



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Max Eastman papers

1916-1968 [bulk 1916-1921]

*T-Mss 1994-008

Processed by Elisabeth Elkind.

Summary

Creator: Eastman, Max, 1883-1969

Title: Max Eastman papers

Date: 1916-1968 [bulk 1916-1921]

Source: Purchased from Yvette Eastman (Mrs. Max)

Abstract: The Max Eastman papers contain primarily photographs of the silent film stars Florence Deshon and Charlie Chaplin.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

Conditions Governing Access:

Photocopying prohibited.

Conditions Governing Use: Unrestricted.

Preferred citation: Max Eastman Papers, *T-Mss 1994-008, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Processing note: Processed by Elisabeth Elkind; machine-readable finding aid created by Mary Ellen Rogan.

Creator History

Editor, writer and translator, Max Eastman founded and edited *The Masses* (1913-1917), and *The Liberator* (1918-1922), and was an editor of the Reader's Digest from 1941.

He published 25 books on a variety of subjects including poetry, the psychology of literature and laughter, and critiques of Marxism. He also translated some of the works of Leon Trotsky and others and compiled and narrated a film history of the Russian Revolution. He was part of the Greenwich Village (N.Y.) leftist, intellectual and artistic circle in the 1910s and 1920s. During this time he met Florence Deshon, a stage and screen actress from Tacoma, Washington. He and Charlie Chaplin competed for her affections. She died of accidental gas asphyxiation in February 1922, despite a transfusion of Eastman's blood. Shortly thereafter, Eastman went to Russia to learn the language and study the Soviet system, but left after an early disillusionment with Stalin.

Scope and Content Note

The collection is primarily photographs of Eastman's silent film star friends, Charlie Chaplin and Florence Deshon.

It contains drawings (undated and unidentified) by Chaplin, personal and family photographs including ones he sent as Christmas cards (1968 and earlier), and negatives and prints from his *The Kid* (1921). The Deshon material consists primarily of photographs and clippings, particularly relating to her film, *Jaffery* (1916) with C. Aubrey Smith, and includes a letter from Smith and one (1919) from Samuel Goldwyn concerning her employment in his studio. The collection also contains photographs of Paulette Goddard and other film personalities, an Actors' Equity Benefit Program (1919) annotated by Eastman, and a copy of the Provincetown Plays (1916).

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by subject

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Drawings
Photographic prints

Titles

Jaffery (Motion picture)
Kid (Motion picture)

Subjects

Motion picture actors and actresses
Silent films -- United States

Names

Eastman, Max, 1883-1969
Chaplin, Charlie, 1889-1977
Deshon, Florence, 1894-1922
Goddard, Paulette, 1911-1990
Morehouse, Marion
Smith, C. Aubrey (Charles Aubrey), 1863-1948
Wells, H. G. (Herbert George), 1866-1946

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Drawings / Charlie Chaplin (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 2 Photographs / Charlie Chaplin 1919-1968 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 3 *The kid (Motion picture)* 1921 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 4 *Jaffery (Motion picture)* 1916 (1 folder)
Photographs, clippings and a letter [1916] on Florence Deshon in the movie, *Jaffery*.
- b. 1 f. 5 Papers / Florence Deshon 1919 (1 folder)
Photographs [undated], letter [1919] and clipping [undated] of Florence Deshon.
- b. 1 f. 6 Photographs / Paulette Goddard 1936 (1 folder)
Photographs [1936 and undated] of Paulette Goddard, alone, with H.G. Wells, or with Max Eastman.
- b. 1 f. 7 Photographs / Marion Morehouse (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 8 Papers / Max Eastman 1916-1919 (1 folder)
Printed material with annotations by Max Eastman relating to the theater.