

Gilbert Seldes Papers

Ms. Coll. 1082

Finding aid prepared by Kristine McGee.

Last updated on April 14, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 October

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Seldes, Gilbert, 1893-1970
Title	Gilbert Seldes Papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1082
Date [inclusive]	1920-1957
Extent	2.5 linear feet (4 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	The papers of journalist, writer and cultural critic, Gilbert Seldes are primarily comprised of newspaper clippings that Seldes used as research for his writings. Drafts and printed copies of several articles are included, as well as a draft of his 1956 book, <i>The Public Arts</i> .

Cite as:

Gilbert Seldes Papers, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania.

Biography/History

Gilbert Vivian Seldes was born on January 3, 1893 in the Jewish agricultural community of Alliance, New Jersey. Gilbert and his older brother George were raised by their father George, a non-observant Jew and self admitted philosophical radical, after their mother Anna died in 1896. Gilbert attended Central High School in Philadelphia and enrolled in Harvard University, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1914.

He began his literary career as a music critic for *The Philadelphia Public Ledger* upon graduation from Harvard. After serving as a foreign correspondent in England during World War I, he returned to the United States and served in editorial capacities for numerous publications including *The Dial*. He went on to author several books, numerous articles, and essays. He also adapted works for Broadway, served as host and commentator for radio programs, and made documentary films. Other career highlights included being hired as the first director of television programs at CBS and serving as the first dean of the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communication.

He married Alice Wadhams Hall in 1924, with whom he had two children: Timothy, a literary agent and Marian, a Tony Award winning actress. Seldes died in 1970 after a lengthy illness.

Scope and Contents

Divided into four series, this collection primarily contains research material Seldes gathered for his writings including his book *The Public Arts*. Also included in the collection is correspondence, drafts and printed copies of articles and reviews Seldes wrote in the 1940s and 1950s. Seldes filed his research material using a numbered category system for which no key to said system was included within the collection. At times, the category name was included on the file folder, but more often than not, it was not. It should also be noted that despite being marked with one category number, material may have been found in a different category folder. The material was left within the category in which it was found. Some brittle and damaged newspaper clippings were replaced with copies obtained from ProQuest historical newspapers [electronic resource].

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Source of Acquisition

Supplementary correspondence was purchased from David J. Holmes Autographs, 1996.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Drafts (documents)
- Manuscripts, American--20th century
- Writings (document genre)

SUBJECT(S)

- Authors
- Authors, American--20th century
- Criticism, Textual
- Journalism

Collection Inventory

SERIES I. RESEARCH.

Scope and Contents note

Primarily consists of articles and clippings Seldes used for his own writings.

	Box	Folder
Advertising, 1953-1954.	1	1
Censorship, 1955-1956.	1	2
The Commercial, 1945-1954.	1	3
Condon, Eddie, 1944.	1	4
Educational television, 1951-1957.	1	5
Hollywood, 1945, 1952.	1	6
Left intellectuals, 1952, 1954.	1	7
Miscellaneous articles, speeches, etc., 1955-1957.	1	8
Movies, 1947-1954.	1	9
Movies: contents and program quality, 1950-1955.	1	10
Movies: influence, 1952-1954.	1	11
Movies: Roman Catholic Church pressure, 1936-1948.	1	12

Other live arts, 1934-1955.	1	13
Pay-television, 1955.	1	14
Radio, 1939-1950.	1	15
Radio: censorship, 1935-1947.	2	1
Radio, television and the public, 1935-1952.	2	2
Radio and television: economics, 1946-1955.	2	3
Radio and television: politics in, 1939-1954.	2	4
Radio and television: programs, 1945-1954.	2	5-6
Riesman, David, 1957.	2	7
Television: impact, 1953.	2	8
Television: culture, 1954-1955.	2	9
Television: politics, 1955.	2	10

SERIES II. SUPPLEMENTARY PURCHASED MATERIAL.

	Box	Folder
Supplementary purchased correspondence (correspondents include Sherwood Anderson, Henry Blake Fuller, Mitchell Kennerley, Robert Sherwood, E.B. White, and Alexander Woolcott), 1920-1950.	2	11

SERIES III. WRITINGS.

	Box	Folder
Articles, 1944-1954.	2	12
Articles: drafts, circa 1940-1945.	2	13
Speech, 1954.	2	14
<i>The Public Arts</i> : draft, undated.	3	1-4

SERIES IV. OVERSIZED.

	Box	Folder
Clippings, 1945-1951.	4	1
Clippings, 1952-1954.	4	2
Clippings, 1955.	4	3
Program Notes: Eddie Condon, 1944.	4	4