Bert MacDonald Papers: Finding Aid

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Overview of the Collection
Title: Bert MacDonald Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1935-1950
Collection Number: mssHM 66522-66575
Creator: MacDonald, Bert.
Extent: 54 items in 1 box
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
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Abstract: This collection contains 54 items related to the investigations of United States War Department and Corp of Engineers agent Bert MacDonald, who was hired in 1942 to monitor and investigate communist and other radical groups in Los Angeles, California.
Language: English.
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Bert MacDonald Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Cataloger's Note
Although Bert MacDonald uses the names Michael McDonald, Quink, and Chic in his espionage work, it was decided to use the name Bert MacDonald throughout the collection. He used that name when he joined the Army and became a Protective Security Agent; we believe it to be his real name.
Biographical Note
Bert MacDonald was a Protective Security Agent with the Corps of Engineers and the War Department. He was hired in 1942 to monitor and investigate communist and other radical groups in Los Angeles.
Scope and Content
The 54 items, which are arranged chronologically, include correspondence, military records, reports, programs, and a newsletter. The collection also contains some ephemera related to the groups and individuals MacDonald was investigating. The material before 1947 deals with MacDonald's early Army career and his appointment as a Security Protective Agent for the War Department and the Corps of Engineers. The material after 1947 pertains to MacDonald's espionage work and his monitoring of radical groups in Los Angeles. These items include material MacDonald collected about the groups as well as his reports on their activities. Some of the groups and people he investigated are: the Congress of American Women, the Federation of American Citizens of German Descent, Dr. Wesley A. Swift, Glendale School Superintendent Willard S. Ford, and a conference on civil rights held by the Los Angeles Community Relations Council. Also included is a copy of the newsletter Alert: A Weekly Confidential Report on Communism and How to Combat It.
The collection deals with the following subjects: Anti-communist movements, anti-Jewish propaganda, Anti-Semitism, Communism, espionage, race relations in the Untied States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the Women's International Democratic Federation, and subversive activities. Some notable authors of correspondence are: Agnes Ayres, George Van Horn Moseley, Gerald L. K. Smith, Colonel Edwin C. Kelton, and Major General Ralph H. Van Deman.
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.
Indexing: Subjects
Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley
  • Subject in “Report on Congress of American Women,” (1947, July 31) by Bert MacDonald. HM 66548.
Swift, Wesley A.
  • Subject in “Report on Meeting held by Wesley A. Swift,” (1948) by Bert MacDonald. HM 66557, 66559, 66561.
United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation
  • Subject in Vere A. Beers letter (1942, Mar. 12) to Bert MacDonald. HM 66534.
United States. Race relations
  • Subject in Bert MacDonald letter (1948, [before Aug. 16]) to “Dear Friend.” HM 66573.
  • Subject in George Van Horn Moseley, 1874-1960, letter (1948, Aug. 16) to Bert MacDonald. HM 66574.
Women’s International Democratic Federation
  • Subject in “Report on Congress of American Women,” (1947, July 31) by Bert MacDonald. HM 66548.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley.
MacDonald, Bert.
Swift, Wesley A.
United States. Army. Corps of Engineers.
United States. War Dept.
Women’s International Democratic Federation.
Anti-communist movements -- California.
Anti-Jewish propaganda -- California.
Antisemitism -- California.
Communism -- California.
Espionage, American.
Internal security -- United States.
Subversive activities -- California.
California -- History -- 20th century -- Sources.
California -- Politics and government -- 20th century -- Sources.
United States -- Race relations.

Forms/Genres
Letters (correspondence) -- California -- 20th century.
Military records -- California -- 20th century.
Newsletters -- California -- 20th century.

Additional Contributors
Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940.
Moseley, George Van Horn, 1874-1960.
Smith, Gerald L. K. (Gerald Lyman Kenneth), 1898-1976.
Van Deman, Ralph H., 1865-1952.
Federation of American Citizens of German Descent.

Box 1 mssHM 66522-66575
[1935], June 23. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald HM 66522
[1935], Sep. 20. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald HM 66524
1935, Oct. 31. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66525
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66526
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66527
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66528
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66529
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66530
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66531
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66532
[Approximately 1935]. Ayres, Agnes, 1896-1940, Emma Ayres, and Maria Ayres to Bert MacDonald  HM 66533

1942, Mar. 12. Beers, Vere A. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66534
1942, June 5. MacDonald, Bert. Report to the Protective Security Officer  HM 66535
1942, July 1. Beers, Vere A. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66536
1942, July 29. Currie, F. J. Notice of Efficiency Rating for Bert MacDonald  HM 66537
1942, Aug. 5. Riordan, R. E. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66538
1942, Sep. 4. Hazenbush, T. G. to John D. Roche  HM 66539
1942, Oct. 23. Beers, Vere A. to Whom it May Concern  HM 66542
1942, Oct. 31. Currie, F. J. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66543
[1942]. Beers, Vere A. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66545
[1942]. Beers, Vere A. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66546
[1942]. MacDonald, Bert to Chief of Engineers  HM 66547
1947, Nov. 30. Federation of American Citizens of German Descent. Resolutions Made at National Convention  HM 66549
1948, Feb. 7. Jeffers, Joseph, Mrs. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66550
1948, Feb. 9. Van Deman, Ralph H., 1865-1952 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66551
1948, Feb. 13. Edstrom, O. E. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66552
1948, Feb. 13. Van Deman, Ralph H., 1865-1952 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66553
1948, Feb. 15. Nulsen, Jack C. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66554
1948, Feb. 17. Van Deman, Ralph H., 1865-1952 to Bert MacDonald  HM 66555
1948, Feb. 18. Edstrom, O. E. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66556
1948, Feb. 20. MacDonald, Bert. Report on Meeting held by Wesley A. Swift  HM 66557
1948, Feb. 21. Edstrom, O. E. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66558
1948, Feb. 22. MacDonald, Bert. Report on Meeting held by Wesley A. Swift  HM 66559
1948, Feb. 29. MacDonald, Bert. Report on Meeting held by Wesley A. Swift  HM 66561
1948, Mar. 3. MacDonald, Bert to Jake Jacoby  HM 66562
1948, Mar. 3. MacDonald, Bert to G. H. Weiner  HM 66563
1948, Mar. 6. Los Angeles Community Relations Council. Program for County-Wide Conference on Civil Rights: [not the same as above item; on verso of last page are handwritten notes possibly by Bert MacDonald]  HM 66565
1948, Mar. 16. MacDonald, Bert to Helen Collback  HM 66566
1948, Mar. 16. MacDonald, Bert to Fredric Engel  HM 66567
1948, Mar. 31. Smith, Gerald L. K. (Gerald Lyman Kenneth), 1898- to Bert MacDonald  HM 66568
1948, Apr. 4. Allen, Marilyn R. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66569
1948, Apr. 12. Brennan, Bernard to Bert MacDonald  HM 66570
1948, Apr. 15. Mc-----, T. H. to Bert MacDonald  HM 66571
1948, May 18. Smith, Gerald L. K. (Gerald Lyman Kenneth), 1898- to Bert MacDonald  HM 66572
1948, [before Aug. 16]. [MacDonald, Bert] to “Dear Friend” HM 66573
1948, Aug. 16. Moseley, George Van Horn, 1874-1960 to Bert MacDonald HM 66574
Combat It: [newsletter] HM 66575