Michel F. Amestoy Collection

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Michel F. Amestoy Collection
Dates: 1934-1967
Collection Number: WGF-MS-061
Creator/Collector: Amestoy, Michel F., 1910-2002
United States. Army Air Forces. First Motion Picture Unit
Extent: 1.25 linear feet
Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Los Angeles, California 90048

Abstract: The Michel F. Amestoy Collection, 1934-1967, primarily contains scripts for military training films and industrial films and documentaries written by Amestoy during his career in non-fiction film. The collection also includes a small number of scripts and treatments for entertainment films and television, as well as research materials on companies and topics, and publications related to the Army Air Forces First Motion Picture Unit.

Language of Material: English

Access
Available by appointment only.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Michel F. Amestoy Collection. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Acquisition Information
Donated by Helen Amestoy, December 3, 2002

Biography/Administrative History
Michel Francois Amestoy, Jr. was born in Los Angeles on September 10, 1910. He was the grandson of Domingo Amestoy, a prominent banker and real estate developer in early Los Angeles. Before the U.S. entered World War II, Amestoy began working on training films being produced by the Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Between 1940 and 1942, Amestoy researched and wrote more than 30 training and morale films. He also worked in the Office of Civilian Defense on air raid precaution films. Amestoy enlisted in the Army Air Forces in 1943, and was posted to the First Motion Picture Unit in Culver City. While serving in the AAF, Amestoy wrote more than a dozen training and orientation films, many of which dealt with highly technical material. After the war, Amestoy embarked on a career as a writer for industrial films and documentaries, working with producers including John Sutherland, Gordon S. Mitchell and Rocket Films. He also worked on films for the U.S. State Department. Amestoy was married to Helen Monnette, who also hailed from a prominent California family, and they had three daughters. Amestoy died in Los Angeles on April 3, 2002, at the age of 91.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Michel F. Amestoy Collection, 1934-1967, is organized into two series. Series I: Production, 1934-1967, is divided into three sub-series. Sub-series A: Scripts and treatments, 1934-1952, includes a script for the 1938 film Suez (written by Philip Dunne and Julien Josephson), as well as two scripts for the television series The Unexpected, and an outline and prototype script for the proposed television program John Nesbitt's Stories of the World. The sub-series also includes several other stories or scripts by Philip Dunne and his brother Finley Peter Dunne, Jr. Sub-series B: Industrial films, 1946-1967, includes scripts and other materials related to industrial productions that Amestoy worked on between in the years following World War II. These include A is for Atom, Skifully Yours, and several films made on behalf of corporations including the Lane-Wells Company, the Byron Jackson Company, and Briggs Filtration. Sub-series C: Military training films, 1941-1959, includes scripts for films Amestoy worked on for the Research Council and the Army Air Forces First Motion Picture Unit, including Safeguarding Military Information, which was shown to the public in 1942. It also includes the script of a film commissioned by the Marine Corps in 1959. Series 2: Subjects, 1941-1957, includes Amestoy's research materials on companies and topics, as well as film catalogs. Of special interest is an unpublished article entitled "The General's Commendation," about life at the First Motion Picture Unit, and an original 1944 telephone directory from the First Motion Picture Unit.

Indexing Terms
Instructional films
Industrial films
Screenplays
Screenwriters