revised biographical note.

**Abstract:** Garry Simpson (1914-2011) was an American television producer, director, and screenwriter for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Vermont Educational Television Station. His papers date from 1930 to 1979 and chronicle his career through scripts, set design drawings, press clippings, and advertising brochures.

**Other Finding Aid:** Prior to donating the collection to New York Public Library, John Simpson wrote detailed notes that further contextualize Simpson's work. These notes include program synopses and dates; awards; notable actors; and an expanded timeline of Garry's time at NBC. Researchers are advised to consult these notes in Additional Resources for more information.

**Preferred citation:** Garry Simpson papers, \*T-Mss 2013-101. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Em Longan in 2022.

## Creator History

Garry Simpson (1914-2011) was an American television producer, director, and screenwriter for more than thirty-five years.

Simpson was born in Jackson, Mississippi, on February 16, 1914, and grew up in San Jose, California.

He served in the National Guard for three years after graduating from high school in 1932. In 1938 Simpson earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and drama from Stanford University. He acted in summer stock in San Francisco before accepting a scholarship to the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York City. Simpson declined an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point in order to accept the scholarship and moved to New York City in 1938.

Simpson worked as an actor and director's assistant with the Old Globe Theatre Company at the New York World's Fair in 1939. While there, he frequently attended television technology demonstrations hosted by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and their parent company, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). After the Fair ended, Simpson was hired by RCA as an announcer and director for closed-circuit experimental television programs. In this role, he toured the country in order to educate the public about new technologies in television. Simpson was then promoted to stage manager at NBC, the first person in the company to hold that position.

As stage manager, Simpson worked on every show produced by the studio, including the Mobile Unit Programs. Some of his directing credits include *Mary Kay and Johnny* (1947-1950), *Eye Witness* (1953), and *Wide Wide World* (1955-1958). Throughout his career, Simpson also wrote and produced commercials for Lucky Strike, Bell Telephone, Jell-O, and others; directed anthology shows including *The Chevrolet Tele-Theatre* (1948-1950) and *Campbell's Soundstage* (1953-1954); and live broadcasts, including the first televised heavyweight boxing match, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and the Heisman Trophy Awards.

At the end of 1958, NBC fired most of their directing staff, including Simpson. He remained in New York City and joined WPIX Education Television, where he produced shows in a variety of subject areas including science, math, music, and fine arts. He then joined N.W. Ayer & Son (1962-1966) and also produced television commercials and industrial films with the United States Army Signal Corps Pictorial Center.

In 1968, Simpson moved to Vermont to spearhead the formation and development of the Vermont Educational Television Station (now Vermont Public). While serving as Director of Programming, he wrote, produced, and directed shows, including *Portrait of America: The Art of Currier and Ives* (1978); *Talisman Barra* (1970); and *The 14th Star* (1977). Simpson retired in 1980.

Simpson was a three-time Emmy Award recipient from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and was a member of the Director's Guild of America and the Actor's Equity Association.

Garry Simpson died in his Middlebury, Vermont, home on November 19, 2011.

## Scope and Content Note

The Garry Simpson papers, dated from 1930 to 1979, provide a comprehensive portrait of Simpson's career as director and writer at the National Broadcast Company (NBC) and the Vermont Educational Television Station. The collection is arranged into two groups: National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and Vermont Educational Television Station.

The NBC materials are arranged into Administrative Materials and Television Programs. Administrative Materials are arranged chronologically and contain internal company files, such as reports, authority codes, and rate manuals, that showcase the landscape of the television broadcasting business.

NBC Television Programs, while not a complete catalog of every project Simpson worked on, include

scripts, set design drawings, booking sheets, and reviews. Materials are arranged alphabetically by program title and include: *Eye-Witness* (1947-1948), *The World of Mr. Sweeney* (1954), and *Wide Wide World* (1955-1958).

Vermont Educational Television Station materials are arranged alphabetically by title and contain scripts, set design drawings, correspondence, and articles. Some of the programs represented here include *Odyssey of a Tree* (1968), *The First Step* (1969), and *Portrait of America: The Art of Currier and Ives* (1978).

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into two groupings: National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and Vermont Educational Television Station.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Educational television stations  
Television -- Production and direction -- United States  
Television broadcasting  
Television programs

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Programs (Publications)  
Scripts  
Set design drawings

### **Occupations**

Television directors.

### **Names**

Hungerford, Art, 1911-2001  
Simpson, Garry, 1914-2011  
Zworykin, V.K. (Vladimir Kosma), 1889-1982  
National Broadcasting Company  
Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.)

## Container List

### National Broadcasting Company 1930s-1957

- b. 1 f. 1-19 Administrative Materials 1936-1977
- b. 6 f. 1-3
  - Contains program booking sheets, press releases, and reviews; internal company reports; service rate manuals; informational advertisements; and television broadcasting authority codes.
- Television Programs
- b. 2 f. 1-3
  - Armstrong Circle Theatre* 1951-1953
  - o. 1 *The Arthur Murray Party* 1957
  - b. 2 f. 4 *Broadway Open House* 1951 August
  - b. 2 f. 5-10 *Campbell's Soundstage* 1953-1954
  - b. 3 f. 1-4
    - Contains scripts and set design drawings for "Innocent Until Proved Guilty" (1953), "Home is Where Love Is" (1953), and "An Eye for an Eye" (1954), among other episodes.
  - b. 6 f. 4 o. 3
- b. 3 f. 5-11 o. 2
  - Chevrolet Tele-Theatre* 1949-1950
  - Contains scripts and set design drawings for "Mirage in Manhattan" (1948), "The Door" (1949), and "The Final Bell" (1950), among other episodes.
  - b. 3 f. 12 *Day at the Zoo* 1947 August
  - b. 4 f. 1-7 *Eye-Witness* 1947-1948
  - b. 4 f. 8 *Ford Star Theatre* 1950
  - b. 4 f. 9 *Four Star Revue* 1950 October 11
  - b. 4 f. 10 *In Town Today* 1946
  - b. 4 f. 11 *Jimmy's Place* 1958 April 29
  - b. 4 f. 12-13 *Lucky Strike Hit Parade* 1951
  - b. 4 f. 14 *Philco Television Playhouse* 1950 April 9
  - b. 4 f. 15 *Suspense* 1953
  - b. 5 f. 1 *The Three Garridebs* 1937 November 23
  - b. 5 f. 2 o. 1 *Tic Tac Dough* 1957
  - b. 5 f. 3-6 o. 1 *Wide Wide World* 1955-1958
  - b. 5 f. 7-10
    - The World of Mr. Sweeney* 1954
    - Contains scripts for episodes "Afraid to Go Home," "Kippie's Examination," and "Kippie Plays Indian." Program notes are also included.

### Vermont Educational Television Station 1966-1978

- b. 5 f. 11 *The 14th Star* 1977
- b. 5 f. 12 *The Art of Luigi Lucioni* 1971
- b. 5 f. 13 *The First Step* 1969
- b. 5 f. 14 o. 4 *In Place of Folly* 1967
- b. 5 f. 15 *Land of Promise* 1973-1974
- b. 5 f. 16 *Odyssey of a Tree* 1968
- b. 5 f. 17 *Portrait of America: The Art of Currier and Ives* 1978
- b. 5 f. 18 *A River of Milk* 1973
- b. 5 f. 19 *The Vermont State Government*