



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Earle McGill papers

1938-1945

*T-Mss 2014-120

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Summary

Creator: McGill, Earle

Title: Earle McGill papers

Date: 1938-1945

Size: 1.3 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: Earle McGill (1897-1949) was an American radio producer and director best known for his work for Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). The Earle McGill papers date from 1938 to 1945 and document his career as a radio director, author, and war correspondent in Japan during the Second World War. The collection primarily holds scripts and correspondence.

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Related Materials:

Earle McGill papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator History

Earle McGill (1897-1949) was an American radio producer and director best known for his work for Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). After graduating from Yale College in 1921, McGill moved to New York and began writing for Metro Goldwyn-Mayer and Paramount, and starting working in radio after meeting producer Jed Harris. McGill was a radio producer and director for CBS for eleven years. Among the numerous shows he directed were Columbia Workshop (beginning in 1938), Millions for Defense (1941), E.R. Squibb & Sons' Calling America (1942), American School on the Air, and the CBS

radio broadcast of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra from 1943 to 1944. He also produced radio shows for the State Department, the United States Army recruiting program, and the Institute for Democratic Education. During the Second World War, as part of the Radio Directors Guild, McGill served as a war correspondent in Hawaii, Guam, Manila, and Japan, where he witnessed the Japanese surrender.

McGill taught radio studies and English at several universities including New York University, Barnard College, and Fordham University. His book, *Radio Directing*, was published in 1940 and was considered a staple textbook for radio education.

Earle McGill died in 1949.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from 1938 to 1945 and primarily holds scripts and correspondence relating to McGill's career as a radio producer and director for Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). McGill's time as a war correspondent in Japan is documented through a small amount of radiograms, memoranda, and remarks regarding the surrender of the Japanese in the Second World War.

CBS files document McGill's administrative activities while he was a radio director and producer. The files hold correspondence, program lists, salary schedules for actors, and scouting activities reports. Correspondence discusses the sending and receiving of radio scripts, author agreements, and billing. Scouting activities reports were created by McGill and other directors and producers for the Columbia Workshop. The reports review radio plays such as *Sing Out Sweet Land*, *Snafu*, *Anna Lucasta*, and *Up in Central Park*.

Correspondence relates to the publication of McGill's book, *Radio Directing*. Primary correspondents are Harry R. Snyder, assistant publisher for McGraw-Hill Book Co., and other editorial staff. Letters dating from 1938 to 1940 discuss securing an author for the book's forward and information for sales promotion of the book. Letters dated from 1944 to 1945 are chiefly from Snyder and regard McGill's proposed second edition, and are accompanied by letters of praise on the book from educators and radio professionals. McGill was a member of the Lotus Club during the 1940s. One file containing meeting notices, invoices, correspondence, and invitations to events is present.

Scripts in the collection are largely for radio shows produced by CBS. Titles include *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1939), *Forecast* (1940), *Highway for Americans* (1941), *Stage Door Canteen* (1942), *Calling America* (1943), *This Land and Its People* (1945), and recordings from the Association of National Advertisers (A.N.A.), including "The Second Wartime Conference of 1943." Other scripts are for YMCA recordings, the Irviah Women's Division of the Jewish Education Committee, and the Navy WAVES Recruiting Company.

Press releases, memoranda, radiograms, and other types of internal correspondence from the General Headquarters of the U.S. Armed Forces, Pacific Public Relations Office are present. Dated August 1945, the messages document the communications between Douglas MacArthur and the Japanese government, including commands issued for cessation of hostilities after the Japanese surrender. Also included is background information on the Fifth Air Force, the history of the USS *Missouri*, and remarks given by MacArthur at the ceremony of surrender.

Material relating to a proposed collection of radio plays for high school students titled *You're on the Air* includes correspondence, play title lists, script draft excerpts, casting suggestions, character lists,

notes, and the final agreement between the creators and the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Company. Correspondents include McGill and the other creators of the program, Abe H. Lass, chairman of the department of English at Fort Hamilton High School, and Donald Axelrod of the Metropolitan Vocational High School. The letters discuss play titles, ideas, script drafts, obtaining rights to plays, and publication.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by format or subject.

Key Terms

Subjects

Radio -- Production and direction
Radio programs
World War, 1939-1945

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scripts

Names

Columbia Broadcasting System, inc.

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-2 CBS Files 1939-1944
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence 1938-1944
- b. 1 f. 4 Lotos Club Material 1944-1945
- b. 3 f. 16 World War II Materials 1945
- b. 3 f. 17 *Book Proposal Material-- You're on the Air* 1942-1945
- Scripts
 - b. 1 f. 5 *American School of the Air* 1941
 - b. 1 f. 6 Annual Conference of Christians and Jews-- "Newsreel for Thanksgiving" 1946
 - b. 1 f. 7 *Army Recruiting Program* 1940
 - b. 1 f. 8-9 Association of National Advertisers Recordings 1943-1944
 - b. 1 f. 10 *Auto-Lite Audition* 1940
 - b. 1 f. 11 *Calling America* 1943
 - b. 1 f. 12 *The Catholic Hour* 1944
 - b. 1 f. 13 *Columbia Workshop-- "The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet"* 1938
 - b. 2 f. 1 "Drop the Hook" 1945
 - b. 2 f. 2 *The Eyes and Ears of the Air Force* 1943
 - b. 2 f. 3 *Forecast* 1940
 - b. 2 f. 4 *The Free Company-- "Above Suspicion"* 1941
 - b. 2 f. 5 *Freedom of Speech* 1941
 - b. 2 f. 6 *Highway for Americans* 1941
 - b. 2 f. 7 *Irviah on the Air* 1944
For Irviah Women's Division of the Jewish Education Committee of New York, Inc.
 - b. 2 f. 8 *Millions for Defense* 1941
 - b. 2 f. 9 Miscellaneous CBS Radio Scripts 1940s
 - b. 2 f. 10 *Mrs. Miniver* 1944
 - b. 2 f. 11-12 *New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra* 1943-1944
 - b. 3 f. 1 *Our Prisoners of War Speak* 1945
 - b. 3 f. 2 *Pursuit of Happiness* 1939
 - b. 3 f. 3 *Red Cross Recordings* 1944
 - b. 3 f. 4 *School of the Air of the Americas-- Americans at Work* 1940-1942
 - b. 3 f. 5 *S.M. Smith- General Motors* 1939
 - b. 3 f. 6 "Something for the Girls" (With Helen Hayes) 1944
 - b. 3 f. 7 *Stage Door Canteen* 1942
 - b. 3 f. 8 "Surrender of Germany" Emergency Script 1945
 - b. 3 f. 9 *They Live Forever* 1942
 - b. 3 f. 10 *This Land and Its People* 1945
 - b. 3 f. 11 *Two Who Did* 1944
For the American Society for the Control of Cancer.
 - b. 3 f. 12 United States Department of the Interior-- "What Price America?" 1940

Scripts (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 13 *Waves on Parade* 1945
- b. 3 f. 14 *The World of Tomorrow* 1943
- b. 3 f. 15 *YMCA Recording-- "One Hundred Years with Youth"* 1944