Descriptive Summary
Title: Mary H. O'Connor Collection
Dates: 1908-1940
Collection Number: WGF-MS-010
Creator/Collector: O'Connor, Mary H., 1872-1959
Extent: 0.21 linear feet
Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Los Angeles, California 90048
Abstract: The Mary H. O'Connor Collection, 1908-1940, primarily consists of programs, flyers, leaflets and other promotional material produced by the Writers, a social club organized by the Screen Writers’ Guild during the 1920s and 1930s. The collection also contains some business records of the Club, including financial statements, receipts, property records, and stockholder documents. Lastly the collection contains some personal Papers of Mary O’Connor including a character scenario for an unproduced Ben Hur (1908) film.
Language of Material: English
Access
Available by appointment only.
Publication Rights
The responsibility to secure copyright and publication permission rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
Mary H. O’Connor Collection. Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Acquisition Information
Donated on May 1, 2014 and September 3, 2014 by Kelvin Thompson, grandnephew of Mary H. O’Connor.
Biography/Administrative History
Mary Hamilton O’Connor was a silent film scenario writer who was an early member of the Screen Writers’ Guild and its social club The Writers. Born on September 1, 1872 in St. Paul Minnesota, she was one of seven children born to Thomas J. and Bridget Nash O’Connor. Her father was a businessman and her mother was a writer. The O’Connor family moved from St. Paul to Portland, Oregon and later settled in Santa Cruz, CA. Mary moved to Los Angeles and worked on films from 1913-1921, along with her sister Loyola who was an actress in silent films during this time. Mary was employed in the story departments of Vitagraph, Majestic-Reliance, Fine Arts and finally Famous Players-Lasky, including its London division under Jesse Lasky. Her writing credits include title cards for D.W. Griffith’s Intolerance, although she is uncredited on screen. She was active in the early Screen Writers’ Guild and its social club, The Writers, during the 1920s-1930s. She died in 1959 in Los Angeles.
Scope and Content of Collection
This collection consists primarily of promotional materials created by The Writers, as well as business records of the club and personal materials of O’Connor. She served on the Board of Directors of The Writers, and was a majority shareholder of its corporate body, the Las Palmas and Sunset Corporation. Series I: The Writers, 1921-1937 contains promotional materials for events held by The Writers, including dinner and party invitations and play and event programs. Many of these documents were illustrated and signed by artist and screenwriter Martin Justice. Playwrights listed in the programs include George S. Kaufman, Hedda Hopper, Rupert Hughes and Dorothy Parker. This series also contains business records of The Writers including receipts, financial statements, the Las Palmas and Sunset Corporation grant deed, loan application, mortgage and escrow documents and a shareholders list. Shareholders listed on the document include Frances Marion, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin. Series 2: Personal Papers, 1908-1940 consists of O’Connor’s personal papers, including a silent film era typed scenario for an unproduced Ben Hur (1908) containing Esther’s scenes. No writer is credited but her family believes she was the writer. This series also contains a letter from the office of Cecil B. DeMille and a personal letter, presumably from a family member, describing thoughts on Mary’s film Nina the Flower Girl. Other papers include a typed list of Famous Players-Lasky films, programs from a variety of events not related to The Writers, and an income statement detailing revenue and expenses of the Motion Picture Relief Fund.
Indexing Terms
Mary H. O’Connor--Archives
Screen Writers’ Guild
Screenwriters