

Messmore Kendall:

An Inventory of His Business Records at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Kendall, Messmore, 1872-1959
- Title:** Messmore Kendall Business Records
- Dates:** circa 1850-1943 (bulk 1921-1924)
- Extent:** 15 document boxes, 2 oversize boxes (osb) (8.07 linear feet)
- Abstract:** The Messmore Kendall Business Records are primarily financial records for Moredall Realty Corporation. The remainder of the collection comprises records of American Releasing Corporation, Capitol Theatre, Columbus Garage Inc., Goldwyn Cosmopolitan Distributing Corporation, Goldwyn Studio, Kendall-Chambers Productions, and Messmore Kendall Studio. A small amount of miscellaneous materials are present.
- Call Number:** Performing Arts Collection PA-00052
- Language:** English
- Access:** Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
- Use Policies:** Ransom Center collections may contain material with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in the collections without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no responsibility.
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Administrative Information

Acquisition: Gift, 1958

Processed by: Joan Sibley, 2001; Helen Adair, 2006; Daniela Lozano, 2017

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

Messmore Kendall was an attorney, entrepreneur, real estate developer, and theater manager. He was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1872 and studied law at George Washington University, known as Columbian University, in Washington, D.C. In 1897, he moved to New York where he established the law firm of Kendall and Herzog with Paul M. Herzog in 1900. He also built one of New York's first cinema palaces, the Capitol Theater on Broadway, in 1919, through his realty company, Moredall Realty Company.

Kendall was also involved in other business ventures including serving as Vice President of the publishing company George H. Doran Company, where he met writer W. Somerset Maugham. He went on to produce several Broadway productions written by Maugham between 1927 to 1931. He also produced films including *The Song of the Soul* (1920), *Pardon My French* (1921), and *Cardigan* (1922).

Sources:

"Messmore Kendall Collection, 1695-1939, Multiple Catalog Numbers." Finding aid at the National Park Service Manhattan Sites Archive, New York, NY.
<http://mhsarchive.org/FullImages/FEHAMessmore-Kendall-Finding-Aid.pdf> (accessed 19 September 2017)

Scope and Contents

Messmore Kendall managed his Capitol Theater movie palace business operations through his Moredall Realty Corporation. The Messmore Kendall Business Records are primarily financial records for Moredall Realty Corporation (circa 1920-1925). The remainder of the collection comprises records of American Releasing Corporation (1922-1923), Capitol Theatre (1919-1936), Columbus Garage Inc. (1931-1943), Goldwyn Cosmopolitan Distributing Corporation (1920-1924), Goldwyn Studio (circa 1923?), Kendall-Chambers Productions (circa 1920), and Messmore Kendall Studio (1921). A small amount of miscellaneous materials are present, including Kendall's ID badge for the 1939 New York World's Fair. The collection is arranged in three series: I. Moredall Realty Corporation, circa 1920-1925; II. Other Firms, circa 1919-1943; and III. Other Papers, circa 1850-1941.

Related Material

Messmore Kendall was a significant collector of American theatre history, and his collections helped to form the basis of the Ransom Center's performing arts holdings. Additional Messmore Kendall materials at the Ransom Center are located in the Messmore Kendall Papers and the Messmore Kendall Collection.

Letters from W. Somerset Maugham to Kendall are located in the W. Somerset Maugham Collection at the Ransom Center.

The National Park Service, Manhattan Sites Archive in New York holds additional Messmore Kendall material.

Series I. Moredall Realty Corporation, circa 1920-1925

Accounts receivable vouchers, 1921-1923

1921-1922, L-N	Container 1.1-5, 2.1
1921; 1923	Container 2.2-5, 3.1-2
1922, D-M	Container 3.3-4, 4.1-4
1922-1923	
G-S?	Container 4.5, 5.1-5
M-S?	Container 6.1-5, 7.1
Various	Container 7.2-5, 8.1
1923	
A-R	Container 8.2-5, 9.1-2
F-G, L	Container 9.3-5, 10.1-3
G-M	Container 10.4-5, 11.1-4
R-W	Container 11.5, 12.1-3
Overtime, 1921	Container 12.4
Salary discontinuances, 1921-1925	Container 12.5-6, 13.1-2
Trial balance [wage book], circa 1920	Container 13.3

Series II. Other Firms, circa 1919-1943

American Releasing Corp., Cardigan weekly contracts, 1922-1923	Container 13.4
Capitol Theatre, 1919-1936	
Daily Report of Receipts	
1922	Container 13.5
1926-1931	Container 13.6
1932-1936	Container 13.7
Profit and loss ledger, 1919-1923	Container osb 16
Rent schedule, 1922	Container 13.8
Columbus Garage Inc., financial journal, 1931-1943	Container osb 17
Goldwyn Cosmopolitan Distributing Corporation	
Song of Soul, 1920-1924; Pardon My French, 1922-1924	Container 14.1
Pardon My French, 1921-1924; Song of Soul, 1922-1924	Container 14.2
Goldwyn Studio, purchase ledger, circa 1923	Container 14.3
Kendall-Chambers Productions	
Materials received ledger, circa 1920	Container 14.4
Name / address book of H. O. Hoyt, circa 1920	Container 14.5
Rental / shipping vouchers, 1920	Container 14.6
Messmore Kendall Studio, inventory, 1921	Container 15.1

Series III. Other Papers, circa 1850-1941

Dillman, L. C., correspondence, 1923	Container 15.2
Kendall's New York World's Fair ID badge, 1939	Container 15.3
Maps (St. Lawrence River Basin, Florida and Gulf of Mexico, New York State northern counties), 1850s	Container 15.4
Pamphlets, 1882-1941	Container 15.5-6
Rent receipt book, 235-247 W. 50th Street, New York City, 1923-1926	Container 15.7
Report on the Westover Copper Mine, undated	Container 15.8
West Palm Beach telephone directory, 1939, with Kendall's personal list of numbers	Container 15.9
Oversize material	Container osb 16.-17