Guide to the Roy Pryor Collection ARS.0020

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Roy Pryor Collection
Dates: Bulk, 1940-1942
Dates: 1937-1949
Collection number: ARS.0020
Creator: Pryor, Roy
Collection size: 16 boxes: approx. 1000 12" and 16" instantaneous discs
Repository: Archive of Recorded Sound

Abstract: The Roy Pryor Collection consists of off-air recordings of local and network radio in Menlo Park, California between 1937 and 1949. Pryor used a home recording machine to make aluminum and lacquer discs of broadcasts, mostly capturing war-related news and commentary.

Language of Material: English

Access
Open for research; material must be requested at least two business days in advance of intended use. Contact the Archive for assistance.

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Preferred Citation

Source
The Roy Pryor Collection was donated to the Stanford Archive of Recorded Sound by Roy Pryor.

Sponsor
This finding aid was produced with generous financial support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Scope and Contents
Roy Pryor ('21, MA '24) was a hobbyist who, from March 1937 to November 1949, recorded radio broadcasts from local stations onto nearly one thousand aluminum and lacquer instantaneous discs. During World War II, he and his family made a special point of trying to capture programs related to the conflict in Europe and the Pacific. From Hitler speeches on KGO in 1938 to Japan signing its surrender on KPO in 1945, these recordings encompass the war years in incredible detail, and depict war-time attitudes toward local and world politics, the economy, and social issues. As a teacher and dean of the Menlo School and Junior College, he used these audio documents in class and made them available to other educational institutions.

The collection contains a wide range of subject material taken directly from local and network radio programs on KGO, KPO, KSFO, KNBC, KQW, KFBK, and KFRC, providing an aural snapshot of day-to-day life at the time. There are a few entertainment programs (including the Standard Symphony Hour and Bell Telephone Hour) and sportscasts in the collection, as well as some Stanford-related content, but the majority of recordings feature news and commentary by announcers Raymond Gram Swing, H. V. Kaltenborn, Fulton Lewis, Jr., Walter Winchell, Dorothy Thompson, Gabriel Heatter, Wythe Williams, and Upton Close. Other programs featured in the collection are American Education Forum, University of Chicago Round Table, University Explorer, Over Our Coffee Cups, America's Town Meeting of the Air, Freedom's People, Menlo Nuggets, and Unlimited Horizons. There is extensive coverage of political campaigns and conventions, and many speeches by President Roosevelt.

The discs, which play at 33 1/3 and 78 rpm, are both single and double-sided, and are made of aluminum or lacquer with cardboard, glass and metal cores. Many programs span multiple discs. The fact that different programs from different dates are on the same disc (and that the Hoover Institution shares some of the same programs) suggests the possibility that some are copies. A few relevant clippings, transcripts, bulletins, etc. are filed with the discs. Pryor maintained excellent recording logs, noting broadcast times, equipment used, and synopses of newscasts. The collection has been described at the item level in a searchable Filemaker database, accessible here.

Arrangement
Discs are in approximate chronological order. All programs were numbered by Pryor.
Related Collections

Hoover Institution Archives holds the related Roy Pryor radio broadcast collection, XX650. Pryor donated fifty-seven discs related to World War II to Hoover, some of which overlap with the programs held by ARS. Hoover has the following programs: 445, 561, 587, 625, 632, 638, 672, 673, 675, 678, 679, 687, 688, 691, 692, 695, 696, 699, 701, 702, 704, 714, 716, 717, 720, 723, 724, 728, 734, 735, 736, 737, 747, 815, and 891. Twenty-five of the titles in the Hoover collection are not in the ARS collection, and eleven titles overlap.

Indexing Terms

Radio programs
Radio journalism.
World War, 1939-1945.

12" Discs

Box 1

1. 1-51e December 1939 - March 1940
Scope and Contents
University of Chicago Round Table ; America's Town Meeting of the Air ; American Education Forum ; Democracy in Action ; University Explorer ; Fifty years of home economics at Oregon State College ; Stanford University Hour ; Art for your sake ; Union-Management Cooperation -- speech by William Green ; The World Is Yours ; USC - UCLA football game (last 12 min.) ; Walter Winchell: News and Commentary ; Opening of congress and the President's address ; American Youth Congress address

Box 2

2. 52a-100 March - May 1940
Scope and Contents
American Education Forum ; University of Chicago Round Table ; America's Town Meeting of the Air ; Stanford University Hour ; University Explorer ; Commonwealth Club ; Symphony Intermission Talks ; Paul Reynaud, Premier of France ; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary ; John B. Hughes: News and Commentary ; Walter Winchell: News and Commentary ; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary ; Pan-American Union address ; Lux Radio Theater ; Declaration of German Policy ; Over Our Coffee Cups

Box 3

3. 101-190 May - July 1940
Scope and Contents
Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary ; Oberlin on the Air ; Peoples Lobby ; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary ; American Education Forum ; Northwestern University: Dedication of new School of Engineering ; University of Chicago Round Table ; Walter Winchell: News and Commentary ; Address to Congress requesting special appropriations for national defense ; Bull Session: "Why did I go to college?" ; Winston Churchill ; NBC News ; Speech by King George VI of England ; Fourteenth Radio "Fireside Chat" ; Herbert Hoover speaking on National Defense ; Anthony Eden: Report of "Battle of the Ports" ; John B. Hughes: News and Commentary ; Activities in Rome during the day of Italy's entry into the war ; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: Speech to graduating class of University of Virginia ; President Roosevelt's reply to Premier Reynaud's appeal for aid ; Republican Convention
4. 191-290 July - October 1940

Scope and Contents
Dupont, Stories about Chemistry; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Washington Merry-Go-Round; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Stanford University Hour; Democratic Convention; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; Walter Winchell: News and Commentary; Wendell L. Willkie Acceptance Speech; University of Chicago Round Table; Gabriel Heatter: News and Commentary; Cavalcade of America; Helen Hayes Theater; Jack Benny

5. 291-335b October - November 1940

Scope and Contents
Gabriel Heatter: News and Commentary; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Cavalcade of America; Joseph Henry Jackson; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; National Vespers; Helen Hayes Theater; On the Home Front (PTA); President Roosevelt speeches; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; John L. Lewis speaks for Willkie; Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. -- Willkie the Man; Our Dying Democracy -- Norman Thomas; Gen. Hugh S. Johnson for Willkie; Our International Relations -- Cordell Hull; National Vespers; Senator Wagner speech answering John L. Lewis talk; Joseph P. Kennedy: Approving defense program of New Deal; Senator Taft Speech; Henry Wallace Speech; Thomas Dewey Speech; Wilkie Speech; Hoover Speech; Charles L. McNary speech; American Education Forum; The World is Yours

6. 335a-390 November - December 1940

Scope and Contents
Samplings of Republican Rally in New York; Election eve speeches; Helen Hayes Theater; On the Home Front (PTA); Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Cavalcade of America; Gabriel Heatter: News and Commentary; Stanford-Washington football game; Joseph Henry Jackson; Pageant of Art; Dorothy Thompson: News and Commentary; University Explorer; Ted Malone -- Between the Bookends; Wendell Willkie -- Armistice Day Address; Wythe Williams: News and Commentary; America's Town Meeting of the Air; Unlimited Horizons; National Vespers; Joseph Henry Jackson; Story Behind the Headlines

7. 391-455 December 1940 - January 1941

Scope and Contents
Dorothy Thompson: News and Commentary; University Explorer; Gabriel Heatter: News and Commentary; Cavalcade of America; Wythe Williams: News and Commentary; Unlimited Horizons; Of men and books: Guest - Lin Yutang; We Who Serve; Pageant of Art; University of Chicago Round Table; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Wythe Williams: News and Commentary; I'm an American: guest: Walter Damrosch; Silver Theater; Fireside Chat: "National Security"; Lux Radio Theater; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Everyman's Theater; FDR Address to 77th Congress; New World News
8. 456-519b January - April 1941

Scope and Contents
Dorothy Thompson: News and Commentary; University Explorer; Helen Hayes Theater; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Unlimited Horizons; Everyman's Theater; American Education Forum; Helen Hayes Theater; FDR Inauguration; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; Wythe Williams: News and Commentary; Cavalcade of America; University of Chicago Round Table; Winston Churchill; American Pilgrimage

Box 9

9. 520-615 April - October 1941 (one June 1942)

Scope and Contents
Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; American Pilgrimage; Unlimited Horizons; Drama behind the headlines; University Explorer; Peoples Platform; I'm an American; Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy; Cavalcade of America; American Education Forum; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Stanford University 50th Anniversary; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: July 4th Ceremony, 1941; University of Chicago Round Table; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; Hidden History; Interview at New York airport with Alfred Duff-Cooper; Invitation to Learning; FDR "shoot on sight" speech; Standard Symphony Hour; Freedom's People; Mobilization for Human Needs; America's Town Meeting of the Air; Pause that Refreshes

Box 10

10. 616-725 November 1941 - January 1942 (one Dec. 1940)

Scope and Contents
Cavalcade of America; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; University Explorer; Hidden History; President Franklin D. Roosevelt -- Navy Day speech; Upton Close: News and Commentary; America's Town Meeting of the Air; FDR Speech to ILO - International Labor Organization; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: Armistice Day Ceremony and Speech; Stanford-Washington State football game; Our Leased-from-Britain Naval Bases; Over Our Coffee Cups; Family Life; Defense And Your Dollar; News Bulletins - Pearl Harbor Day - First Day of War for U.S. - Dec. 7, 1941; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: Speech to joint session of Congress suggesting declaration of war, Report of the first three days of the war; Invitation to Learning; Bill of Rights Day, We Hold These Truths; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Unlimited Horizons; Freedom's People; Winston Churchill - Speaking to a joint session of Congress

Box 11

11. 726a-800b December 1941 - November 1942

Scope and Contents
Unlimited Horizons; Defense and your Dollar; Invitation to Learning; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; University Explorer; Upton Close: News and Commentary; Winston Churchill Speaking to the Canadian Parliament; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Cavalcade of America; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: State of the Union message to 77th Congress; America's Town Meeting of the Air; On the Home Front (PTA); Foreign Policy Association; Freedom's People; Over Our Coffee Cups; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Standard Symphony Hour
12. 801a-850 February - March 1942
Scope and Contents
Unlimited Horizons; Winston Churchill - Speech after Fall of Singapore; Foreign Policy Association; Freedom's People; Upton Close: News and Commentary; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; America's Town Meeting of the Air; This is War; Invitation to Learning; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "Take Out Your Maps"; Over Our Coffee Cups; United Nations at War; March of Time; University Explorer; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary.

Box 12

13. 856-929 March - June 1942
Scope and Contents
This Is War; Foreign Policy Association; Invitation to Learning; Upton Close: News and Commentary; H. V. Kaltenborn: News and Commentary; University Explorer; Cavalcade of America; America's Town Meeting of the Air; Unlimited Horizons; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Hitler with Pierre Huss; March of Time; University of Chicago Round Table; Freedom's People; Pause that Refreshes; President Franklin D. Roosevelt: 7-Point non-Inflation Program; Musical Excerpts; Winston Churchill speech -- Report on the War; Cavalcade of America; Radio City Music Hall; Bell Telephone Hour; Voice of Firestone; A Message from Lincoln.

Box 13

14. 930-1004b June 1942 - March 1943
Scope and Contents
Foreign Policy Association; Invitation to Learning; Radio City Music Hall; Upton Close: News and Commentary; The Army Hour; Destiny of the Hemisphere in World Affairs; Cavalcade of America; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Raymond Gram Swing: News and Commentary; Waltz Time; Treasure Hour of Song; Nature Sketches; Hour of Charm; Voice of Firestone; Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra; President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Wendell Willkie: Report on Trip Around the World; Wartime Censorship of News; Roosevelt - Report to Congress on the State of the Union; Casablanca Meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill; Roosevelt -- First Speech after Casablanca, Washington's Birthday Address; Madame Chiang Kai-shek - Address to Wellesley College.

Box 14

15. 1005-1133, M1-M20b, no.a-m, B1a-B11, Yeats March 1937 - November 1949
Scope and Contents
Menlo Nuggets; Poetry of W. B. Yeats, W. De la Mare, A. Marvell; American Education Forum; Riveting Machine Sound Effects; President Franklin D. Roosevelt - The Supreme Court, Speaking from Monterrey, Mexico, Appeal to Coal Miners, Address to Food Conference; Stanford University Hour; Western Education Forum; Roosevelt Fireside Chats; Hitler's Speech; Chamberlain's Speech; Hitler's Speech at Wilhelmshaven, Germany; American Education Forum; The Graf Spee Incident - Montevideo, Uruguay; University Explorer; Boy Scouts - 31st Anniversary Program; American Album of Familiar Music and The Hour of Charm; Fulton Lewis, Jr.: News and Commentary; Winston Churchill - Comments on War and Conditions in England, Address to Congress; Anthony Eden - from Annapolis, Maryland - Pledges Britain; Cordell Hull - Pan-American Day Address; Leon T. Loofoeurw: Alfred Lambouris -- a Study in Revision of Poetry; Standard Symphony Hour; Bell Telephone Hour.

16" Discs
Box 16

1. 1027-1128 June 1944 - September 1949

Scope and Contents

Standard Symphony Hour; D-Day excerpts; Comments on death of President Roosevelt; Lowell Thomas - 1st Day Back from Europe; Fleetwood Laurton - False V-E Day Reports; V-E Day Reports; Lowell Thomas, V-E Day Reports; Fleetwood Laurton; President Truman - Report on Berlin Conference; False Report - V-J Day; Report on V-J Day; Signing Japanese Surrender; Bell Telephone Hour; The Son of Man -- Passion Play