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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Al Celley Collection of Duke Ellington Materials
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1240
Date: 1943 - 1989
Extent: 2.5 Cubic feet (7 boxes, 1 oversize folder)
Creator: Celley, Al
Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974
Language: English

Collection text is in English.
Some materials in Arabic, Dutch, French, and German.

Summary: A diverse collection of papers assembled by Duke Ellington's road manager, Al Celley. The collection includes correspondence, photographs of Ellington and his orchestra at various times and locations; concert ephemera; handwritten notes; business and financial documents, primarily receipts; and travel ephemera.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Related Materials
Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Duke Ellington Collection (AC0301)
Duke Ellington Oral History Project (AC0368)
This project includes an interview with Al Celley, July 12, 1989.

Other Finding Aids
Inventory available.

Processing Information
Processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, January 2014.
Preferred Citation


Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Reference copies for audio discs and moving image do not exist. Use of these materials requires special arrangement with the Archives Center staff. Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs and negatives.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Albert "Al" Joseph Celley (1909-1994) was Duke Ellington's road manager from 1942 to 1964. Celley handled the band's business affairs, such as concert bookings, logistics, staging shows, and organizing tours. Celley also handled the weekly payroll, contracts, collecting money from promoters, paying road expenses, and sending weekly reports to Bill Mittler, an accountant.

Scope and Contents

The collection was assembled by Duke Ellington's road manager, Al Celley and includes correspondence, photographs of Ellington and his orchestra at various times and locations; concert ephemera; handwritten notes; business and financial documents, primarily receipts; and travel ephemera.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into six series.

**Series 1: Personal Materials, 1943-1962**

Subseries 1.1: Al Celley, 1943-1962

Subseries 1.2: Duke Ellington, 1948

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1945-1963**

Subseries 2.1: Chronological, 1945-1963

Subseries 2.2: Alphabetical, 1949-1961

**Series 3: Subject Files, 1948-1963**
Subseries 4.1: Payroll/Salary Ledgers, 1944-1962
Subseries 4.2: Expense Notebooks, 1946, 1959
Subseries 4.3: Receipts and Bills, 1945-1964

Series 5: Photographs, 1947-1967

Subseries 6.1: Moving Image, 1957
Subseries 6.2: Audio Discs, 1945-1946

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
  African Americans
  Big bands
  Jazz -- 20th century -- United States
  Jazz musicians
  Music
  Music trade
  Musicians

Types of Materials:
  16mm motion picture film
  78 rpm records
  Business records
  Contracts
  Correspondence
  Financial records
  Handbills
  Notes
  Orchestrations
  Passports
  Photographs
  Signatures (names)
  Tickets
  Writings
Container Listing

Series 1: Personal Materials, 1943 - 1962

The personal materials are divided into two subseries: Al Celley and Duke Ellington. Celley's personal materials consist of a prescription, a pocket diary, an amateur radio license, a union card for the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers, and a business card for an optician in Toronto. Al Celley's pocket diary from 1943 contains notes about bills paid and other appointments. Duke Ellington's personal materials contain a receipt for medical services, 1957; a smallpox vaccination record, 1948; and some biographical information (name, birth date, address, and instrument played) about band members Matthew Gee, Andrew Wilcox Ford, Mitchell Wood, and Eddie Mullen.

Subseries 1.1: Al Celley, 1943 - 1962

Box 1, Folder 1  Prescription, 1958
Box 1, Folder 2  Diary, 1943
Box 1, Folder 2  Federal Communications Commission (FCC) amateur radio license, 1961
Box 1, Folder 2  Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers card, Union 18032, 1962

Subseries 1.2: Duke Ellington, 1957, 1948

Box 1, Folder 3

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1945 - 1963

This series is divided into two subseries: Subseries 2.1: Chronological, 1943-1963 and Subseries 2.2: Alphabetical, 1949-1961. The chronological correspondence is general in nature and consists of correspondence written to Duke Ellington and Al Celley primarily about matters pertaining to Ellington band performances (bookings and arrangements). Also included are letters and telegrams from other businesses in the music industry (agreements and contracts), hotels, musicians seeking employment with Ellington, and fans seeking photographs and autographs. The series is arranged chronologically.

The alphabetical correspondence includes letters, receipts, and contracts with organizations such as the American Federation of Musicians, Associated Booking Corporation, Charter Coach Corporation, Checkerway Charter Coach Company, Chicago Federation of Musicians, and Gary Suburban Lines. Many of the handwritten notes detail salary information for the band and provide the percentage of money (typically ten percent) due under the union guidelines. Also included are contracts executed between Duke Ellington, Inc. and other organizations and/or venues.

Subseries 2.1: Chronological, 1945 - 1963

Box 1, Folder 4 General, 1945 - 1959
Box 1, Folder 5 General, 1960 - 1963

Subseries 2.2: Alphabetical, 1949 - 1961

Box 1, Folder 6 American Federation of Musicians, 1952 - 1961
Box 1, Folder 7 Associated Booking Corporation (contracts), 1958
Box 1, Folder 8 Charter Coach Corporation (bus transportation), 1956 - 1957
Box 1, Folder 9 Checkerway Charter Coach Company (forms), undated
Box 1, Folder 10 Chicago Federation of Musicians (blank contracts), 1949
Box 1, Folder 11 Gary Suburban Lines (blank trip reports), undated
Series 3: Subject Files, 1947 - 1989

The subject files consist of a variety of materials assembled by Celley as manager and used during the course of daily business. The ephemera consists of menus, hotel stickers, pocket maps, and a passenger list for the *R.M.S. Queen Elizabeth* (1948). The itineraries provide details about the band's international and domestic travels, and the instrument lists provide the musician's name, instrument played, and serial number.

Box 1, Folder 12  Business cards, undated
Map-folder 1   Calendar (wall), 1947
Box 1, Folder 13  Envelopes/letterhead, 1955 - 1962
Box 1, Folder 14  Ephemera, undated
Box 2, Folder 1  Instrument lists for Duke Ellington Orchestra, 1957
Box 2, Folder 2  Itineraries, 1952 - 1953, 1960, 1963
Map-folder 1  Manifest Lists (for the band), 1952, undated
Box 2, Folder 3;  Newspaper clippings, 1958 - 1989
Map-folder 1
Box 2, Folder 4  Telephone messages and numbers, 1961
Box 2, Folder 5  Miscellaneous printed materials, 1948 - 1961

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The financial series is the largest series in the collection and is divided into three subseries: Subseries 4.1: Payroll/Salary, 1944-1962; Subseries 4.2: Expense Notebooks, 1946, 1959; and Subseries 4.3: Receipts and Bills, 1945-1964. The payroll information is arranged chronologically and provides detailed expenses not only for salaries, but for tips, taxis, gifts, and other entertaining. Loose materials associated with the payroll ledgers include union-related materials, envelopes, letterhead, and handwritten notes.

The expense notebooks are arranged chronologically and contain handwritten notes about expenses paid and advances provided to band members. Many of the expense notebooks contain loose materials, primarily consisting of "I Owe You" (IOU) slips for Duke Ellington, Inc.

The receipts and bills are arranged chronologically and consist of payroll deduction slips for band members, IOU slips, hotel and restaurant bills, and handwritten notes. Also included here are mileage and telephone log information.

Subseries 4.1: Payroll/Salary Ledgers (for the band), 1944 - 1962

- Box 2, Folder 6: Payroll Ledger, 1944 - 1946
- Box 2, Folder 7: Payroll Ledger, 1946 - 1948
- Box 2, Folder 8: Payroll Ledger (loose materials), 1946 - 1948
- Box 2, Folder 9: Payroll Ledger, 1949 - 1950
- Box 2, Folder 10: Payroll Ledger (loose materials), 1949 - 1950
- Box 2, Folder 11: Payroll Ledger, 1950
- Box 2, Folder 12: Payroll Ledger, 1958
- Box 3, Folder 1: Payroll Ledger, 1959
- Box 1, Folder 2: Payroll Ledger, undated
- Box 3, Folder 3: Salary information (for the band), [1957?]
- Box 3, Folder 4: Loans and exchanges (photocopied ledger sheets), 1962
- Box 3, Folder 5: Withholding tax tables, 1946

Subseries 4.2: Expense Notebooks, 1946, 1959

- Box 3, Folder 6: Notebook (and loose material), 1946
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3, Folder 7</th>
<th>Notebook (and loose material), 1959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 8</td>
<td>Notebook, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 9</td>
<td>Expenses (loose), undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subseries 4.3: Receipts and Bills, 1945 - 1964**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3, Folder 10</th>
<th>Receipts and bills, 1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 11</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 12</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 13</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1949 - 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 14</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 15</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 16</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 17</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1953 - 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 18</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 19</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 1</td>
<td>Receipts and bills (includes mileage and telephone logs), 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 2</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 3</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 4</td>
<td>Receipts and bills (includes tickets, Germany trip), 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 5</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 6-8</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 9</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 10</td>
<td>Receipts and bills, 1963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 4, Folder 11  Receipts and bills (Germany and Netherlands), 1959 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 12  Receipts and bills (miscellaneous), undated
Box 4, Folder 13  Super Service Bus Company (mileage), 1961

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Series 5: Photographs, 1947 - 1967

The photographs contain black and white and color prints depicting Duke Ellington and his band members performing and traveling, portraits of Duke Ellington as well as portraits of other musicians/singers such as Louie Bellson, Dave Black, Kay Davis, Harry Carney, Johnny Hodges, Erroll Garner, and Al Hibbler. Other publicity photographs include entertainers [Brigitte Bardot?], Sid Caesar, Jimmy Dean, Alice Faye, Steve Gibson and the Redcaps, the Smith Sisters, and the Jordanettes. The photographs taken during Ellington's visit to Pakistan in 1963 were created by the United States Information Service (USIS).

Box 6  Portraits of Duke Ellington, undated
Box 6  Entertainers, Musicians and Singers, undated
Box 6  Pakistan and India Trip, 1963
Box 7  International Basketball Tournament, 1947
Box 7  Duke Ellington Orchestra at Hamilton Air Force Base, 1962
Box 7  Duke Ellington Orchestra at Air National Guard of Utah, [1967?]
Box 7  Miscellaneous (unidentified), undated

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The audio visual materials are divided into two subseries: Subseries 6.1: Moving Image, 1957 and Subseries 6.2: Audio Discs, 1945-1946. There are two 16 mm films from The United States Steel Hour (television) for Duke Ellington's A Drum is a Woman. The television play was written by Will Lorin and directed by Norman Felton. The play was broadcast on May 8, 1957.

Subseries 6.1: Moving Image, 1957 - 1957

Reel 1
A Drum is a Woman (Part 1), 1957 May 8
1 Reel (16 mm)

Reel 2
A Drum is a Woman (Part 2), 1957 May 8
1 Reel (16 mm)

Subseries 6.2: Audio Discs, 1945 - 1946

Box 5, Item 1
"Body and Soul", undated
1 Disc (78 RPM)

Box 5, Item 2
[Ellington/Murrow interview?], undated
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 3
"Threesome", undated
1 Disc (78 RPM)

Box 5, Item 4
Duke Ellington on the Piano, 1945 January 12
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 5
"Hollywood Hang [Ten?]", Duke Ellington and Cat Anderson, undated
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 6
"I Love to Make Love to You Doll", 1946 August 6
1 Disc (78 RPM)

Box 5, Item 7
Ravel: Chanson's Madecasses, Jennie Tourel, undated
1 Disc (33 RPM)

Box 5, Item 8
"Don't Matter At All" and "Lost Love", undated
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 9
"I Saw a Boy" and "I'm So In Love With You", undated
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 10
Jazz Concert, Volume 1 from Goodyear Jazz Concert, undated
1 Disc