

Guide to the Leland McNamee papers

YCAL MSS 1212



by Karen Spicher

September 2024

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1212

CREATOR: McNamee, Leland, 1897-1981 , author

TITLE: Leland McNamee papers

DATES: 1933-1949, undated

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.8 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Music, song texts, and fragments of a scrapbook relating to minstrel shows produced by Leland McNamee; and a small amount other papers relating to McNamee. Disassembled pages from the scrapbook relate to performances by Leland McNamee's America's Finest Minstrel Show, most 1933-1936, performed at the Hippodrome Theater, Cleveland, Ohio, and for fraternal organizations and other charity benefits in the Cleveland area. Contents include newspaper clippings of advertisements and reviews, printed programs, other ephemera, and correspondence. One newspaper clipping includes a photograph of McNamee in blackface costume. Accompanying the scrapbook is a seven-frame fragment from an unidentified silent motion picture film, circa 1910, showing a group of people including either African Americans or people in blackface costume, and white people, some apparently women wearing police uniforms, with a map of the southern United States displayed on a wall.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.mcnamee>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.mcnamee>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Brian Cassidy on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2017.

Biographical / Historical

Leland McNamee (1897-1981), theatrical producer and blackface performer, owned Leland McNamee Productions and produced Leland McNamee's America's Finest Minstrel Show, in Cleveland, Ohio, during the 1930s.

Content Description

Music, song texts, and fragments of a scrapbook relating to minstrel shows produced by Leland McNamee; and a small amount other papers relating to McNamee. Disassembled pages from the scrapbook relate to performances by Leland McNamee's America's Finest Minstrel Show, most 1933-1936, performed at the Hippodrome Theater, Cleveland, Ohio, and for fraternal organizations and other charity benefits in the Cleveland area. Contents include newspaper clippings of advertisements and reviews, printed programs, other ephemera, and correspondence. One newspaper clipping includes a photograph of McNamee in blackface costume. Accompanying the scrapbook is a seven-frame fragment from an unidentified silent motion picture film, circa 1910, showing a group of people including either African Americans or people in blackface costume, and white people, some apparently women wearing police uniforms, with a map of the southern United States displayed on a wall.

Music for minstrel show songs, choruses, and dances, most undated copyist's manuscripts with performance annotations, is organized in portfolios of parts for first violin, first saxophone, tenor saxophone, first trumpet, trombone, and piano. Other music consists of vocal scores with piano and parts for additional instruments, most printed, copyright 1900s-1940s and undated. Also present are a few song texts, typescript and typescript mimeograph, undated.

Other papers include blank printed contract forms for minstrel show performances produced by McNamee and Joseph McElhone, undated; a poem by McNamee and writings about personality traits, possibly by McNamee, typescript carbon, undated; and newspaper clippings relating to vaudeville, 1936 and undated.

Arrangement

Arranged by type of material.

Collection Contents

	Scrapbook relating to performances by Leland McNamee's America's Finest Minstrel Show	1933-1936
	<p>Disassembled pages from the scrapbook relate to performances by Leland McNamee's America's Finest Minstrel Show, most 1933-1936, performed at the Hippodrome Theater, Cleveland, Ohio, and for fraternal organizations and other charity benefits in the Cleveland area. Contents include newspaper clippings of advertisements and reviews, printed programs, other ephemera, and correspondence. One newspaper clipping includes a photograph of McNamee in blackface costume. Accompanying the scrapbook is a seven-frame fragment from an unidentified silent motion picture film, circa 1910, showing a group of people including either African Americans or people in blackface costume, and white people, some apparently women wearing police uniforms, with a map of the southern United States displayed on a wall.</p>	
b. 1	Fragments of the scrapbook	1933-1936
b. 6	Oversize fragments of the scrapbook	1933-1936
	<p>Silent film clip</p> <p>Seven-frame fragment from an unidentified silent motion picture film, circa 1910, showing a group of people including either African Americans or people in blackface costume, and white people, some apparently women wearing police uniforms, with a map of the southern United States displayed on a wall.</p> <p>Original nitrate negatives were discarded in 2023 in accordance with Yale policy. Digital reference surrogates available.</p>	
	<p>Music for minstrel show songs, choruses, and dances</p> <p>Most undated copyist's manuscripts with performance annotations.</p> <p>Organized in portfolios of parts for first violin, first saxophone, tenor saxophone, first trumpet, trombone, and piano.</p>	
b. 2	Parts for first violin, first saxophone, tenor saxophone, first trumpet, trombone, and piano	
b. 3	Parts for first violin, first saxophone, tenor saxophone, first trumpet, trombone, and piano	
	Other music	1900s-1940s and undated
	<p>Other music consists of vocal scores with piano and parts for additional instruments, most printed, copyright 1900s-1940s and undated. Also present are a few song texts, typescript and typescript mimeograph.</p>	
b. 4	Vocal scores with piano and parts for additional instruments	1900s-1940s and undated
b. 5	Vocal scores with piano and parts for additional instruments	1900s-1940s and undated
b. 1	A few song texts, typescript and typescript mimeograph	undated

b.1	<p>Other papers</p> <p>Blank printed contract forms for minstrel show performances produced by McNamee and Joseph McElhone, undated; a poem by McNamee and writings about personality traits, possibly by McNamee, typescript carbon, undated; and newspaper clippings relating to vaudeville.</p>	1936 and undated
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