
Motion Picture Association of America certificate books

Special Collections

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Motion Picture Association of America certificate books

Date (inclusive): 1934-1965

Collection number: 1643

Creator: Motion Picture Association of America

Extent: 6.7 linear feet of papers.

Repository: Margaret Herrick Library. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Languages: English

Access

Available by appointment only.

Publication rights

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Preferred Citation

Motion Picture Association of America certificate books, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Biography

The Motion Picture Association of America is an American film self-censorship organization. In 1922, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) was formed with Will Hays as president, primarily to defend the film industry against censorship. In 1930, Hays introduced the Production Code, a document designed to help the industry regulate itself by following certain moral principles and guidelines. Hays chose Joseph Breen to oversee the administration of the Code in 1934. Under Breen, the studios were required to submit all screenplays for approval. In 1946, the organization changed its name to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and Hays was succeeded by Eric Johnston. The Production Code remained in force until 1968, when it was superseded by the MPAA ratings system, which is still in use today.

Collection Scope and Content Summary

The Motion Picture Association of America certificate books span the years 1934-1965 and encompass 6.7 linear feet. The collection contains 140 Production Code certificate books from the California office of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America. Each 10-inch by 10 3/4-inch book once contained 150 certificates, numbered sequentially, with three certificates per page. These are the original books from which the certificates were detached and given to the producers, once a film had been approved, leaving the stub behind. The stub includes the certificate number, stamped approval date, film title, release and production company, and the length, given in number of reels. Since certificate numbers were assigned prior to actual approval, the stamped approval dates do not follow a strict chronology. The books, with certificate numbers 1 through 21,002, are arranged sequentially by certificate number.

Arrangement

Arranged in the following series: Not arranged in series.

Indexing Terms

Motion Picture Association of America
organization records
