

---

## **Finding Aid for the Ray Spencer papers, 1937-1984; bulk 1930s-1960s**

Processed by Loren Spector and Julie Graham; machine-readable finding aid created by Julie Graham.

Performing Special Collections

University of California, Los Angeles, Library

Performing Arts Special Collections, Room A1713

Charles E. Young Research Library, Box 951575

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575

Phone: (310) 825-4988

Fax: (310) 206-1864

Email: [speccoll-paging@library.ucla.edu](mailto:speccoll-paging@library.ucla.edu)

<http://www2.library.ucla.edu/specialcollections/performingarts/index.cfm>

© 2008

The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved.

---

## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Ray Spencer papers,

**Date (inclusive):** 1937-1984; bulk 1930s-1960s

**Collection number:** 296

**Creator:** Spencer, Ray

**Extent:** 6 boxes (3 linear ft.) and 1 flat box

**Abstract:** Ray Spencer was a screenwriter and produced the West Coast production of the controversial play of, *Deep are the Roots*, in Los Angeles and San Francisco, CA (ca. 1947-1948). The bulk of the collection consists of materials related to the play. Additionally, there is a small amount of script material, correspondence, contractual agreements, and a small number of story synopses and newsletters associated with Paramount Pictures. In addition, there are a small number of letters and reader reports related to his wife, Helen Spencer.

**Language:** Finding aid is written in English.

**Repository:** University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Performing Arts Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

**Physical location:** Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Performing Arts Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

### Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Library, Performing Arts Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

### Restrictions on Use and Reproduction

Property rights to the physical object belong to the UCLA Library, Performing Arts Special Collections. Literary rights, including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or his or her heir for permission to publish where The UC Regents do not hold the copyright.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Ray Spencer papers (Collection 296). Performing Arts Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

### Biography

There is very little biographical information available about Ray Spencer. Much of the following information was compiled from the collection. Ray Spencer may also be known as R. Edward Spencer and may have written under the pseudonym of Bill Owen or Robert Owen. He was married to Helen Spencer with whom he had one child, Greg. He was a graduate of the 1947 workshop at Yale, executive director of *Meet the People*, and a theatrical designer and screenwriter. He worked as a member of the reading staff at Paramount Pictures in ca. early-1940s. In 1947, he obtained the West Coast production rights for the play *Deep Are the Roots*, written by Arnold d'Usseau and James Gow. He produced the play in both Los Angeles and San Francisco in ca. 1947-1948. In the early 1950s, Spencer and his family moved to Mexico where he continued to write. It is uncertain when he returned to the United States. His motion picture credits include *Bonnie Lassie*, *Star Bright*, *Boogie Woogie*, and *Crackup*.

### Scope and Content

The collection consists of materials related to the career of writer and producer Ray Spencer. The bulk of the collection is comprised of files related to the West Coast production of the controversial play, *Deep Are the Roots*, produced by Spencer, ca. 1947-1948. Also included is small amount of script material and reader reports (not identified with a studio), believed to be written by Spencer; a small collection of correspondence and contracts for projects in which it appears Spencer was involved, and a research file about Plaintiffs Against the Blacklist. There are also a small number of items related to Paramount Studios such as a script for *Your Son is My Brother*, script synopses, reader reports, and newsletters titled New York Bulletin Stories. In addition, there are a small amount of letters and readers reports written by Ray Spencer's wife, Helen Spencer. Notably absent from the collection are materials related to films *Bonnie Lassie*, *Star Bright*, *Boogie Woogie*, and *Crackup*, for which Spencer is credited.

### Organization and Arrangement

Arranged in the following series:

1. Contracts
2. Correspondence File

- 
3. Deep Are the Roots
  4. Paramount Pictures
  5. Writings by Ray Spencer
  6. Helen Spencer
  7. Plaintiffs vs. Blacklist
  8. Miscellaneous Files

#### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

#### **Subjects**

Spencer, Ray

Screenwriters--Archival resources.

Theatrical producers and directors --Archival resources.

#### **Other Index Terms Related to this Collection**

Spencer, Helen

---

#### **Contracts 1940s, 1952**

**Physical Description:** (Box 3)

##### **Scope and Content Note**

The series includes two files. One file contains a small amount of contractual agreements for *The Boomerang*, *My Own True Love*, technicolor shorts, and agent services. The other file is related exclusively to the Herb Little and Ray Spencer partnership. The files are arranged alphabetically by file title.

Box 3, Folder 6

#### **Contractual agreements file 1943-1944, 1947**

##### **Note**

Agreements for *The Boomerang*, *My Own True Love*, Technicolor shorts, and agent services.

Box 3, Folder 5

#### **Herb Little and Ray Spencer partnership - correspondence and contracts 1952 Correspondence File 1940s, early 1950s, 1960s**

**Physical Description:** (Box 3)

##### **Scope and Content Note**

The bulk of the correspondence series consists of incoming rejection letters and a few outgoing submission letters for projects Spencer was trying to put forward via story submissions. No script materials were found with the correspondence. Of a particular interest is note from the office of Langston Hughes (written by Nate White) with regards to the Hollywood Mammy sketch. Other correspondence appears personal in nature, but often mentions projects in which Spencer was involved. The files are arranged alphabetically by file title. A portion of the file titles were supplied or enhanced by the processor.

Box 3, Folder 19

#### **Caldwell Colt - Mexico correspondence 1958, 1966-1967, 1969**

##### **Note**

Letters to and from RS.

Box 3, Folder 9

#### **Correspondence 1942, 1946, 1948, 1950, 1952-1960**

##### **Note**

Mostly submission and rejection letters that appear to be for projects Spencer was interested in putting forward.

---

---

Box 3, Folder 10	<p><b>Correspondence 1951</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Incoming and outgoing letters that appear to be a personal, yet may mention possible projects.</p>
Box 3, Folder 18	<p><b>Florence and George - Mexico correspondence 1968</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Letters to and from RS.</p>
Box 3, Folder 20	<p><b>Fred Allert - Peru correspondence 1966</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Letters to and from RS.</p>
Box 3, Folder 17	<p><b>Hector and Pixley - Mexico correspondence 1968</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Letters to and from RS.</p>
Box 3, Folder 3	<p><b>Hollywood Mammy - sketch number (2 copies) 1951</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>With short letter from Langston Hughes' office written by Nate White for Langston Hughes</p>
Box 3, Folder 16	<p><b>Presidencia Municipal - Mexico correspondence 1967-1970</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Communications from the Presidencia Municipal (in Spanish)</p>
	<p><b>Deep are the Roots 1945, 1947-1948</b></p> <p><b>Physical Description:</b> (Boxes 1, 2, 7)</p> <p><b>Scope and Content Note</b></p> <p>The Deep Are the Roots series is comprised of files that relate to the West Coast production of the play in which Ray Spencer was the producer, ca. 1947-1948. Included among the files are a mix of correspondence, notes, press clippings, publicity ephemera, a small amount of photographs, and a script. The series is arranged alphabetically by file titles which reflect the contents of the folders.</p>
Box 2, Folder 5	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - audience comment cards for San Francisco performance no date</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Small collection of comment cards that are soiled and maybe difficult to read.</p>
Box 2, Folder 1	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - audience comment cards for San Francisco performance A- F no date</b></p>
Box 2, Folder 2	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - audience comment cards for San Francisco performance G- L no date</b></p>
Box 2, Folder 3	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - audience comment cards for San Francisco performance M- R no date</b></p>
Box 2, Folder 4	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - audience comment cards for San Francisco performance S- Z no date</b></p>
Box 1, Folder 11	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1947 Sep - Oct (some undated)</b></p>
Box 1, Folder 12	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1947 Dec</b></p>
Box 1, Folder 13	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Jan</b></p>
Box 1, Folder 14	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Jan</b></p>
Box 1, Folder 15	<p><b>Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Jan 6</b></p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Issue of Fortnight: The Newsmagazine of California (vol. 4 issue 2).</p>

---

Box 1, Folder 16 **Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Feb**  
Box 1, Folder 17 **Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Feb**  
Box 1, Folder 18 **Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Mar - Apr**  
Box 1, Folder 19 **Deep Are the Roots - clippings 1948 Dec**  
Box 1, Folder 7 **Deep Are the Roots - contracts 1947-1948**  
Box 1, Folder 4 **Deep Are the Roots - correspondence with Leah Salisbury 1947**  
Box 1, Folder 5 **Deep Are the Roots - letter to George Heller from Vincent 1945 June 28**  
Box 1, Folder 6 **Deep Are the Roots - notes 1947**

**Note**

List of individual's names (thought to be for financial support).

Box 7, Folder 1 **Deep are the Roots - photographs (7 items) ca. 1940s**

**Note**

Includes group photo with Rose Hobart, Roddy McDowell, Lena Horne and others. Six production stills that may include James Edwards, Franki Lynn, Rose Hobart, Curt Conway, Robert Warwick or Jessie Coles Grayson.

Box 1, Folder 8 **Deep Are the Roots - post-production correspondence 1948**  
Box 1, Folder 3 **Deep Are the Roots - pre-production correspondence 1947**  
Box 1, Folder 10 **Deep Are the Roots - press releases 1947-1948**  
Box 1, Folder 2 **Deep Are the Roots - production notes 1947-1948**

**Note**

With contracts, budgets, and ticket information.

Box 1, Folder 9 **Deep Are the Roots - programs and publicity 1948**  
Box 1, Folder 1 **Deep Are the Roots - script 1945**

**Paramount Pictures 1937-1944**

**Physical Description:** (Boxes 2-6)

**Scope and Content Note**

It is believed that Ray Spencer was employed by Paramount Pictures as a member of the reading staff and that this small collection of material may have been written or collected by Spencer during his tenure there. The series includes one estimating script for *Your Son is My Brother*, story synopses, reader reports, and a small number of *The New York Bulletin Stories*, is a newsletter thought to be published by Paramount Pictures. A small number of the synopses were written by Spencer. Additionally, many of the story synopses include forwards written by William Dozier, head of Paramount's story and writing department. The series is arranged by project or publication title.

Box 6, Folder 35 **Aerial Gunner - synopsis for the original story by unknown author 1942 Oct 21**  
Box 6, Folder 21 **All Out Irene - synopsis for the original story by HI Phillips 1943 July 13**  
Box 6, Folder 26 **Also the Hills - synopsis for the original story by Frances Parkinson Keyes 1943 Sep 29**  
Box 6, Folder 7 **Around the Horn to Matrimony - synopsis for the original story by Tom S. Hyland 1942 Nov 6**  
Box 6, Folder 6 **Beggars of the Sea - synopsis for the original story by Houston Branch and Frank Waters 1942 Nov 5**  
Box 6, Folder 20 **Boomerang - synopsis for the original story by Henry Blankfort and Leo Mittler 1943 May 19**  
Box 5, Folder 21 **Bundles For Freedom - synopsis for the original story by Milton Holmes 1942 Jan 30**  
Box 6, Folder 34 **China - synopsis for the original story by Frank Butler 1942 Nov 9**  
Box 6, Folder 12 **Counterattack - synopsis for the original story by Janet Marshall and Philip Stevenson 1943 Feb 8**  
Box 5, Folder 25 **Decoy - synopsis for the original story by James Edward Grant 1942 June 1**  
Box 6, Folder 23 **Equinox - synopsis for the original story by Allan Seager 1943 July 26**  
Box 6, Folder 30 **Fallen Sparrow - synopsis for the original story by Dorothy B. Hughes no date**

---

Box 6, Folder 11	<b>Gaunt Woman - synopsis for the original story by Edmund Gilligan 1943 Jan 11</b>
Box 6, Folder 8	<b>Great Big Doorstep (The) - synopsis for the original story by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett 1942 Nov 20</b>
Box 6, Folder 9	<b>Home Front (The) - synopsis for the original story by Mildred Cram 1942 Dec 12</b>
Box 6, Folder 1	<b>Hostages - synopsis for the original story by Stefan Heym 1942 June 30</b>
Box 6, Folder 33	<b>Hungry Hill - synopsis for the original story by Daphne Du Maurier no date</b>
Box 5, Folder 19	<b>Jackpot - synopsis for the original story by Joan Harrison and Helen Deutsch 1941 Dec 11</b>
Box 6, Folder 18	<b>Land for the Living - synopsis for the original story by George Batson 1943 May 8</b>
Box 6, Folder 29	<b>Marriage for Two - synopsis for the original story by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Fritz Kortner 1944 Jan 31</b>
Box 6, Folder 2	<b>Mary Smith - USA synopsis for the original story by Mildred Cram (2 copies) 1942 July 6</b>
Box 3	<b>New York Bulletin Stories - News no date</b> <b>Note</b> In folder numbers 21-23.
Box 4	<b>New York Bulletin Stories - News no date, 1942-1943</b> <b>Note</b> In folder numbers 1-21.
Box 5	<b>New York Bulletin Stories - News 1943-1944</b> <b>Note</b> In folder numbers 1-18.
Box 6, Folder 31	<b>Number One - synopsis for the original story by John Dos Passos no date</b>
Box 5, Folder 24	<b>Only One Storm - synopsis for the original story by Granville Hicks 1942 April 14</b>
Box 6, Folder 28	<b>Over Twenty One - synopsis for the original story by Ruth Gordon 1944 Jan 5</b>
Box 6, Folder 38	<b>Paramount Reader Reports not written by Spencer 1937, 1940-1942</b> <b>Note</b> Bulk of reports created by Mildred Barish
Box 6, Folder 13	<b>Patriots (The) - synopsis for the original story by Sidney Kingsley 1943 Feb 8</b>
Box 6, Folder 5	<b>Pirate (The) - synopsis for the original story by JN Behrman 1942 Nov 3</b>
Box 6, Folder 25	<b>Razor's Edge (The) - synopsis for the original story by W. Somerset Maugham 1943 Sep 29</b>
Box 2, Folder 6	<b>Reader reports written by Spencer for Paramount Pictures, Inc. 1942-1943</b>
Box 6, Folder 19	<b>Ready Willing and 4F - synopsis for the original story by Brain Marlow 1943 May 12</b>
Box 6, Folder 27	<b>Simone - synopsis for the original story by Lion Feuchtwanger 1943 Nov 24</b>
Box 5, Folder 22	<b>Sound of an American (The) - synopsis for the original story by Stephen Longstreet 1942 Feb 19</b>
Box 6, Folder 16	<b>Spur and the Bridle (The) - synopsis for the original story by Martha Albrand 1943 April 13</b>
Box 6, Folder 4	<b>Strip for Action - synopsis for the original story by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse 1942 Oct 9</b>
Box 6, Folder 10	<b>Survival - synopsis for the original story by Phyllis Bottome 1942 Dec 21</b>
Box 6, Folder 3	<b>Thus Liberty - Or Death - synopsis for the original story by Ruth Mitchell 1942 Sep 1</b>
Box 6, Folder 17	<b>Tomorrow the World - synopsis for the original story by James Gow and Arnaud d'Usseau 1943 April 23</b>
Box 6, Folder 15	<b>Tomorrow's Harvest - synopsis for the original story by Alfred Maury 1943 March 5</b>
Box 6, Folder 32	<b>True to Life - synopsis for the original story by Don Hartman no date</b>
Box 6, Folder 24	<b>Two of Us (The) - synopsis for the original story by Richard Sherman 1943 Aug 6</b>
Box 6, Folder 36	<b>Untitled synopsis and script material no date</b>
Box 5, Folder 20	<b>Washington Angle (The) - synopsis for the original story by Leonard Q. Ross and Leonard Spigelglass 1941 Dec 31</b>

---

---

Box 6, Folder 14	<b>What Became of Anna Bolton - synopsis for the original story by Louis Bromfield 1943 Feb 10</b>
Box 5, Folder 23	<b>Without Love - synopsis for the original story by Philip Barry 1942 March 27</b>
Box 6, Folder 22	<b>You Bring Me Luck - synopsis for the original story by Albert Treynor 1943 July 19</b>
Box 6, Folder 37	<b>Your Son is My Brother by Mel Riddle - estimating script 1943 May 12</b>

**Note**

Short subject, produced at RKO Studios, Hollywood for Masonic Service Association.

**Writings by Ray Spencer 1937-1946, 1960s, 1970s****Physical Description:** (Boxes 2-3)**Scope and Content Note**

The Writings by Ray Spencer series is a mix of script material and reader reports. The script material includes a small number of scripts, loose pages, notes, or synopses for projects believed to be written by or in partnership with Ray Spencer including Adventures of a Gun, The Black Suitcase, Bamboo Trap, Eleventh Hour, and Injunction Granted, among others. For many of the projects it is not clear if they were created for television or motion picture and/or if they were ultimately produced. It is worth noting the collection does not appear to include script material related to Bonnie Lassie, Star Bright, Boogie Woogie, and Crackup, for which Spencer is credited. The small number of reader reports, includes items which are believed to have been written by Ray Spencer and are not identified with any studio. The files in the series are arranged alphabetically project titles or by file titles which reflects the contents of the folders. Most files titles were supplied by the processor.

Box 2, Folder 8	<b>Adventures of a Gun - synopsis 1942 Dec 3</b>
-----------------	--

**Note**

Original story by Carl Foreman and Ray Spencer.

Box 2, Folder 10	<b>Bamboo Trap - notes and clippings for story ca. 1969, 1976, 1977</b>
Box 2, Folder 14	<b>Black Suitcase (The) - screenplay ca. 1960</b>

**Note**

Screenplay based upon characters and incidents in Cabbages and Kings; includes copyright registration and information.

Box 2, Folder 13	<b>Cabbages and Kings - synopsis and episode notes no date</b>
Box 2, Folder 11	<b>Eleventh Hour (The) - an original story for the screen by Carl Foreman and Ray Spencer 1942 Aug 18</b>

**Note**

Title "Present for Windy" found on title page has been lined out.

Box 2, Folder 15	<b>Galveston - script material and handwritten notes ca. 1944</b>
Box 2, Folder 9	<b>Gun Story (The) - synopsis 1949 Nov 1</b>

**Note**

Revised version of Adventures of a Gun by Carl Foreman and Ray Spencer

Box 2, Folder 16	<b>Ideas and notes for unknown projects no date</b>
Box 2, Folder 17	<b>Injunction Granted - revised script 1946</b>

**Note**

Federal Theatre Play script #9.

Box 2, Folder 18	<b>Injunction Granted - script materials and loose pages 1946</b>
Box 2, Folder 20	<b>Madman's Holiday - list of title ideas no date</b>

**Note**

Thought to be a project by RS.

Box 3, Folder 2	<b>Opening - script material, handwritten notes and clippings no date</b>
-----------------	---

---

- 
- Box 2, Folder 7      **Reader reports written by RS for unknown studios 1937, 1941-1944**  
Box 3, Folder 1      **Sejanus - script material no date**  
Box 2, Folder 12      **Sextette - synopsis of a revised version by Carl Foreman and Ray Spencer 1949 Oct 1**  
                                 **Note**  
                                 Original story titled The Adventures of a Gun.
- Box 2, Folder 19      **Ten-cent Saint (The) - reader reports from Play Bureau, Federal Theater Project 1937**  
                                 **Note**  
                                 Reader reports for project thought to be co-written by RS using the pseudonym Robert Owen.
- Helen Spencer 1940s, 1950s;**  
                                 **Physical Description:** (Box 3)  
                                 **Scope and Content Note**  
                                 The series includes a small collection of letters and reader reports related to Ray Spencer's wife, Helen Spencer. The letters were written to family and friends from Helen Spencer during a period of time when she and Ray Spencer lived in Mexico (ca.1954 and 1959). The small number of reader reports appear to be written by Helen Spencer for MGM and Republic Pictures (ca. 1943-1953). The series is arranged by file titles which reflect the contents of the folders. All file titles were supplied by the processor.
- Box 3, Folder 14      **Mexico correspondence from Helen [Spencer] to family and friends 1954, 1959**  
Box 3, Folder 13      **Reader Reports written by Helen Spencer for MGM and Republic Studios 1943-1945, 1951-1953**  
**Plaintiffs Against the Blacklist 1960-1961**  
                                 **Physical Description:** (Box 3)  
                                 **Scope and Content Note**  
                                 The series includes one file of clippings and printed ephemera about the group, Plaintiffs Against the Blacklist. Plaintiffs vs. the Blacklist was a group of twelve writers and actors engaged in an anti-trust suit against major motion picture producing companies of the Motion Picture Producers Association. The goal of their legal action was to win a Federal Court decision declaring the blacklist illegal.
- Box 3, Folder 7      **Plaintiffs Against the Blacklist - clippings, printed ephemera and notes 1960-1961**  
                                 **Note**  
                                 Related to legal action to declare the blacklist illegal. Materials are about the group's efforts.
- Miscellaneous Files 1965 and no date**  
                                 **Physical Description:** (Box 3)  
                                 **Scope and Content Note**  
                                 This series contains a mix of items not otherwise related to other materials in the collections. The items include unidentified caricature drawings, printed ephemera, and other miscellanea. Most of the material is not dated. The series has no specific arrangement. All file titles were supplied by the processor.
- Box 3, Folder 11      **Drawings (sketches) of unidentified character/cartoon images no date**  
Box 3, Folder 8      **Literary Agents - list and notes no date**  
Box 3, Folder 12      **Sheet Music no date**  
                                 **Note**  
                                 Music and lyrics for "Joe Hill" and "The Quilting Bee."
-



---

Box 3, Folder 4

**Sticks and Stones - playbill, budget info and papers no date**

**Note**

R. Spencer listed as Stage Manager.

Box 3, Folder 15

**Tributes to Philip Stevenson (Lars Lawrence) 1965**