

**Sam Jaffe Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2004**

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

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007023>

Prepared by Laura J. Kells

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Revised 2010 April

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Sam Jaffe Papers

**Span Dates:** 1915-1991

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1925-1984)

**ID No.:** MSS84952

**Creator:** Jaffe, Sam, 1891-1984

**Extent:** 1,175 items

**Extent:** 4 containers

**Extent:** 1.6 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2003084952>

**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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### 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.

Robinson, Edward G., 1893-1973--Correspondence.

Robinson, Edward G., 1893-1973.

Shylock (Fictitious character)

Stone, Ezra, 1917- --Correspondence.

Taiz, Lillian, -1941--Correspondence.

### Organizations

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

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Un-American Activities.

### Subjects

Acting.

Blacklisting of entertainers--United States.

Motion picture acting.

Television acting--United States.

Theater rehearsals--United States.

Theater--United States.

## Occupations

Actors.

## 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

Date	Event
1891, Mar. 10	Born Shalom Jaffe, New York, N.Y.
1912	Graduated College of the City of New York, New York, N.Y.
1915-1916	Head of mathematics department, Bronx Cultural Institute, New York, N.Y.
1915	Joined Washington Square Players
1917-1918	Toured with Washington Square Players
1918-1919	Served in United States Army
1921	Broadway debut as Leibush in <i>The Idle Inn</i> , New York, N.Y.
1925	Played Yudelson in <i>The Jazz Singer</i> , New York, N.Y.
1926	Married Lillian Taiz (died 1941)
1930	Played Kringelein in <i>Grand Hotel</i> , New York, N.Y.
1934	Film debut as Grand Duke Peter in <i>The Scarlet Empress</i>
1937	Played The Adversary in <i>The Eternal Road</i> , New York, N.Y. Appeared as High Lama in film <i>Lost Horizon</i>
1939	Appeared in title role in film <i>Gunga Din</i>
1943	Founded Equity Library Theatre
1947	Appeared as Professor Fred Lieberman in film <i>Gentleman's Agreement</i>
1950	Appeared as Doc Erwin Riedenschneider in film <i>The Asphalt Jungle</i> , received Academy Award nomination for his performance
1951	Appeared as Professor Jacob Barnhardt in film <i>The Day the Earth Stood Still</i>
1956	Married Bettye Ackerman
1959	Appeared as Simonides in film <i>Ben-Hur</i>
1961-1965	Appeared as Dr. Zorba on television series "Ben Casey"
1971	Appeared as Bookman in film <i>Bedknobs and Broomsticks</i>
1979	Final Broadway performance as Tarun Maharaj in <i>A Meeting by the River</i> , New York, N.Y.

1984                                      Appeared as Father Knickerbocker in film *Nothing Lasts Forever*  
1984, Mar. 24                            Died, Beverly Hills, Calif.

## 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

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	Adler, Stella, 1967, 1975-1984, 1990, undated
BOX 1	“A” miscellaneous, 1941-1950, 1962-1986, undated (2 folders)
BOX 1	Birnbaum, Abe, 1937, 1948, undated
BOX 1	Bradbury, Ray, 1970-1971, 1978, 1984, undated
BOX 1	“B” miscellaneous, circa 1930, 1938-1941, 1951, 1958-1986 (2 folders)
BOX 1	Carroll, Pat, 1966-1977, 1984-1986, undated
BOX 1	“C-E” miscellaneous, 1941-1955, 1962-1986, undated (3 folders)
BOX 1	Fairbanks, Douglas (1909-2000), 1938-1939, undated
BOX 1	Farrell, James T., 1936-1938, undated
BOX 1	“F” miscellaneous, 1938-1940, 1956, 1963-1984, undated (2 folders)
BOX 1	Gershwin, George, 1927-1937, 1973, undated
BOX 1	Gershwin, Ira, 1930, 1967-1982, undated
BOX 1	“G” miscellaneous, 1946-1952, 1958-1984, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Hoff, Syd, 1982-1985, undated
BOX 2	“H-I” miscellaneous, 1937-1941, 1951, 1957-1988, undated (3 folders)
BOX 2	Jaffe, Sam A., 1961-1964, 1972-1978, undated
BOX 2	“J” miscellaneous, 1947, 1956-1958, 1977-1984
BOX 2	Kallen, Horace Meyer, 1938, 1962-1973, undated
BOX 2	“K” miscellaneous, 1940-1950, 1956-1985, undated
BOX 2	Lloyd, Norman and Peggy, 1963-1983, undated
BOX 2	“L” miscellaneous, 1938-1941, 1950-1956, 1963-1984, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Molnár, Ferenc, 1942-1950, undated
BOX 2	Mostel, Zero, 1942-1950, 1956, 1962, 1970-1978, undated
BOX 2	“M-Q” miscellaneous, 1934-1984, undated (5 folders)
BOX 2	Robinson, Edward G., Gladys, and Jane, 1939-1943, 1949, 1966-1969
BOX 3	Ruby, Harry, 1966-1972
BOX 3	“R-V” miscellaneous, 1931-1944, 1950, 1957-1986, undated (6 folders)
BOX 3	Wilder, Thornton, 1939
BOX 3	“W-Z” miscellaneous, 1926, 1938-1947, 1957-1988, undated (4 folders)
BOX 3	Unidentified, 1982, undated
BOX 3	Writings

## Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 3	Miscellaneous, 1925-1928, 1936-1940, 1962, 1973-1983, undated (2 folders)
BOX 3	Poems, 1967-1971, undated
BOX 3	Speeches, 1968-1973, 1981, undated
BOX 4	Miscellany
BOX 4	Blacklisting, 1940, 1951-1959, undated
BOX 4	Equity Library Theatre, 1945-1959, 1974-1991 (2 folders)
BOX 4	Inventory of Jaffe papers, 1994, undated (4 folders)
BOX 4	Memorabilia, 1915-1919, 1940-1942, 1963-1965, 1971, 1987-1988, undated
BOX 4	Printed matter, 1925-1946, 1959, 1968-1991, undated (3 folders)