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Inventory of the

Cinema Corporation of America Collection

(MSS2004-008)

Created by Burt Altman

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SUMMARY INFORMATION

Dates: 1925-1981 (inclusive)

Dates: 1925-1932 (bulk)

Extent: 5.7 LinearFt.

Languages represented in collection: English

Abstract: The Cinema Corporation of America Collection documents the history of this film distribution company, and American producer and director Cecil B. DeMille's role in its founding.

Portions of collection available online? : No

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition Information:

The Cinema Corporation of America Collection was given to Special Collections by Mr. Robert Martin in July 2004.

Provenance: Created by Alan F. Martin, father of the donor Robert Martin.

Access Conditions:

Collection is open to research

Use Conditions:

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Processing History:

This collection was processed from December 2004-January 2005 by Burt Altman.

BIOGRAPHICAL / HISTORICAL NOTES

In 1916, American motion-picture director and producer Cecil B. DeMille became "director general" of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, the nucleus of what would soon become

Paramount Pictures. According to DeMille archivist James D'Arc at Brigham Young University's Film Music Archives, DeMille, in early 1922, terminated his ties with Famous Players-Lasky, purchased the Ince Studio in Culver City, California, and formed his own production unit, Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc. This company operated under the aegis of Paramount Pictures for most of the rest of his career. DeMille contracted to release his films through Jeremiah Milbank's Producers Distributing Corporation. The Ince Studio later became Selznick International Pictures, and finally became Pathe.

From 1919-1922, DeMille concentrated on producing and directing films that portrayed a liberated sexual morality, while continuing to endorse traditional values. By 1923, however, the Hollywood film industry was charged with promoting immorality. While attempting to help redeem the industry from these charges, DeMille decided to produce a new film genre for which he was best known for the remainder of his career: spectacular historical and biblical epics. The first two examples of these productions, "The Ten Commandments" (1923; silent version) and "The King of Kings" (1927; originally silent), were immediately successful at the box office. According to Alan F. Martin's son Robert, "The King of Kings" premiere was the film that opened Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. To take advantage of the newly introduced technique of sound, "The King of Kings" went into general release in 1928, complete with a score arranged by Hugo Riesenfeld. Since that time, the film has been seen in this form.

In 1925, DeMille left Paramount Pictures and organized the Cinema Corporation of America as a holding company that owned the stock of the Producer's Distributing Corporation and a new subsidiary, Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation, controlled jointly by Milbank and DeMille. DeMille's position in the corporation was undermined by the fact that his features - those directed by himself as well as those under his supervision at DeMille Productions - were earning modest, if any, profits. His \$2 million expenditure for "The King of Kings," although the film was quite successful, "created a crisis that threatened bankruptcy" and led to the merger of Producer's Distributing Corporation, the Keith Albee-Orpheum chain, and the Pathe Exchange in 1927. That year, Keith Albee-Orpheum was renamed Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO), and RKO took over control of Pathe. Cinema Corporation of America was kept in existence for the purpose of distributing "The King of Kings." It owned the copyright to that film, which was renewed in 1955.

DeMille's alliance with Cinema Corporation of America was short-lived, however, and in 1928 he took his staff from Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc. to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. At his request, DeMille rejoined Paramount in 1931, and began producing and directing lavish films such as "The Sign of the Cross" (1932), "Cleopatra" (1934), and "The Crusades" (1935). From that time on, DeMille's association with larger-than-life, big-budget films became legendary.

Through the work of the Cinema Corporation of America and its Vice-President Alan F. Martin, Cecil B. DeMille's most enduring film, "The King of Kings," has been in constant theatrical and non-theatrical distribution since 1927. According to Robert Martin, his father "was the single reason 'The King of Kings' stayed available to the public for close to 40 years." Alan F. Martin created the educational film strips and study guides for the movie and had the titles translated into dozens of languages. The film was used by missionaries all over the world and was still being shown by church groups and in theatres into the 1970s. In August 1971, Cinema Corporation of America sold all of its assets, including its copyright to "The King of Kings," to Modern Sound Pictures.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

The Cinema Corporation of America Collection documents Cecil B. DeMille's role in the founding of the company and its film distribution activities in later years under Vice President Alan F. Martin. The collection includes production materials for "The King of Kings" and other films; correspondence, business records, legal materials; educational filmstrips; religious film catalogs, and the "Cap Stubbs and Tippiie" newspaper cartoon strips created and drawn by Edwina Dumm, which first appeared in 1918. They were purchased by the Cinema Corporation of America in the mid 1920s.

INDEXING TERMS

Personal Names:

DeMille, Cecil B. (Cecil Blount), 1881-1959
Logan, Jacqueline
Martin, Alan F.

Corporate Names:

Cecil B. DeMille Productions
Cinema Corporation of America

Subject Terms:

Bible. N.T.--History of biblical events--Drama.
Bible films.
Comic books, strips, etc.--United States.
Feature films.
Motion picture industry--California--Los Angeles--History.
Motion picture industry--United States.
Motion pictures--United States--Distribution.
Motion pictures--United States--History.
Silent films.

Genre/Format Terms:

clippings
contracts
correspondence
deeds
financial records
fliers
interviews
legal documents
letters (correspondence)
manuscripts
pamphlets
photographs
photographic prints.
postcards
posters

COLLECTION CONTENTS

Box 1 Correspondence (1926-1981)

Notes: Arranged chronologically, these materials consist of letters to and from Cinema Corporation of American Vice-President Alan Martin on such topics as the popularity and impact of showings of "The King of Kings" in the United States and abroad, purchase of prints of "The King of Kings" to be shown to church groups, and the distribution of the film to African nations, India, and Pakistan. Some of the letters are from Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and Cecil B. DeMille. In addition, there is a body of correspondence between Jacqueline Logan and Alan Martin that cover such topics as Logan's request for screenings of "The King of Kings" to actress friends, translations and television broadcasts of the film, and the dissolution of the Cinema Corporation of America in the early 1970s. Logan was the former actress who played "Mary Magdalene" in the original 1927 "The King of Kings" motion picture, and who became the Cinema Corporation of America's film agent in later years.

Box 1 Folder 1 "King of Kings": Bronston-MGM 1961 Production. (1960-1962) : 54 items

Box 1 Folder 2 "King of Kings": Comments about Previews and Opening. (March-May 1927) : 37 items

Box 1 Folder 3 "King of Kings": General Correspondence. (1927-1928) : 10 items

Box 1 Folder 4 "King of Kings": Technicolor Process. (1926-1927) : 4 items

Box 1 Folder 5 Logan, Jacqueline. (1959-1973) : 109 items

Box 1 Folder 6 Martin, Alan F. (1930, 1933-1958) : 84 items

Box 1 Folder 7 Martin, Alan F. (1960-1981) : 96 items

Box 1 Production Files (1925-1928)

Notes: Arranged alphabetically by record type, these materials primarily feature title lists and cutting continuity scripts for "The King of Kings." Many of these title lists concern the translation to several foreign languages of Biblical titles used in this film. In addition, there are release schedules and title sheets for other films produced by Cecil B. DeMille.

Box 1 Folder 8 Braveheart (film): Title Sheet. (December 10, 1925) : 1 item

Box 1 Folder 9 "King of Kings": Changes to be made in long version. (1927) : 2 items

Notes: Includes suggestions about cutting length of "The King of Kings."

Box 1 Folder 10 "King of Kings": Cutting Continuity (American, condensed version). (May 16, 1928) : 1 item

Box 1 Folder 11 "King of Kings": Cutting Continuity (Foreign version). (May 24, 1927) : 1 item

Box 1 Folder 12 "King of Kings": Title List (Foreign version). (June 11, 1927) : 2 items

Box 1 Folder 13 "King of Kings": Title List. (July-October 1927) : 6 items

Notes: Includes correspondence from Jeanie McPherson, actress in this film and its script writer, to William Siström, General Manager of DeMille Studio.

Box 1 Folder 14 "King of Kings": Title List (Long version). (August 18, 1927) : 1 item

Notes: This title list shows titles as they appeared in the film as of this date, with explanatory notes and a supplemental list of titles with more than one reference.

Box 1 Folder 15 "King of Kings": Titles. Condensed version, American continuity. (May 16-September 30, 1928) : 2 items

Box 1 Folder 16 Producers Distributing Corporation: Release Schedule. (1925-1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Business Files (1925-1928)

Notes: Arranged alphabetically by record type, most of these items concern budgets and cost estimates and foreign sales costs and revenue for "The King of Kings," and several other films produced by Cecil B. DeMille.

Box 2 Folder 1 Cinema Corporation of America: Report and Accounts. (1927) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 2 "King of Kings": Charges. (1928) : 3 items

Box 2 Folder 3 "King of Kings": Cost to complete. (1926-1927) : 8 items

Box 2 Folder 4 "King of Kings": Costs for prints. (1927-1928) : 7 items

Box 2 Folder 5 "King of Kings": Foreign sales and collections. (May 31, 1928) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 6 "Wedding Song": Production budget and cost estimate. (1925) : 3 items

Box 2 Folder 7 "Yankee Clipper": Advance production and final budgets. (1926-1927) : 2 items

Box 2 Publicity Materials (1927-1956)

Notes: Arranged alphabetically by record type, this series largely includes posters, flyers, brochures and advertising reprints for "The King of Kings," and other DeMille productions. There is also a transcript of a 1949 radio address given by Cecil B. DeMille, in which he discusses the challenges of producing a major biblical film. There are also flyers and main title billings for other DeMille motion pictures.

Box 2 Folder 8 "Braveheart". (1925) : 5 items

Mapcase 3, Drawer 4 "Braveheart". Exhibitors' Press Sheet. (circa 1925) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 9 "The Heart is a Rebel". (1960) : 2 items

Notes: "The Heart is a Rebel" was a Billy Graham evangelistic film produced by Worldwide Pictures.

Box 2 Folder 10 "King of Kings". (1936-1952) : 26 items

Box 3 Folder 7 "King of Kings": Publicity still photographs. (ca. 1927) : 20 items

Notes: Includes photos of Cecil B. DeMille, the cast, and production crew of "King of Kings."

Box 3 Folder 8 "King of Kings": Publicity still photographs (1 of 2 folders) (ca. 1927) : 32 items

Notes: Includes photos of the cast and scenes from the film.

Box 3 Folder 9 "King of Kings": Publicity still photographs (2 of 2 folders) (ca. 1927) : 35 items

Notes: Includes photos of Cecil B. DeMille, the cast, and production crew of "King of Kings."

Box OS1 Folder 1-3 "King of Kings": Publicity still photographs (ca. 1927) : 3 items

Notes: Includes scenes from the film.

Box 2 Folder 10A Religious film catalogs. (1956) : 2 items

Box 2 Folder 11 "Ten Commandments" (1956) : 2 items

Box 2 Folder 12 "Turkish Delight" (1927) : 1 item

Box 2-3 Legal Files (1925-1947)

Notes: This large series, arranged chronologically, contains agreements, chattel mortgages, contracts, correspondence, and deeds involving transactions between the Cinema Corporation of America, other film companies, and various banking and insurance companies. These activities involve payments for movie set property in Culver City, payment of advances on print production costs, royalties on future sales of "The King of Kings" film, copyright ownership of "The King of Kings," purchase of sound track prints for "The King of Kings," as well as other transactions.

Box 2 Folder 13 Agreement by Thomas H. Ince Corporation to sell real estate and personal property to Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc. (1925-1926) : 5 items

Box 2 Folder 14 Contracts between Cinema Corporation of America and Motion Picture Capital Corporation concerning advances on account of the negative cost of producing "The

Volga Boatman," payments of prints for films, loans to Cinema Corporation of America for production of "The King of Kings" and other films. (1925-1927) : 19 items

Box 2 Folder 15 Contract between Cinema Corporation of America, Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation, and Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc. and Cecil B. DeMille defining the terms of "the personal direction of a production by Cecil B. DeMille," and "the personal supervision of a production by Cecil B. DeMille." (February 13, 1925) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 16 Correspondence and original copy of loan agreement between Motion Pictures Capital Corporation and Cinema Corporation of America. (February 25, 1925-March 23, 1928) : 4 items

Box 2 Folder 17 Agreement between Cinema Corporation of America and Producers Distributing Corporation concerning Cinema Corporation of America's granting rights to distributors in the United States and Canada of all motion pictures controlled by (or controlled in the future by) Cinema Corporation of America. (September 1, 1925) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 18 Agreement by and between Cecil B. DeMille, Cecil B. DeMille Productions, and Cinema Corporation of America to transfer motion picture rights in the play "Strongheart" to Cinema Corporation of America, for its screenplay of "Braveheart." Includes playscript. (September 23, 1925) : 2 items

Notes: "Braveheart" was taken from the original play, "Strongheart," written in 1905 by Cecil B. DeMille's father, William C. DeMille, a playwright.

Box 2 Folder 19 List of "Personal Service" Contracts unapproved by Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation and artists, writers, etc. (1926-1927) : 2 items

Box 2 Folder 20 Correspondence and agreement between Cinema Corporation of America and George Matthew Adams Service in which the Cinema Corporation of America acquired the rights to create a motion picture based on the cartoon strip, "Cap Stubbs and Tippie." (1926-1928) : 4 items

Notes: "Cap Stubbs and Tippie" was written and drawn by Edwina Dumm, one of the first female cartoonists. The comic strip first appeared in 1918.

Box 2 Folder 21 Agreement between Realty and Securities Corporation, the W.W. Hodkinson Corporation, the Cinema Corporation of America, and Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation concerning the advancement of money by Realty and Securities Corporation to the Cinema Corporation of America for the production and distribution of motion picture productions. (January 15, 1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 22 Agreement between the Cinema Corporation of America and Cecil B. DeMille concerning the endorsement of promissory notes given by DeMille to the Cinema Corporation of America for the purchase of motion picture rights in certain stories. (March 12, 1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 23 Employment agreement between Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation and actress Jacqueline Logan for her performance as Mary Magdalene in "the King of Kings." (August 12, 1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 24 Agreement between Cinema Corporation of America and Cecil B. DeMille concerning Cinema Corporation of America's request for a loan from the Commercial National Trust and Savings Bank of Los Angeles for Cinema Corporation of America's purchase of motion picture rights in certain stories. (August 13, 1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 25 Contract between Technicolor Motion Picture Corporation and Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation for photographing "The King of Kings" using the technicolor process. (September 8, 1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 26 Agreement between Producers Distributing Corporation and Sid Grauman that "The King of Kings" will be the first motion picture presented at Grauman's new Chinese theatre. (October 12, 1926) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 27 Agreement between the Cinema Corporation of America, the W.W. Hodkinson Corporation, the Producers Distributing Corporation, and Pathe Exchange, Inc., concerning the delivery of negatives and positive prints of "The King of Kings" and other motion picture productions. (1927) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 28 Chattel Mortgage: Cinema Corporation of America and Cecil B. DeMille Corporation to Motion Picture Capital Corporation, covering advance payments on the motion picture rights of "The King of Kings." (1927) : 9 items

Box 2 Folder 29 Agreement and correspondence concerning 1927 agreement between Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Cecil B. DeMille, and the Cinema Corporation of America about payments of gross receipts from "The King of Kings." (1927-1932) : 11 items

Box 2 Folder 30 Chattel Mortgage: Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation and Cinema Corporation of America to Motion Pictures Capital Corporation for the production of various motion pictures. (February 8, 1927) : 2 items

Box 2 Folder 31 Correspondence concerning Cecil B. DeMille Pictures Corporation's deposit and withdrawal of funds in Los Angeles. (February 10, 1927) : 1 item

Box 2 Folder 32 Agreement between Producers Distributing Corporation and Erdill Theatre Corporation, manager of the Gaiety Theatre in New York City, that Producers Distributing Corporation present "The King of Kings" at that theatre and pay additional expenses incurred during the opening weeks of the film's presentation. (February 19, 1927-April 1927) : 7 items

Box 2 Folder 33 Certification by Motion Pictures Capital Corporation that a chattel mortgage was executed by the Cinema Corporation of America to the Motion Pictures Capital Corporation for the production of "The Country Doctor" film. (April 1, 1927) : 2 items

Box 3 Folder 1 Purchase contract between F.H. Brownell, the Realty and Securities Corporation, Cecil B. DeMille, Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc. and the Cinema Corporation of America, B.F. Keith Corporation, and the Pathe Exchange concerning the combining of all assets of these companies into one corporation, for the purpose of reorganizing the Pathe Company. (April 11, 1927) : 3 items

Notes: Includes stock contracts between these parties.

Box 3 Folder 2 Contract between Cecil B. DeMille, Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc., the B.F. Keith Corporation, the Realty and Securities Corporation, F.H. Brownell (all stockholders of the Cinema Corporation of America) and the Cinema Corporation of America, Producers Distributing Corporation, and W.W. Hodkinson Corporation concerning the issuance of stock to the Pathe Exchange for its reorganization. (April 14, 1927) : 1 item

Box 3 Folder 3 Correspondence concerning the Encyclopedia Britannica acquiring the rights to use photographs of sets used in the "Road to Yesterday" and "The King of Kings." (September 1928) : 4 items

Box 3 Folder 4 Correspondence between the Cinema Corporation of America and General Electric concerning the delivery of a print of "The King of Kings" to General Electric and Pathe's purchase of the sound track prints of that film. (September 1928) : 4 items

Box 3 Folder 5 Legal documents concerning the Cinema Corporation of America's acquisition and ownership of copyright, prints, and all other rights to "The King of Kings." (1929-1947) : 7 items

Notes: Alan F. Martin, as Vice President of the Cinema Corporation of America, was involved in these negotiations.

Box 3 Folder 6 Agreements and correspondence concerning the Cinema Corporation of America's payments of back royalties and royalties on future sales of "The King of Kings" and the sale of "The King of Kings" rights for television. (1932-1940) : 7 items

Box 3, OS 1 Educational Materials (1947)

Notes: Arranged alphabetically by record type, this small series contains filmstrip guides that accompany the nine filmstrips on "Incidents on the Life of Christ," and the nine filmstrips.

Box 3 Folder 11 Filmstrip guides to the nine filmstrips on "Incidents in the Life of Christ." (1947) : 12 items

Box 4 Educational filmstrips: "Incidents in the Life of Christ." Taken from Cecil B. DeMille's "The King of Kings." (1947) : 9 items

Box OS 2-3 Bound Comic Strips, "Cap Stubbs and Tippie." (1920-1924, 1926)

Notes: Arranged chronologically, this series contains the "Cap Stubbs and Tippie" newspaper cartoon strips created and drawn by Edwina Dumm, and purchased by the Cinema Corporation of America in the mid 1920s.

Box OS 2 Bound Comic Strips, "Cap Stubbs and Tippie." (1920-1922) : 3 items

Box OS 3 Bound Comic Strips, "Cap Stubbs and Tippie." (1923-1924, 1926) : 3 items

Box 3 Memorabilia, Alan F. Martin (1938-1946)

Notes: This small series contains Alan F. Martin's RKO Service Corporation Identification Card (when he was in its executive department), an article about RKO's 1946 "billings drive" with a

picture of Martin and other management personnel, and an article from the Saturday Evening Post by Verne Porter ("Copyright, 1938," from the Nov. 19, 1938 issue) about obtaining the silent film copyright for "The Prince of Pilsen" from the Cinema Corporation of America.

Box 3 Folder 10 Memorabilia, Alan F. Martin (1938-1946) : 3 items