Sam Jaffe Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2004
Revised 2010 April

Contact information:
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Additional search options available at:
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007023

LC Online Catalog record:
http://lccn.loc.gov/mm2003084952

Prepared by Laura J. Kells
Collection Summary

Title: Sam Jaffe Papers
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1925-1984)
ID No.: MSS84952
Creator: Jaffe, Sam, 1891-1984
Extent: 1,175 items ; 4 containers ; 1.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Actor. Correspondence, writings, newspaper clippings, printed matter, sketches, photographs, and other papers relating to Jaffe’s career as an actor and his personal life including his experience as a blacklisted actor in the 1950s.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Ackerman, Bettye, 1924-2006--Correspondence.
Cagney, James, 1899-1986--Correspondence.
Farrell, James T. (James Thomas), 1904-1979--Correspondence.
Garfield, John--Correspondence.
Gershwin, George, 1898-1937--Correspondence.
Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983--Correspondence.
Huston, John, 1906-1987--Correspondence.
Jaffe, Sam, 1891-1984.
Kazan, Elia--Correspondence.
Loeb, Philip, 1894-1955--Correspondence.
Molnár, Ferenc, 1878-1952--Correspondence.
Mostel, Zero, 1915-1977--Correspondence.
Piscator, Erwin, 1893-1966--Correspondence.
Reinhardt, Max, 1873-1943--Correspondence.
Reinhardt, Max, 1873-1943.
Stone, Ezra, 1917--Correspondence.
Taiz, Lillian, -1941--Correspondence.

Organizations
Equity Library Theatre (New York, N.Y.)

Subjects
Acting.
Blacklisting of entertainers--United States.
Motion picture acting.
Shylock (Fictitious character)
Television acting--United States.
Theater rehearsals--United States.
Theater--United States.

Occupations
Actors.
Administrative Information

Provenance
The papers of Sam Jaffe, actor, were given to the Library of Congress by Bettye Ackerman Jaffe in 2003.

Copyright Status
Copyright in the unpublished writings of Sam Jaffe in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Sam Jaffe are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Sam Jaffe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891, Mar. 10</td>
<td>Born Shalom Jaffe, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Graduated College of the City of New York, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-1916</td>
<td>Head of mathematics department, Bronx Cultural Institute, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Joined Washington Square Players</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917-1918</td>
<td>Toured with Washington Square Players</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918-1919</td>
<td>Served in United States Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Broadway debut as Leibush in <em>The Idle Inn</em>, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Played Yudelson in <em>The Jazz Singer</em>, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Married Lillian Taiz (died 1941)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Played Kringlelein in <em>Grand Hotel</em>, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Film debut as Grand Duke Peter in <em>The Scarlet Empress</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Played The Adversary in <em>The Eternal Road</em>, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeared as High Lama in film <em>Lost Horizon</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Appeared in title role in film <em>Gunga Din</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Founded Equity Library Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Appeared as Professor Fred Lieberman in film <em>Gentleman’s Agreement</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1950  Appeared as Doc Erwin Riedenschneider in film *The Asphalt Jungle*, received Academy Award nomination for his performance

1951  Appeared as Professor Jacob Barnhardt in film *The Day the Earth Stood Still*

1956  Married Bettye Ackerman

1959  Appeared as Simonides in film *Ben-Hur*

1961-1965  Appeared as Dr. Zorba on television series “Ben Casey”

1971  Appeared as Bookman in film *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*

1979  Final Broadway performance as Tarun Maharaj in *A Meeting by the River*, New York, N.Y.

1984  Appeared as Father Knickerbocker in film *Nothing Lasts Forever*


**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Sam Jaffe (1891-1984) span the years 1915-1991, with the bulk of the material dating from 1925 to 1984. The collection includes correspondence, writings, and miscellaneous material relating to the life and work of an actor whose career on stage and screen lasted over six decades.

A major portion of the papers consists of correspondence between Jaffe and fellow actors, artists, writers, directors, composers, and other friends and coworkers from the 1920s until his death in 1984. Jaffe’s wives, the actress and singer Lillian Taiz, and the actress Bettye Ackerman, who costarred with him on the television series “Ben Casey,” also feature prominently in the letters. Correspondents include James Cagney, James T. Farrell, John Garfield, George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin, John Huston, Elia Kazan, Philip Loeb, Ferenc Molnár, Zero Mostel, Erwin Piscator, Max Reinhardt, Edward G. Robinson, Ezra Stone, and Thornton Wilder. Several letters from Zero Mostel are illustrated with self-portraits. Among the correspondents are entertainers accused of being communists and blacklisted in the 1940s and 1950s. Drafts of Jaffe’s letters are often written on the back of script pages.

Jaffe’s writings include tributes to his lifelong friend, Edward G. Robinson, an account of rehearsing a play with Max Reinhardt, and an analysis of William Shakespeare’s character Shylock. Among the miscellany are files on Jaffe’s experience as an actor blacklisted by the film industry after receiving a subpoena from the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and material about the Equity Library Theatre which he founded with George Freedley in 1943. Also included is an appraiser’s inventory of Jaffe’s papers compiled while the material was still in the possession of Bettye Ackerman Jaffe. Not all of the items inventoried were received by the Library of Congress.

**Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is arranged by type of material and therein alphabetically.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 1     | Correspondence  
  (2 folders)  
  Birnbaum, Abe, 1937, 1948, undated  
  (2 folders)  
  (3 folders)  
  Farrell, James T., 1936-1938, undated  
  (2 folders)  
  Gershwin, George, 1927-1937, 1973, undated  
  (2 folders)  
  Hoff, Syd, 1982-1985, undated  
  (3 folders)  
  “K” miscellaneous, 1940-1950, 1956-1985, undated  
  Lloyd, Norman and Peggy, 1963-1983, undated  
  (2 folders)  
  Molnár, Ferenc, 1942-1950, undated  
  “M-Q” miscellaneous, 1934-1984, undated  
  (5 folders)  
  Ruby, Harry, 1966-1972  
  (6 folders)  
  Wilder, Thornton, 1939  
  (4 folders)  
  Unidentified, 1982, undated  
  Writings |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
<pre><code>       | (2 folders) |
</code></pre>
<p>| BOX 3     | Poems, 1967-1971, undated |
| BOX 4     | Miscellany |
| BOX 4     | Blacklisting, 1940, 1951-1959, undated |</p>
| BOX 4     | Equity Library Theatre, 1945-1959, 1974-1991  
           | (2 folders) |
| BOX 4     | Inventory of Jaffe papers, 1994, undated  
           | (4 folders) |
           | (3 folders) |