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.

Conditions Governing Access:

Photocopying prohibited.

Conditions Governing Use: Unrestricted.


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)
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.