
Jackson Gillis Papers

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Writers Guild Foundation Archive

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Jackson Gillis Papers

Dates: 1946-1992

Collection Number: WGF-MS-046

Creator/Collector: Gillis, Jackson, 1916-2010

Extent: 8.5 Linear Feet

Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Los Angeles, California 90048

Abstract: The Jackson Gillis Papers, 1946-1992, contains manuscripts, correspondence, and development materials created by the television writer Jackson Gillis. The bulk of the collection consists of produced and unproduced manuscripts written by Gillis over his career.

Language of Material: English

Access

Majority of materials stored off site. One week advance notice required for retrieval.

Publication Rights

The responsibility to secure copyright and publication permission rests with the patron.

Preferred Citation

Jackson Gillis Papers. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Acquisition Information

Donated by Candida Gillis, November 16, 2011.

Biography/Administrative History

Jackson Gillis was a prolific television writer whose career spanned over four decades and covered nearly every television genre and format. Gillis was born on August 21, 1916 in Kalama, Washington to Ridgway, a highway engineer, and Marjorie Lyman, a piano teacher. When Gillis was a teenager, his family moved to California where he attended Fresno State University and graduated from Stanford. Following Stanford, he pursued a career in acting, performing at London's Westminster Theater and eventually appearing at the esteemed Barter Theater in Virginia where he met fellow actor Patricia Cassidy. Gillis and Cassidy soon wed and remained married for 62 years until Cassidy's death in 2003. During WWII, Gillis served in the Pacific as an Army intelligence officer. Following the war, he and Patricia moved to Los Angeles, where he began a career writing for radio. Gillis wrote for such radio shows as "The Whistler" and "The Amazing Mrs. Danbury" and became a member of the Writers Guild of America in 1954. In the 1950's, Gillis transitioned to writing for television and worked steadily in the medium for over 40 years. He's perhaps best known for his work on "Adventures of Superman," "The Mickey Mouse Club," "Perry Mason," on which he served as the show's script consultant from 1959-1960 and producer from 1960-1961, and "Columbo," for which he was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Writing with the episode "Suitable for Framing." His numerous credits include "Racket Squad," "Lassie," "Sugarfoot," "Lost in Space," "Wild, Wild, West," "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," "Bonanza," "Ironside," "Starsky and Hutch," and "Murder She Wrote," among many others. In addition to his screenwriting career, Gillis also authored two novels, *The Killers of Starfish* in 1977 and *Chainsaw* in 1988. After a long and successful television writing career, he retired from screenwriting in 1996 and moved with his wife to Moscow, Idaho. Gillis passed on August 19, 2010 at the age of 93. He is survived by his daughter Candace Gillis and one grandson.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Jackson Gillis Papers are organized into four series. Series I: Television Scripts is comprised of produced episodic television dating from 1952 to 1992 and is divided into three sub-series. Subseries A: Episodic Television, 1952-1992, contains scripts from *Sugarfoot*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Columbo*, and *Zorro*, among many others. Subseries B: *Perry Mason*, 1959-1966, contains 30 episodes written by Gillis for the classic legal drama starring Raymond Burr. Subseries C: *The Mickey Mouse Club*, 1955-1957, contains scripts for some of the popular dramatic serials written by Gillis that aired during the last 15 minutes of *The Mickey Mouse Club*, including *The Adventures of Spin and Marty* and *The Hardy Boys*. Series II: Radio and MOW Scripts is comprised of Gillis' work outside of episodic television and is divided into two subseries. Subseries A: *Movie of the Week*, 1971-1988, contains scripts from the miniseries and television movies *The Chisholms*, *A Stoning in Fulham County*, *The Time Travelers*, and several others. Subseries B: Radio, 1946-1947, contains scripts from three of the radio programs he worked on, *An Adventure with Richard Davis*, *The Amazing Mrs. Danbury*, and *The Whistler*. Series III: Unproduced Works, 1953-1989, contains unproduced film and television scripts written by Gillis, including episodes for *Adventures of Superman*, *The Chisholms*, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Magnum P.I.*, and several others. Series IV:

Correspondence and Treatments, 1956-1988, contains notes, ideas, outlines, and correspondence pertaining to Gillis' produced and unproduced television work.

Indexing Terms

Made-for-TV movies

Television scripts

Superman (Television program : 1952-1958) Lassie (Television program) Perry Mason (Television program) Columbo (Television program) Murder, she wrote (Television program)

Television writers
