

PRELIMINARY INVENTORY
K0031 (KA0035)
BLEVINS DAVIS PAPERS

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City. If you would like more information, please contact us at kansascity@shsmo.org.

Introduction

Approximately 35 cubic feet and 24 scrapbooks

The Blevins Davis Papers contains research materials, scripts, plays, photographs, printed materials, correspondence, scrapbooks, and memorabilia of Davis, an internationally prominent playwright and producer.

Blevins Davis, an internationally known theatrical producer and playwright, grew up in Independence, Missouri, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Davis. Blevins was a long-time friend of Mr. and Mrs. Harry S. Truman and their daughter Margaret. He attended the old Kansas City Junior College, Princeton University, and the University of Missouri, graduating in 1925. Following graduation, Davis taught at William Chrisman High School in Independence, Missouri. He procured postgraduate work through Yale University and later became supervisor of educational programs at National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in New York.

Davis was married in 1946 to Mrs. Margaret Sawyer Hill, widow of a railroad executive. The former Mrs. Hill was an heiress, social leader, and art patron in New York. After a brief marriage, Mrs. Davis suffered a heart attack and died at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 18, 1948. Davis became heir of her nine million dollar fortune. He returned to Independence, Missouri, where he rebuilt and refurbished his residence, Glendale Farm.

In 1949, Blevins Davis purchased an estate, Claremont, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, which he renamed "Trianon". At that time, he was president of the Ballet Theater of New York and member of the board of directors of the American National Theater Association. Also in 1949, Davis presented the first American production of "Hamlet" at the Elsinore Castle in Denmark. He also produced "Porgy and Bess" with an all-black cast starring William Warfield, Leontyne Price, and Cab Calloway. In 1952, Davis sold "Trianon" to the Sisters of St. Francis Seraph.

Davis moved to Lima, Peru, in the mid 1950's. He made his home there for a decade. While on a business trip to London in 1971, Blevins Davis suffered a fatal heart attack. Much of his wealth had been donated during his lifetime to the performing arts.

Donor Information

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by the General Library at the University of Missouri-Kansas City on August 21, 1980 (Accession KA0035). An addition was made on September 29, 1980 (Accession No. KA0044).

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Blevins Davis Papers

Location note

The collection is stored offsite and will need to be retrieved before viewing.

Box List

Box 001

Great Plays, A-P, 1940-1941

Box 002

Great Plays, R-W, 1940-1941
Five 3-ring binders of plays, 1938

Box 003

Play scripts, some with transmittal correspondence, no date

Box 004

Great Plays, no date

Box 005

Great Plays, 1939-1940

Box 006

Great Plays, filed in folders, perhaps early drafts, no date

Box 007

Plays, no arrangement, some transmittal correspondence, no date

Box 008

Jesus, a production for the screen, includes drafts and working material, no date

Box 009

Series of radio plays which were broadcast, with a listing, 1929-1937 "Pilgrimage of Poetry," radio scripts for weekly poetry session by Ted Malone, 1939-1940 "Art for Your Sake," radio presentations on art and artists, 1939-1940

Box 010

Jesus, research notes and scripts other screenplays and movie shorts that Davis was involved in, no date

Box 011

Coronations, materials related to Davis' coverage of the English coronations, 1937, 1953

Box 012

Coronations, materials and clippings *Elizabeth the Queen*, script and associated materials, no date

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Box 013

Clippings, Jubilation, also South Shore Players, no date

Box 014

Great Plays, early drafts, correspondence, no date

Box 015

Plays, no arrangement, scripts which may have been evaluated for radio use, no date

Box 016

1938-1955

NBC education articles

Lena River script

Program, talent, sales

ANTA, Hamlet, SNEAF, Huebues address

General Washington correspondence, re: cultural program, State Department

Record letters

National Broadcastings Company Concert Bureau facts

National Broadcastings Company drama survey

American Educational Theatre California speech, clippings, December 27, 1929-
1939 Nelson Rockefeller, South America

K. Cornell

St. John Devine

American Library Association convention

A.G. Boesel

Great Plays

Michael Doele

R.J. Potts, Lana Trower account

Mrs. Atwell, Mrs. Lawrence Wood Robert

Liberty Jone

Your Rights and Mine

Equity franchises

John's Manville Co.

Boys Club program

Educational stations

Queen Elizabeth clippings

Jubilation

Defense industries parade

Ronald Rogers

Queen Elizabeth clippings

Radio, Maxwell House, Coronation

Motion picture shorts, 48 states, list of 48 States scripts

American Royal

Interdepartmental Great Plays

"Aspects of Modern Drama" Chandler

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Passion play
Dowling
Great Play, "Don't Forget"
Playbills, Great Plays
Sarnoff speeches
Sources on Democracy
New England Drama Festival
NBC Master Play List
Series III, Great Plays, 1939-1940
Wechsler memo and outline
Lena Rivers
Great Plays, 1940-1941
Boucicaults "The Octoroon"
Drama Survey, catalogues
Theatre Guild on the Air
American National Theatre and Academy

Box 017

Scrapbooks

"Weirton's 9th Annual Labor Day Celebration, photos of army units, etc., 1942
Hamlet, including correspondence, clippings, photos, no date
Hamlet, photos, no date
Ballet Theatre, 1950
Washington, DC, photos, no date

Box 018

Hamlet photos, no date
Mock-up of booklet, "Veloz and Yolanda", no date
Photos, "Movie Stars", no date
"Murder in the Cathedral", no date
Hamlet folders, no date
"Song of Venice" photos, no date
Oversize photos of works of art, no date
Works of art, no date
Personal photos, no date
Set design for "Human Element", no date
Portraits of ballerinas, no date
Play photos, no date
Photo of party, no date
Copper printing block , Harry S. Truman, no date

Box 019

WWII Army show materials, no date

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Box 020

WWII Army show materials, no date

“A Century of Progress, 1833-1933,” dedication of Jackson County Courthouse, no date

Box 021

Plays, no arrangement, includes “Complete File of Joy Freuer”, no date

Box 022

Plays, no date

Box 023

Playbills and pamphlets, miscellaneous topics, no date

Box 024

Literary and play manuscripts, includes versions of “In the Shadow of the Spotlight” by E.D. Price, written for and described to Blevins Davis and Ardelia Palmer, no date

Box 025

Literary, play, and music manuscripts, no date

Articles from magazines and newspapers, no date

Box 026

School notes from high school in Independence and Yale University, no date

Scripts of student productions, no date

Correspondence to parents, 1940-1941

Box 027

Annie Laurie Williams, no date

“Radio and Public Response” by Franklin Dunham, no date

Yale Alumni in Drama, no date

Correspondence, 1937-1938

“Drama and Its Place in Radio” by Blevins Davis, no date

“Music, A New Force in American Life” by Dr. Franklyn Dunham, no date

“Radio and Its Part in Education, no date

“Radio as a Social Force”, no date

“Shadow in the Spotlight”, no date

NBC yearly report by Sarnoff, 1939

Ed Padula’s tv program and ball, 1939

“The Story of Corn”, no date

“Drama of and for Radio”, no date

“These Our Freedoms”, no date

State Nurses Association of Connecticut, no date

NBC statistics, 1936

Pratt Institute speech, 1940

Talk at Roosevelt High School, 1940

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Warrensburg talk, 1939
Teaneck High School, 1939
Trenton speeches, 1939
National English Council, 1939
American Library Association, Los Angeles, no date
Correspondence, 1937
Allied Teachers Association, 1939
Library Association, Kansas City, Missouri, 1938
National Speech Conference, Cleveland, 1938
Light of a Star, no date
Pilgrimage of Poetry program, no date
PTA meeting, no date
New Theatre School, no date
"Broadcasting in a Democracy" by David Sarnoff, no date
NBC service to schools, no date
Typescript note by Blevins Davis, no date
Local play notes, no date
Correspondence, John P. Jones, 1942
Dramatists Guild, 1945
New Gate of Castle Arms, no date
Clippings, pamphlets, miscellaneous, no date

Box 028

Appointment books, 1946-1947, 1953, 1956
"Glendale" autograph book of visitors to the farm, no date
"Marge and Blev" book, no date
Jackson County History, no date
Bluelines, National Theatre project, no date
Poetry selected by Blevins Davis, no date
Leather notebook, gift, pages empty except for inscription, no date
Postcards, pamphlets, photo, miscellaneous, no date
"Siddon Collection", no date
EBT audition, "World Traveler, A Play", no date
American National Theatre and Academy, no date
Blev-Ray Realty Corp., no date
Correspondence, Richard Cowell, 1950
Correspondence, 1930-1948
Correspondence, Cheryl Crawford, no date
Clippings, 1943
Correspondence, Jr. Chamber of Commerce, 1950
Correspondence, Ico Kamp, no date
Correspondence, Angela Carabella, no date
Correspondence, no date
Culea Ballet, no date
G-W Direction List, 1953
China Essay Contest Dinner, 1940

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Miscellaneous Blevins Davis items, no date
Poultney Collection, index of a play in manuscript, no date
Awards, no date

Much of the material in BOXES 29-32 deals with the presentation of Porgy and Bess in Russia.

Box 029

Theatre programs, reviews of *Porgy and Bess* in the USSR, clippings, scrapbooks, photographs, no date

Box 030

Theatre programs, manuscripts, music, scripts, photographs, clippings, correspondence, no date

Box 031

Printed music, photographs, clippings, notes, correspondence, no date

Box 032

Theatre programs, no date

Box 033x3

- Roll 1 The Modern Interpretation of Hamlet, Danish Hamlet Festival at Krunburg Castle, no date
Roll 2 Staatsoper in Der Volksoper, The American National Ballet Theatre, no date

Scrapbooks

- v. 1 Great Plays, clippings, 1938-1939
- v. 2 Great Plays, clippings, 1938-1940
- v. 3 Great Plays, correspondence, 1938
- v. 4 Great Plays, correspondence, 1938
- v. 5 Great Plays, correspondence, 1938-1939
- v. 6 Weirton Pageant, 1941
- v. 7 Weirton Pageant, 1942
- v. 8 Weirton Pageant, 1943
- v. 9 Army War Show, Chicago, Cleveland, Louisville, no date
- v. 10 Army War Show, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Dallas, Houston, no date
- v. 11 Army War Show, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, no date
- v. 12 Army War Show, Milwaukee, Des Moines, Omaha, no date
- v. 13 Army War Show, New Orleans, Birmingham, Atlanta, no date
- v. 14 Army War Show, Pittsburgh, Akron, Detroit, no date
- v. 15 Coronation, no date
- v. 16 Coronation, no date
- v. 17 Ballet Theatre, no date

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- v. 18 Howard Players to Europe, 1948
- v. 19 General scrapbook, 1918-1934
- v. 20 General scrapbook, 1935-1940
- v. 21 General scrapbook, 1940-1947
- v. 22 General scrapbook, 1947-1949
- v. 23 General scrapbook, 1949-1950
- v. 24 Unidentified scrapbook, black, no date