



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Sam Shain papers**

1931-1970

\*T-Mss 1977-006

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** Shain, Sam

**Title:** Sam Shain papers

**Date:** 1931-1970

**Size:** 6.38 linear feet (16 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Sam and Elsie Shain, circa 1977.

**Abstract:** The Sam Shain papers (1931-1970) document the career of the editor, publisher, and Twentieth Century-Fox Film executive through correspondence, publication subscription invoices, articles, company reports, legal documents, and prospectuses. The collection is largely comprised of material gathered by Shain concerning the motion picture and broadcast television industries.

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**Preferred citation:** Sam Shain papers, \*T-Mss 1977-006. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014 One scrapbook was disassembled and placed into folders.

## Creator History

Sam Shain (d. 1976) was an American reporter, editor, and publisher. He began his career in the 1920s as a journalist for *Variety*, and later wrote for and edited the *Motion Picture Daily* from 1936 to 1943. Shain was named director of trade relations for Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation in 1943, and was promoted to director of exhibitors and public relations in 1947, holding that position until he resigned in 1951. He then worked with the Council of Motion Picture Organizations (COMPO) regarding the proposed federal admissions tax on motion picture theaters. During this time he also began editing and publishing *Space & Time*, a business and communications trade newsletter, and in 1954 merged it with another trade publication, *Inside Advertising*. In 1967, he purchased the *International Motion Picture Exhibitor*, a Philadelphia-based trade publication featuring film reviews and a catalog of annual

film releases. Shain spent the later years of his career as a business consultant for CBS.

Sam Shain died in 1976.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Sam Shain papers (1931-1970) document his career as an editor, publisher, and Twentieth Century-Fox Film executive through correspondence, publication subscription invoices, articles, company reports, legal documents, and prospectuses. The collection is largely comprised of material gathered by Shain concerning motion picture and television broadcasting regulation, corporate finance, broadcast advertising, and tax law.

Correspondence is both personal and professional in nature. The majority of the personal correspondence dates from the 1930s to the 1940s and is from family members, most notably Shain's nephews, George M. Cohen and Joe Rogantick. Professional correspondence spans the majority of Shain's career, from his time as a journalist for *Variety* until his publication of *Space & Time*. Topics of correspondence include Shain's resignation from Fox, business travel plans, ideas for stories, and the activities of entertainment business executives. Interoffice memoranda at the Motion Picture Daily document policies and changes in the magazine's news coverage, staff research efforts for stories on television networks, and the distribution and circulation of the magazine. Primary correspondents include reporters, news editors, film and theater producers, and businesses and executives who subscribed to or advertised in *Space & Time* and *The International Motion Picture Exhibitor*. Paul Lockwood, vice president of Schenley Industries during the 1960s, is a frequent correspondent.

Articles, company reports, and legal documents in the collection concern broadcast television regulation; corporate finance; securities law; and companies, such as NBC, CBS, and Paramount Pictures. Articles are sometimes published, though several are drafts written by Shain while he was editor for the Motion Picture Daily in the 1940s, such as "A Draft of a Consent Decree Regarding the Sale of Motion Pictures." Annual reports are present for Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation; American Broadcasting Companies, Inc.; Columbia Pictures Industries; and NBC. Shain's study of entertainment corporation finance is documented through annotated exchange offers and preliminary and final prospectuses for companies such as The Walt Disney Corporation, Inflight Motion Pictures, Inc., the National General Corporation, and Cinema V Distributing, Inc. Other reports document liquor shipments, imports, and alcohol consumption rates by state. Legal complaints, statements, and memoranda document the activities of The Distilled Spirits Industry (DSI), the National Association of Alcoholic Beverage Importers, and Schenley Industries from the 1950s to the 1960s, particularly regarding finance regulation of alcohol distilleries and broadcast advertising of hard liquor. Sometimes Shain's notes are interspersed amongst the articles and reports.

Other legal documents consist of briefs, complaints, and memoranda concerning American film sales and exports, "Free TV," "Pay-As-You-See Television," and other topics surrounding the development of mainstream television in the 1950s. Parties involved include the Federal Communications Commission, the State Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, network television executives from CBS and NBC, and the Motion Picture Association.

The collection holds issues of the Motion Picture Exhibitor dating from 1937 to 1969. Contracts and correspondence regarding advertising within the publication precede the chronological run of the newspaper. A limited amount of *Space & Time* newsletters from the mid to late 1960s are also present and are accompanied by subscription invoices. A large portion of the invoices are for Schenley Industries and span over twenty years. Other companies represented through the invoices include

Westinghouse Electric, NTA Telefilm (Canada), Cunningham & Walsh, and American Tobacco Company.

The collection contains a scrapbook on confectionery in movie theaters dating from 1946 to 1948. It holds photographs of concession stands at theaters in New York and New Jersey in 1946. Articles and descriptions of indoor concession markets, and confectionery marketing surveys and statistics are also present. The scrapbook also holds issues of *Extra Profits*, a supplemental publication of the Motion Picture Exhibitor, dating from 1956.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into the following categories: Correspondence; Articles, Reports, and Legal Documents; International Motion Picture Exhibitor; Space & Time; and Scrapbook.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Advertising -- United States -- Periodicals  
Motion picture industry -- United States  
Motion picture journalism  
Motion pictures -- Reviews  
Television broadcasting -- United States  
Television broadcasting policy -- United States

### **Occupations**

Editors

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Legal documents  
Newsletters

### **Names**

Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-7 Correspondence 1931-1952
- b. 2 f. 1-7 Correspondence 1951-1970
- Articles, Reports, and Legal Documents
  - b. 6 f. 8 Prospectuses 1957-1960
  - b. 7 f. 1-4 Prospectuses 1961-1969
  - b. 2 f. 8-9 1933-1947
  - b. 3 f. 1-6 1941-1969
  - b. 4 f. 1-7 1955-1969
  - b. 5 f. 1-10 1957-1969
  - b. 6 f. 1-6 1966-1969
- Motion Picture Exhibitor
  - b. 7 f. 5 Advertising Contracts 1949-1968
- b. 15 f. 1-2 1937-1939
- b. 16 f. 1-2 1939-1941
  - b. 7 f. 6 1941-1942
- b. 8 f. 1-7 1943-1946
- b. 9 f. 1-7 1946-1951
- b. 10 f. 1-6 1952-1955
- b. 11 f. 1-7 1954-1957
- b. 12 f. 1-7 1957-1959
- b. 13 f. 1-8 1959-1965
- b. 14 f. 1-4 1966-1969
- b. 14 f. 5-8 Space & Time 1956-1970  
Includes subscription invoices.
- b. 14 f. 9-11 Scrapbook 1946-1956