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William “Billy” Friedberg Papers 1950-1965 MS# 1455

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SUMMARY INFORMATION

Creator

William Friedberg, 1916-1965.

Title and dates

William “Billy” Friedberg Papers, 1950-1965

Abstract

This collection contains the scripts of writer and producer Billy Friedberg’s television, radio, and Broadway work, with papers and correspondence relating to their production.

Size

5.72 linear feet (11 document boxes, 1 oversize box)

Call number

MS # 1455

Location

Columbia University
Butler Library, 6th Floor
Rare Book and Manuscript Library
535 West 114th Street
New York, NY 10027

Language(s) of material

English

Biographical Note

William “Billy” Friedberg (1916-1965) was a New York theatre publicity agent who began writing and then producing television during the 1950s and early 1960s. He is best remembered as a television comedy writer, although he also wrote plays, musicals, variety reviews, short stories, and radio programs. Among his best-known works are episodes of *Car 54, Where Are You?*, *As Time Goes By*, and *The Phil Silvers Show*. In 1957 and 1958, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences awarded Friedberg the Emmy for Best Comedy Writing of a Variety or Situation Comedy, for *The Phil Silvers Show*; he was nominated for the same award again in 1959. He collaborated on a few television scripts with writer Neil Simon, worked on various television programs with producers Nat Hiken and Max Liebman, and wrote routines for comedians such as Alan King and Martha Raye. His television work began in the period of review and variety programs sponsored by large corporations, and evolved into the era of the long-running serial drama or sitcom. Later in his career he served as a producer for a few television series, including *Harry’s Girls*. He was married briefly in 1945 to actress Jane Hoffman, and then from 1950-1965 to actress Hope Cameron. Friedberg died of a heart attack at the age of 49.

Description

Friedberg's work represented in this collection spans many genres, including comedy review sketches, TV dramas, short stories, plays, and musicals. The vast majority of the collection consists of typed scripts, either drafts or “shooting scripts” used for production, which Friedberg wrote or produced. Production files for some of the scripts are the second-largest group of material, including casting ideas, budgets, contracts, advertising records, and intra-staff memos. The collection also contains documents which Friedberg used in his creative process, including typed or handwritten notes and ideas for future works, and newspaper clippings that he used for inspiration. Three sketchbooks of pencil drawings are also present, which may be the work of Friedberg's wife Hope Cameron. Finally, there are a small number of family snapshots and personal papers.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series.

Series I: Writings and Work, 1950-1965, undated	PAGES 5-7
Subseries I.1: Television, 1950-1965	PAGES 5-6
Subseries I.2: Radio, 1950-1951	PAGE 6
Subseries I.3: Other Writings and Work, 1953-1963, undated	PAGE 7
Series II: Personal, 1950-1965	PAGE 7

Series I: Writings and Work of Billy Friedberg, 1950-1965, undated

This series consists of Friedberg’s writings, organized by genre, and documents that supported the creative process and production of his dramatic work (drafts, notes, contracts, budgets, etc.). Also included are production documents of the television programs that he produced. Material in this series is arranged alphabetically. When multiple episodes of a program are included, they are arranged in chronological order.

[Subseries I.1: Television, 1950-1965](#). This subseries contains Friedberg's television scripts arranged in alphabetical order by the show's title, together with documents such as Friedberg's notes, intra-staff memos, budgets, and other records of production.

[Subseries I.2: Radio, 1950-1951](#). Included in this subseries are the scripts of fifty-one episodes of the radio serial "The Magnificent Montague" in chronological order. These aired in 1950-1951, and several years later (circa 1957) Friedberg wrote a pilot script for an adaptation of the series into a television program, included in Subseries I.1. The series title is also the name of a popular African-American disc jockey of the late 1950s and the 1960s; however, they seem to be unrelated.

[Subseries I.3: Other Writings and Work, 1953-1963, Undated](#). This subseries comprises all other genres of writing by Friedberg, including plays, musicals, and short stories, and unidentified writings and fragments, in alphabetical order by genre. Included are writings generated in the creative process: ideas for future projects that either did not come to fruition or are not included here in their finished form, and clippings that he used for inspiration. The subseries contains a group of memos from director Robert Soderberg, who collaborated with Friedberg on the television programs "Peter Loves Mary" and "McKeever and the Colonel." Also present is the text for a course on acting in commercials, titled "TV Commercials University" -- it is unclear whether Friedberg taught this class (and thus, wrote this text) or participated as a student.

[Series II: Personal, circa 1950-1965](#)

This series holds a folder of letters from Neil Simon, written circa 1964 when Simon was in London; most of the contents are personal, chronicling Simon's experience living in England, but he also occasionally touches on various professional projects, both his own and Friedberg's. This series contains a "General" folder of personal papers such as letters, contracts, clippings about Friedberg, and a resume. Series II also includes two unidentified photos, probably of Friedberg, and a caricature of him by an unknown artist. Lastly, it houses three sketchbooks of pencil drawings, artist unknown, although two are marked "Hope" on the cover, suggesting that they may have belonged to Friedberg's wife, Hope Cameron. Items are arranged alphabetically by material type, after the General folder.

ACCESS AND USE

Access

This collection has no restrictions.

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Curator of Manuscripts of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML). The RBML approves permission to publish that which it physically owns; the responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Other Finding Aids

"American Film Scripts Online (AFSO)"

“Neil Simon: Plays,” Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University
“The Richard Hoffman Neil Simon Collection,” University of Delaware

ACQUISITION AND APPRAISAL

Provenance and Acquisition

Donated by the estate of Hope Cameron Friedberg, 1999.

PROCESSING AND OTHER INFORMATION

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Anne Holt, GSAS 2013. Finding aid written by Anne Holt in June 2008.

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*

Encoding

Finding aid written in English.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); William “Billy” Friedberg Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

Subject Headings

These papers have been indexed in the Columbia University Library online catalog using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

Dramatists, American -- 20th Century
Friedberg, William, 1916-1965
Hiken, Nat
King, Alan
Liebman, Max
Radio serials
Radio programs -- United States
Raye, Martha
Screenwriters -- United States
Simon, Neil
Television authorship
Television production
Television scripts
Theatre -- United States -- 20th Century

Series I: Writings and Work of Billy Friedberg, 1950-1965, undated
Subseries I.1: Television, 1950-1965

Box 1

- Alan King Show, The*
F. 1 Notes and Memos, 1960
F. 2-3 Script Drafts, undated (2 folders)
F. 4 Script, Shooting, and Documentation, 1960
As Time Goes By
F. 5 Notes and Scenario, circa 1960-1961
F. 6 Script--Early Drafts, undated
F. 7 Script--Pilot, 1961

Box 2

- Bob and Ray Show, The*
F. 1 Scripts 1952, March-April
F. 2 Scripts 1952, May-June
F. 3 Scripts 1952, July
F. 4 Scripts 1952, July-August
F. 5 Scripts, undated
F. 6 *Buick Circus Hour, The*--Scripts, 1953

Box 3

- Car 54, Where Are You?*
F. 1 Scripts # 31-38, circa 1962
F. 2 Scripts # 42-45, undated
F. 3 Scripts # 46-47, undated
F. 4 Correspondence, 1962
F. 5 *Colgate Comedy Hour, The*--Script, 1952, December
F. 6 *Drumbeater, The*--Scripts, circa 1959
F. 7 *Harry's Girls*--Documentation, 1963

Box 4

- Jack Carson Review, The*
F. 1 Scripts 1950, October-November
F. 2 Scripts 1950, December
F. 3 Scripts 1951, January-February
F. 4 Scripts 1951, April-May
F. 5 Scripts 1951, June-September
F. 6 Scripts, undated
F. 7 *Law and Mr. Jones, The*--Scripts and Documentation, 1960

Box 5

- Leave it to Larry*
F. 1 Scripts # 1-2, 1952, October
F. 2 Scripts # 3, 4, and 6, 1952, October-November
F. 3 Scripts # 7, 9, 1952, December
F. 4 *Magnificent Montague, The*--Pilot Script, circa 1957
Martha Raye Show, The
F. 5 Scripts, undated
F. 6 Scripts, 1951
F. 7 Scripts, 1952

Box 6

- Martha Raye Show, The*
F. 1 Scripts, 1952
F. 2-3 Scripts, 1953 (2 folders)
F. 4-5 Scripts, 1954 (2 folders)
Max Liebman Presents
F. 6 Script, 1954, October 10
F. 7 Script, 1954, October 23

Box 7

- Max Liebman Presents*
F. 1 Script, 1954, November
F. 2 Script, 1955, January
F. 3 Script, 1955, April 9
F. 4 Script, 1955, April 24
F. 5 Script, 1955, May
F. 6 *McKeever and the Colonel*--Shooting Schedules, 1962
F. 7 NBC News Broadcast--Script, 1954, April
F. 8 *NBC Presents Betty and Jane Kean*--Script, undated
Old Man Webster
F. 9 Notes and Correspondence, circa 1961
F. 10 Script Drafts, undated

Box 8

- F. 1 *Perry Como Show, The*--Script, 1960, April
F. 2 *Peter Loves Mary*--Shooting Schedule, undated
F. 3 *Phil Silvers Show, The* (aka "Sergeant Bilko")--Documentation, 1957-1961
F. 4 [*Satin and Spurs*]--Script, circa 1954
F. 5 *Shirley*--script, 1964
F. 6 *Three's Company*--Scenarios and Notes, undated
F. 7 *U.S. Rubber Company Presents U.S. Royal Showcase*--Script, 1952, January

[Subseries I.2: Radio, 1950-1951](#)

Box 8

- Magnificent Montague, The*
F. 8 Scripts # 1-4, 1950, November-December
F. 9 Scripts # 5-9, 1950, December - 1951, January
F. 10 Scripts # 10-14, 1951, January-February
F. 11 Scripts # 15-19, 1951, February-March

Box 9

- Magnificent Montague, The*
F. 1 Scripts # 20-24, 1951, March-April
F. 2 Scripts # 25-29, 1951, April-May
F. 3 Scripts # 30-34, 1951, June
F. 4 Scripts # 35-39, 1951, June-August
F. 5 Scripts # 40-44, 1951, August-September
F. 6 Scripts # 45-49, 1951, September-October
F. 7 Scripts # 50-51, 1951, October

Subseries I.3: Other Writings and Work, 1953-1963, undated

Box 10

- F. 1 Clippings--Inspiration, undated
- F. 2 Memos--Soderberg, Robert, 1960-1962
- F. 3 New Projects--Notes and Scenarios, undated
- F. 4 Plays--Scripts and Supporting Documentation
- F. 5 Scripts--Other Authors, 1953-1963
- F. 6 Short Stories--Drafts, undated
- F. 7 *T.V. Commercials University*--Classroom Text, circa 1958

Box 11

- F. 1 Untitled Writings and Script Fragments, undated

Series II: Personal, circa 1950-1965

Box 11

- F. 2 General--Correspondence, Documents, and Clippings, undated

Box 12

- F. 1 Caricature of Billy Friedberg, undated, artist unknown

Box 11

- F. 3 Photographs, undated
- F. 4 Simon, Neil--Correspondence, circa 1964
- F. 5 Sketchbooks (3), undated