



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the Mack Gordon Papers

NMAH.AC.1363

Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Mack Gordon Papers
<b>Date:</b>	1926-1977, undated
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.1363
<b>Creator:</b>	Myrow, Josef (Composer) Gordon, Mack, 1904-1959 (Creator)
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Motion picture film 3 Cubic feet (9 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Mack Gordon (1904-1959) was a prolific and successful songwriter, lyricist, and composer. He composed songs for stage and screen. He and Harry Warren won the Academy Award for Best Song in 1943.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Collection donated to the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution by Jack Gordon, son of Mack Gordon, in 2015.

### Processing Information

Processed by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., archivist; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist, 2016.

### Preferred Citation

Mack Gordon Papers, 1926-1977, undated, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

### Restrictions

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## Biographical / Historical

Mack Gordon was a prolific and successful songwriter, lyricist, and composer who composed songs for stage and screen. Born Morris Gitler (he legally changed his name to Mack Gordon in later life) in Poland on June 21, 1904, his family immigrated to the United States in 1908 and settled in New York. His early career was as a performer in vaudeville and minstrel shows, but by the early 1930s he had formed a songwriting

partnership with pianist Harry Revel. Gordon wrote for the Broadway stage and eventually made his way to Hollywood where he worked at a number of different motion picture studios.

In addition to Revel, Gordon worked with such well-known composers as Harry Warren, with whom he won his only Academy Award for Best Song for "You'll Never Know" from *Hello Frisco Hello*, and Josef Myrow, to name just three. Some of his more famous songs are "Chattanooga Choo Choo," "At Last," and "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?". He was nominated for the Academy Award nine times and became a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame. He died on February 28, 1959 in New York City (some biographies have his date of death as March 1), and is entombed at the Corridor of Immortality at the Home of Peace Memorial Park, Los Angeles, California.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers document the life and career of songwriter Mack Gordon. They include business records, both personal and business correspondence, contracts, royalty statements, commercially published sheet music, a script for the motion picture *Three Little Girls in Blue*, photograph albums, a scrapbook of clippings, original music manuscripts, notes and writings that may have served as mnemonic devices for song ideas, an excerpt from the Paramount short film, *The Collegians*, funeral materials, name change documents, and a passport. The production and creative files give insight into Gordon's creative process, and ideas for lyrics, song titles, and word play are found throughout these files.

The collection is organized in seven series.

**Series 1: Production and Creative Files, 1931-1950, undated.** This series contains files relating to motion picture and theatrical productions, both produced and unproduced. This series also contains unidentified lyric notes, instrumental sketches, and themes.

**Series 2: Business Records, 1931-1975, undated.** This series contains business records, royalty contracts, telegrams, correspondence and other business records pertaining to Gordon and his work for theatrical and motion picture companies.

**Series 3: Original Music Manuscripts, 1940-1952, undated.** This series contains original music manuscripts written by Gordon.

**Series 4: Commercial Sheet Music, 1928-1959, undated.** This series contains commercially published sheet music. The sheet music was bound by Gordon into volumes he titled, *Majors & Minors*, there is also a folder of unbound sheet music.

**Series 5: Personal and Family, 1935-1977, undated.** This series contains personal documents such as passports, life insurance documents, name change documents, the auction catalogue from the sale of furnishings at Gordon's Pacific Palisades home. This series also contains personal correspondence from singer Sandra Werner to Gordon.

**Series 6: Photographs, 1933-1956, undated**

**Series 7: Audio-Visual, 1926**

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## Arrangement

The collection is organized in seven series.

**Series 1: Production and Creative Files, 1931-1950, undated**

**Series 2: Business Records, 1931-1975, undated**

**Series 3: Original Music Manuscripts, 1940-1952, undated**

**Series 4: Commercial Sheet Music, 1928-1959, undated**

**Series 5: Personal and Family, 1935-1977, undated**

**Series 6: Photographs, 1933-1956, undated**

**Series 7: Audio-Visual, 1926**

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Motion pictures
- Motion pictures -- 1930-1940
- Motion pictures and music -- 1930-1970
- Motion pictures, American
- Music -- 20th century
- Music -- United States
- Musical theater
- Musicals
- Theater

### Types of Materials:

- Business records -- 20th century
- Clippings -- 20th century
- Contracts -- 20th century
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Motion picture stills
- Motion pictures (visual works) -- 1930-1950
- Passports
- Photograph albums -- 20th century
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 20th century
- Scrapbooks -- 1930-1940
- Scripts (documents)
- Sheet music -- 20th century
- Songs
- Writings

### Names:

- Berle, Milton
- Cantor, Eddie, 1892-1964
- Castle, Nick -- 20th century
- Crosby, Bing, 1904-1977
- Dailey, Dan
- Dunne, Irene -- 20th century
- Faye, Alice -- 20th century
- Fisher, Eddie -- 20th century
- Gable, Clark, 1901-1960 -- 20th century
- Grainger, Edmund -- 20th century
- Henie, Sonja, 1912-1969 -- 20th century
- Jolson, Al, d. 1950 -- 20th century
- Langford, Frances -- 20th century
- Lombard, Carole -- 20th century
- Merman, Ethel -- 20th century

O'Hara, Maureen, 1920- -- 20th century  
Oakie, Jack, 1903-1978 -- 20th century  
Payne, John -- 20th century  
Power, Tyrone, 1914-1958 -- 20th century  
Revel, Harry -- 20th century  
Taurog, Norman -- 20th century  
Taylor, Robert -- 20th century  
Warren, Harry, 1893-1981 -- 20th century

Occupations:

Composers  
Motion picture actors and actresses

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Production and Creative Files, 1931-1950, undated

Box 6, Folder 6	A Ticket to Tomahawk, 1950
Box 6, Folder 7	Bundle of Joy, 1956
Box 6, Folder 8	Call Me Mister, 1950
Box 6, Folder 9	Diamond Horseshoe, 1944
Box 6, Folder 10	Down Argentine Way, 1940
Box 1, Folder 2	The Dolly Sisters, 1945
Box 1, Folder 1	Fast and Furious, 1931
Box 6, Folder 11	I Love Melvin, production 1584/4692, 1952
Box 6, Folder 12	It's a Man's World, production A-602, undated
Box 6, Folder 13	It Happens Every Spring, production A-564, 1949
Box 6, Folder 14	Love in Bloom, 1935
Box 6, Folder 15	Mother Wore Tights, 1947
Box 6, Folder 16	Springtime in the Rockies, 1942
Box 1, Folder 4; Box 6, Folder 17	Summer Stock, production 4501, 1949-1950
Box 6, Folder 18	Sun Valley Serenade, 1941
Box 6, Folder 19	The Girl Next Door, production A-658, 1951
Box 1, Folder 3; Box 6, Folder 20	Three Little Girls in Blue, 1945-1946
Box 6, Folder 21	Two for Tonight, 1935
Box 1, Folder 5	"Don't Do What You're Told," lyric notes, undated
Box 1, Folder 6-7	Lyric notes, undated

Box 1, Folder 9-10;      Titles, lines, lyric memos, undated  
Box 2, Folder 1-2

Box 7, Folder 3-4      Unidentified instrumental sketches, 1940, undated

Box 7, Folder 5      Themes, undated

Box 7, Folder 6      Instrumental sketches, undated

Box 7, Folder 7      Song sketches, undated

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## Series 2: Business Records, 1931-1975, undated

*Box 3, Folder 13*

Box 3, Folder 1	Ziegfeld Theatre, 1931
Box 3, Folder 4	Miller Music Corporation, 1931-1933
Box 3, Folder 5-6	DeSylva, Brown & Henderson, Incorporated, 1932-1957
Box 3, Folder 7	Robbins Music Corporation, 1933-1957
Box 3, Folder 8	Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1935-1956
Box 3, Folder 9	The Cinephonic Music Company, 1936-1937
Box 3, Folder 10	Famous Music Corporation, 1936-1949
Box 3, Folder 11	Leo Feist, 1937-1958
Box 3, Folder 12	20th Century Fox Film Corporation, 1942-1975
Box 3, Folder 13	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), I Love Melvin, 1952
Box 3, Folder 14	Harry Warren Music, Incorporated, Four Jays Music Company, Incorporated, Summer Stock, 1954-1957
Box 3, Folder 15	Blackstone Music Incorporated, Bundle of Joy, 1957
Box 4, Folder 1	Correspondence, 1935-1977, undated
Box 4, Folder 2	Telegrams and cablegrams, 1936-1953
Box 4, Folder 3	Business, 1935-1958, undated
Box 4, Folder 4	United Kingdom income tax, 1936-1937
Box 9, Folder 1	Music and royalty contracts, all companies, 1931-1957
Box 7, Folder 1	Oversize news clippings, 1942-1955

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## Series 3: Original Music Manuscripts, 1940-1952, undated

Box 5, Folder 1	"All This and Heaven Too", undated
Box 5, Folder 2	"Barbara From Park Avenue", undated
Box 5, Folder 3	"Beat That Tom Tom", undated
Box 5, Folder 4	"Believe You Me", undated
Box 5, Folder 5	"Chummy McGregor's Tune", 1940
Box 5, Folder 6	"Comes Another Spring", undated
Box 5, Folder 7	"Count Your Calories", 1951
Box 5, Folder 8	"Don't Do a Thing Till You Hear From Me", undated
Box 5, Folder 9	"Glenn Miller Ballad", 1940
Box 5, Folder 10	"Greeks", undated
Box 5, Folder 11	"I Beg Your Pardon", undated
Box 5, Folder 12	"I Can't Stand This Much Longer", undated
Box 5, Folder 13	"I Dream of Paris", undated
Box 5, Folder 14	"I Got a Glimpse of You", undated
Box 5, Folder 15	"I'm Saving Up Pennies", undated
Box 5, Folder 16	"I Remember You", undated
Box 5, Folder 17	"If I Had a Nickle", undated
Box 5, Folder 18	"In the Presence of You", undated
Box 5, Folder 19	"It's Awfully Lovely Out Tonight", undated
Box 5, Folder 20	"Merci Beaucoup", undated
Box 5, Folder 21	The Moon Was New", undated
Box 5, Folder 22	"My Best Beau", undated
Box 5, Folder 23	"Name It and It's Yours", undated

Box 5, Folder 24	"Ooh! What They Do in Peru", 1952
Box 5, Folder 25	"Phil, the Philosopher", undated
Box 5, Folder 26	"Powder and Lipstick and Rouge", undated
Box 5, Folder 27	"Right There and Then", undated
Box 5, Folder 28	"Salt", undated
Box 5, Folder 29	"So Much to Tell You.", undated
Box 5, Folder 30	"Stable,", undated
Box 5, Folder 31	"Streets of Memories,", 1940
Box 5, Folder 32	"There's Not a Day Goes By,", undated
Box 5, Folder 33	"Through,", undated
Box 5, Folder 34	"When Did You Get to Town,", undated
Box 5, Folder 35	"When You Speak,", undated
Box 5, Folder 36	"Whistle and Walk Away,", undated
Box 5, Folder 37	"Worry About Tomorrow-Tomorrow,", undated
Box 6, Folder 1	"Yo Ho Ho-Yo Hoo Hoo," short version of "Lollipop," production A558, undated
Box 6, Folder 2	"You Said You Wouldn't Do It,", undated
Box 5, Folder 3	"Young People,", undated
Box 6, Folder 4	"Your Face is My Fortune,", undated
Box 6, Folder 5	"You're Paradise in Person,", undated

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**Series 4: Commercial Sheet Music, 1928-1959, undated**

Box 2, Folder 3	"Majors & Minors," volume 1, bound sheet music, 1932
Box 2, Folder 4	"Majors & Minors," volume 2, bound sheet music, 1933-1934
Box 2, Folder 5	"Majors & Minors," volume 3, bound sheet music, 1929-1934
Box 3, Folder 1	"Majors & Minors," volume 4, bound sheet music, 1937
Box 3, Folder 2	"Majors & Minors," volume 5, bound sheet music, 1934-1937
Box 7, Folder 2	Commercial sheet music, mixed titles, 1928-1953

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**Series 5: Personal and Family, 1935-1977, undated**

Box 4, Folder 5	Passports and travel documents, 1936-1955, undated
Box 4, Folder 6	New York Life Insurance, 1938-1951
Box 4, Folder 7	"Titles by Mack Gordon," 1940
Box 4, Flat-file 8	Change of name, 1955
Box 4, Folder 9	Scrapbook, 1931
Box 4, Folder 10	Personal, 1942-1959, undated
Box 4, Folder 11	Correspondence from Werner, Sandra, 1953-1955
Box 4, Folder 12	"Complete Home Furnishings of the Pacific Palisades Estate of Mr. Mack Gordon," auction catalogue, 1954
Box 4, Folder 13	Funeral visitation register, Gordon, Mack, 1959
Box 4, Folder 14	Notepad, undated
Box 4, Folder 15	Gordon, Jack, 1977

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## Series 6: Photographs, 1933-1956, undated

Box 8

Photographs, 1933-1956, undated

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## Series 7: Audio-Visual, 1926

AC1363.01 "That's Hollywood Rhythm" from The Collegians, 1926  
1 Film reel ("That's Hollywood Rhythm" from the Paramount motion picture,  
The Collegians, a short subject; 16mm, black and white motion picture film)

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