



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Harry Stone papers**

1915-1977

\*T-Mss 1994-004

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** Stone, Harry, 1928-

**Title:** Harry Stone papers

**Date:** 1915-1977

**Size:** .84 linear feet (2 boxes, 1 volume)

**Source:** Donated by Laurence Breakstone, 1994

**Abstract:** Harry Stone, also known as Israel Breakstone (born circa 1900), was an entertainer who worked on the vaudeville circuit in New York and Pennsylvania for about 15 years in the 1920s and 1930s. The Harry Stone papers, dating from 1915 to 1977, hold source material for his comedic skits, photographs, scrapbooks, and an address book.

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

## Creator History

Harry Stone, also known as Israel Breakstone (born circa 1900), was an entertainer who worked on the vaudeville circuit in New York and Pennsylvania for about 15 years in the 1920s and 1930s. Primarily a vocalist, he also incorporated jokes and his own comedic skits into his act. Stone first worked as a social director in resorts in the Catskills, and during his career he performed with Milton Berle, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Phil Baker, George Burns, and Gracie Allen. He also sang in the chorus of the Metropolitan Opera. After leaving vaudeville, Stone became a theatrical agent.

## Scope and Content Note

The Harry Stone papers, dating from 1915 to 1977, hold source material for his comedic skits, photographs, scrapbooks, and an address book.

Source material comprises the bulk of the collection. Dating from 1924 to 1933, it consists of comedic skits authored by Stone, song lyrics and published sheet music, and published jokes and skits. Most of Stone's original typed skits, with stage and prop instructions, are in a bound volume titled "Bits and Skits." The rest are foldered along with hand-written skits and jokes, and published booklets of jokes, stories, and other stage material.

The photographs contain three undated professional publicity prints of a duo of performers, one of which is probably Stone.

One of the scrapbooks is an autograph book dating from Stone's high school years. The other contains clippings and programs covering Stone's years in school and his time working in the Catskills, and on the vaudeville circuit in New York City and Pennsylvania.

The address book dates from Stone's career as an agent and contains the names of many entertainers and industry contacts. The names are arranged by profession or act, such as agents, dancers, hypnotists, magicians, etc.

The collection also holds a paper about vaudeville written by Sylvan Sobel in 1976 during his senior year of college, for which the student interviewed Stone. Sobel sent a copy to Stone the following year with an explanatory letter.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged alphabetically by format or title.

## **Key Terms**

### **Occupations**

Comedians  
Singers

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Scripts

### **Subjects**

Vaudeville

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Address Book undated
- Performance Material
- b. 1 f. 2-5 1924-1933, undated
  - v. 1 *Bits and Skits* undated
- b. 1 f. 6 Published Sheet Music 1920s
- b. 1 f. 7 Photographs undated
- b. 2 f. 1 *A Return to Vaudeville: Its Function and What It Symbolically Said About America, 1885-1932 by Sylvan Sobel* 1976-1977
- Scrapbooks
- b. 2 f. 2 1915
- b. 2 f. 3 1916-1933