

(J.A.) MCNEIL COLLECTION

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Photos, manuscript notes and ephemera relating to Gilbert and Sullivan and especially to the tour of the D'Oyley Carte Company across Canada in 1927. Some biographical material relating to J.A. McNeil.

Gift of Dora Mavor Moore, 1977.

Extent: 1 box

Biographical sketch:

John Alexander (Jack) McNeil was born in Angus, Ontario in 1876. After 6 years of schooling he commenced work as a printer's devil for the weekly Barrie Gazette. In 1892 he moved to Toronto where he became a typesetter for The Empire. Later, in London, Ont., while taking part in a printer's strike, he proved his worth as a reporter when the strikers published their own paper, and he was hired in 1900 as a reporter for the London Advertiser. His work as a dramatic reviewer attracted attention, and he was hired as a drama critic and general reporter for the Toronto Mail and Empire in 1903.

His rise was rapid. He was soon in charge of the evening edition of the newspaper, subsequently abandoned, and in 1911 he became the first night correspondent in Toronto of the newly organized Canadian Press. In 1913 he joined the staff of the Montreal Gazette. Once again he rose rapidly, moving from reporter to managing editor by 1927. He became a director of the Canadian Press the same year and in 1939 became general manager upon the retirement of J.F.V. Livesay. He directed the CP through the difficult war years, retiring in 1945.

While he made his living as a newspaperman, his real love was the theatre. He collected books, records and photos, many of which were autographed by the world's leading actors. He was personally acquainted with many of the members of the D'Oyley Carte Company which staged Gilbert and Sullivan and was a renowned authority on the operettas, as well as on eighteenth century music and plays.

He died in Toronto October 18, 1964.

Rachel Grover  
August 1986

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CONTAINER LISTING

The D'Oyly Carte Company tour of Canada, 1927: photos (mainly auto-graphed), clippings, brochures.

General ephemera on Gilbert and Sullivan: brochures and reviews of books; The American Gilbert and Sullivan Quarterly, 1936, centennial issue; Sir William S. Gilbert Centenary dinner menu.

J.A. McNeil - personal material:

Speech on Gilbert and Sullivan given at the St. James Literary Society, Montreal.

Lists of photos owned by J.A. McNeil.

Notes dictated to Dora Mavor Moore by J.A. McNeil.

Photo of J.A. McNeil. 2 copies.

Photo of J.A. McNeil with Sir John Martin-Harvey and his company on board ship.

Charlesworth, Hector to J.A. McNeil. T.L.S. 1 leaf.

Toronto, Dec. 7, 1943. Letter relates to material from the actor R.L. Milligan which sender encloses.

Milligan, R.L. To Hector Charlesworth, Toronto. A.L.S. 2 leaves.

Harriston, Ont., Nov. 8, 1943. Thanks addressee for his review of his appearance in "On Trial". Accompanied by an envelope which advertises "Milligan, Dialect Comedian". Signed: Harry Dawson, manager, Harriston, Ontario.

Messages of condolence received upon the death of J.A. McNeil. Obituaries from Canadian newspapers. Xerox copies.

The J.A. McNeil Collection of photos and prints of British and American actors and other theatrical personalities is stored in a filing cabinet in 1B. For details of this collection, please ask at the Reference Desk.