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Guide to the Emil J. Simon Autobiography and Lee de Forest Memorabilia

Collection number: BANC MSS 72/115 z

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Collection Summary
Collection Title: Emil J. Simon Autobiography, and Lee de Forest Memorabilia,
Date (inclusive): 1888-1963
Collection Number: BANC MSS 72/115 z
Extent: Number of containers: 4 boxes, 1 oversize folderLinear ft.: 2
Repository: The Bancroft Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Abstract: Inserted in the autobiography are letters, clippings, photographs and other materials documenting his life and career as a radio engineer and inventor. The Lee de Forest memorabilia include articles by and about the vacuum tube pioneer, letters, clippings, Simon's reminiscences, etc., and also material relating to the de Forest pioneers.
Languages Represented: English
Access
Collection is open for research.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Emil J. Simon autobiography, and Lee de Forest memorabilia, BANC MSS 72/115 z, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Scope and Content
Emil Jacob Simon was born, October 25, 1888, in New York City to Sigmont and Jennie (Sampter) Simon. He attended schools in New York and in the fall of 1905 entered Columbia University. He majored in engineering and had an active interest in wireless.

In 1906 he met Lee de Forest and in 1909 went to work for him. He stayed with de Forest’s company until it failed in December 1910, and then went to work for other companies as an engineer. In 1911 he was with the National Electric Signaling Company and from 1912 to 1915, the Wireless Improvement Company.

In 1915 he started out on his own, making radio transmitters of his own design—the Simon Quenched Spark System for wireless transmission. In the next few years he was involved with various companies making such things as direction finders for ships and a device for talking back and forth in a noisy airplane.

In 1920 he founded Intercity Radio Telegraph Company. It operated the first overland wireless service in the East and initiated service between Berlin, Germany and New York. However, over the next ten years the larger domestic radio communication companies began to push the smaller ones out of business and Intercity failed in 1930.

In 1932 Simon conceived and began development of a direction finder which he called the “Simon Radioguide”. In 1934 he incorporated the Radio Navigation Instrument Corporation in order to market it and other radio devices. The Radioguide became popular for use in airplanes.

In 1948 the Radio Navigation Instrument Corporation failed and Simon became an independent consulting engineer specializing in radio patent suits.

Over the years he had continued his friendship with his former employer, Lee de Forest, and became an active charter member of the De Forest Pioneers.

He died in New York in 1963.

The Simon Collection came to The Bancroft Library in January, 1972 as a gift of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. It consists of the holograph manuscript of his autobiography and related material (described in the Key to Arrangement which follows) and letters and papers relating to Lee de Forest and the DeForest Pioneers.

Boxes 1-3

Autobiography

Additional Note
Holograph ms. and, inserted in it, correspondence, newspaper clippings, citations to articles in newspapers, photographs, legal agreements and contracts, patents, brochures, magazine articles, blueprints, deeds, and certificates, documenting Simon’s early life; his career as a radio engineer, inventor and president of the Intercity Radio and Telegraph Company and Radio Navigation Instrument Corporation, Inc.; and his interests in amateur radio, radio history, stamp collecting and automobiles. Originally in nine looseleaf binders, with a chronological arrangement. The material has been removed from the binders and placed in folders, with the original order retained and the folders marked with the former volume numbers. Some blueprints have been placed in an oversize folder.

Box 1  v. I-V, 1888-1932
Box 2  v. VI-VII, 1933-1943
Box 3  v. VIII-IX, 1944-1969

Letters written by Lee de Forest (two folders)
Letters written by Marie de Forest (Mrs. Lee de Forest)
Letters written by Emil J. Simon to de Forest
Box 4  

**de Forest Memorabilia**

Additional Note

Articles by and about de Forest, newspaper clippings, citations for newspaper stories, photographs, correspondence, patents, blue-prints, booklets and Simon's reminiscences, documenting the career of Lee de Forest and his various companies. Arranged chronologically. Included in the correspondence are:

- Copy of a letter, Mar 16, 1956, from Dwight David Eisenhower to de Forest.
- Copies of letters, Sept 5, 1903 to the Secretary of the Navy; and Jan. 29, 1932 to S. M. Kinter from Reginald Aburey Fessenden.

**De Forest Pioneers**

Additional Note

Membership lists, correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs, copies of speeches, programs and news releases concerning the activities and organization of the society.

**De Forest Radio Company (brochure)**

Veteran Wireless Operators Association - Yearbooks, Notices of Meetings and other miscellaneous material.

**Bailey, George William, 1887-**


**Basset, Preston Rogers, 1892-**


**Damon, Ralph Shepard, 1897-**


**de Forest, Lee**


**Dodge, Marcellus Hartley, 1881-**


**Dubilier, William, 1888-**

Letter, June 24, 1957, in v. IX, part 3; and copies of letters to him dated Aug. 29, 1951 in v. IX, part 1.

**Dunning, John Ray, 1907-1975**


**Eisenhower, Dwight David, 1890-1969**

Copy of a letter, Nov 4, 1957, to him in v. IX, part 3.

**Goldsmith, Alfred Norton, 1887-**


**Goubeau, Vincent dePaul, 1898-**


**Hull, Cordell, 1871-1955**


**Lippincott, Donald K.**


**Littlewood, William, 1899-**


**Loening, Grover C., 1888-**


**Loughren, Arthur Vivian, 1902-**


**Morgan, Junius Spencer, 1892-**
Pratt, Haraden, 1891-1969
Letter, July 26, 1969 (copy) to Charles Süskind and letter to him from Süskind,
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 1882-1945
Sarnoff, David, 1891-
Copies of letters, Dec 17, 1951 and Dec 20, 1951, to him in v. IX, part 1.
Stone, Ellery Wheeler
Letter, Apr 13, 1951; and copy of letter to him, Apr. 4, 1951 in v. IV, part 1. Letter,
June 6, 1947; and copy of letter to him, June 3, 1947, in v. VIII, part 2.
Süsskind, Charles, 1921-
Letter, Aug. 5, 1968 to Haraden Pratt; and copy of a letter from Pratt to him, July 26,
1969, in v. IX, part 3.
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972
Copies of letters, Apr. 6, 1951 and June 20, 1951, to him in v. IX, part 1.

De Forest, Lee, 1873-1961
DuMont, Allen Balcom, 1901-
Letter, Apr 20, 1962, and letter, Feb 29, 1960; and copies of letters, Mar. 1, 1960 and
Nov. 19, 1960, to him.
Gernsback, Hugo, 1884-1967
Letter, June 14, 1956.
Guy, Raymond Frederick, 1899-
to him.
Hogan, John Vincent Lawless, 1890-
2 letters, Feb 18, 1952 and June 18, 1952 (copies); and copy a letter, Mar. 1, 1960 to
him.
Loughren, Arthur Vivian, 1902-
Copy of a letter, Mar 28, 1956.
Stone, Ellery Wheeler
Letters, June 25, 1956, June 25, 1956, June 26, 1956 and June 28, 1956; and copies of