

George Kleine Papers

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Prepared by Ruth Wennersten
Revised and expanded by Mary Wolfskill

Collection Summary

Title: George Kleine Papers

Span Dates: 1886-1946

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1930)

ID No.: MSS52274

Creator: Kleine, George

Extent: 26,000 items ; 77 containers ; 30.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Film executive and businessman. Business records consisting of correspondence, financial and legal papers, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and other material relating primarily to Kleine's ventures in the early motion picture industry. Includes files relating to patent and distribution litigation, educational and European films, and to Kleine's business relations with Thomas A. Edison, Eastman Kodak Company, Motion Picture Patents Company, and Biograph Co.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Edison, Thomas A. (Thomas Alva), 1847-1931.

Kleine, George.

Organizations

Ambrosio (Firm)

Biograph Company.

Cines (Firm)

Eastman Kodak Company.

Eclipse (Firm)

Essanay Film Manufacturing Co.

Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

General Film Company.

Greater New York Film Rental Company.

Kalem Company.

Kleine Optical Company.

Motion Picture Patents Company.

Thomas A. Edison, Inc.

United Theatre Equipment Corporation.

Subjects

Motion picture industry--United States.

Motion pictures in education.

Motion pictures--Distribution.

Motion pictures--Europe.

Motion pictures--Patents.

Motion pictures--United States.

Occupations

Businessmen.

Executives.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of George Kleine, film executive and businessman, were transferred to the Manuscript Division from the Motion Picture Division of the Library of Congress in 1967.

Processing History

The papers of George Kleine were arranged in 1968 and more fully processed in 1978. The finding aid was revised in 2013.

Additional Guides

In 1979 the Library published *George Kleine, a Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress*.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some photographs and posters have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division. Sheet music has been transferred to the Music Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the George Kleine Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of George Kleine is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of George Kleine are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, George Kleine Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1863	Born, New York, N.Y.
1882	Graduated, City College of New York, New York, N.Y.
1896	Became involved in the motion picture business
1897	Incorporated the George Kleine Optical Co., Chicago, Ill.
1903	Began the importation of foreign films
1906	Established film rental and selling branches in the United States and Canada
1907	Founded, with Samuel Long and Frank J. Marion, the Kalem Co., and served as first president
1910	Published <i>Catalog of Educational Moving Pictures</i> . Chicago: Press of Bentley, Murray Sold his distributing exchanges to the General Film Co., served as vice president, 1910-1913, and president, 1916

1913	Imported the Italian film <i>Quo Vadis?</i> that became a model for future films
1916	With others formed the Kleine-Edison-Selig-Essanay Service
1917	Instituted a new film rental system
1920s	Devoted much time to the development of a system for the distribution of educational films
1921	Produced the serial <i>The Hope Diamond Mystery</i>
1923	Moved to New York, N.Y.; became treasurer and chairman of the board of directors of Ritz-Carlton Pictures
1931, June 8	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of George Kleine (1863-1931) span the years 1886-1946, with the bulk of the material dated between 1900 and 1930. The collection consists primarily of business records including correspondence, financial and legal papers, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and miscellaneous material generated by Kleine's various financial ventures in the motion picture industry. The papers are organized into three series: [Subject File](#), [Inventories and Lists](#), and [Distribution File](#).

A variety of material in the [Subject File](#) documents the early history of the motion picture industry. There are patent papers for some of the first projection equipment, legal documents from court suits, and correspondence of major producers, distributors, and exhibitors.

The extent of Kleine's involvement in the industry is evident from files on corporations that comprise a large portion of the [Subject File](#). In addition to papers relating to companies that Kleine either owned or was associated with, such as Kleine Optical Company, Kalem Company, and United Theatre Equipment Corporation, there are papers for Eastman Kodak Company, Biograph Company, Essanay Film Manufacturing Co., and Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

Kleine's relationship with the Thomas A. Edison enterprises is documented in a file on Edison and in correspondence with Thomas A. Edison, Inc. Kleine made extensive use of Edison's "Conquest Film" series, which was especially designed for use in schools, churches, and civic organizations. Kleine was also a member with Thomas A. Edison, Inc., and other firms in the first motion picture trust, the Motion Picture Patents Company, and its distributing arm, the General Film Company, in which Kleine served as vice president and later president. There are substantial files for this venture. The papers also document the trust's fall from power following a suit against it by the Greater New York Film Rental Company. The particulars of this suit and other legal entanglements are detailed in files on litigation and Motion Picture Patents Company litigation.

Both the [Subject File](#) and [Distribution File](#) series document Kleine's efforts to establish a non-theatrical film distribution system. His aim to provide wholesome and instructional films is evident in the titles of subject files: "better and highbrow film movements," non-theatrical films," "educational films," "educational distribution to universities," and "educational institutions." In correspondence with William H. Dudley, chief of the Bureau of Visual Instruction of the University of Wisconsin and organizer of the National Academy of Visual Instruction, Kleine discusses his proposals for ensuring the moral content of film subjects. In the [Distribution File](#) series is evidence of his system for distributing films to schools, churches, and community organizations through state universities.

The importation of foreign films consumed a significant part of Kleine's professional interests beginning in 1903. Kleine eventually became the largest importer of foreign films in the United States and Canada. In the [Subject File](#) is correspondence with foreign film companies such as Ambrosio (Società Anonima Ambrosio), Cines (Società Italiana Cines), and Eclipse (Société Générale des Cinématographes). Among the foreign films featured are *The Last Days of Pompeii*, *Julius Caesar*, and the spectacular motion picture, *Quo Vadis?* Kleine discontinued importing films after the start

of World War I, but correspondence in the 1920s with Alfred Bourget, his representative in France, reveals a continuing interest in the subject.

Other topics in the collection that reflect on the early history of the film trade include files on censorship, copyright, prize fights, and World War I.

Though brief in size, the [Inventories and Lists](#) series and [Distribution File](#) series provide an overview of the most popular or sought-after film releases for the periods covered. Together with subject files on banks, branches, distribution, finances, and historical material, they give a detailed picture of the film distribution system for which Kleine is best known.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in three series:

- [Subject File, 1886-1946](#)
- [Inventories and Lists, circa 1900-1945](#)
- [Distribution File, 1920-1932](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-67

Series

Subject File, 1886-1946

Correspondence, financial and legal papers, clippings, printed matter, and miscellaneous material.

Arranged alphabetically by topic, title of film production, name of organization, or person.

BOX 68-70

Inventories and Lists, circa 1900-1945

Lists and inventories of film titles, release schedules, prints, negatives, and other material with related correspondence.

Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

BOX 71-77

Distribution File, 1920-1932

Correspondence, financial records, and other items relating to the distribution of motion pictures.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material or geographic location.

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	Canada, 1918-1919
	Committee on Public Information, 1917-1918
	Employees in United States Military and other service, 1917-1919
	Italian war pictures, 1918, undated
BOX 66	Liberty Loan, 1917-1920, undated
	(3 folders)
	Miscellaneous, 1915-1922, undated
	(3 folders)
	Motion pictures, 1918
	Postwar Americanization, 1920-1923
BOX 67	Taxes, 1917-1922
	(2 folders)
	<i>The Unbeliever</i> , 1918
	War Camp Motion Picture Committee, 1917-1918
	War Industries Board, 1917-1918
	Wright, Wilbur <i>See Container 1, Airplanes and Wilbur Wright</i>
	Xydias, Anthony, 1915-1916
	<i>Your Obedient Servant</i> , 1920-1922
	(2 folders)

Zeza, Baron A., 1914-1916

BOX 68-70

Inventories and Lists, circa 1900-1945

Lists and inventories of film titles, release schedules, prints, negatives, and other material with related correspondence.
Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

BOX 68

Advertised in Motion Picture News (titles, authors, directors), Mar.-Apr. 1920
“Around the World in 52 Reels of Film” (advertisement)
Classic series glass negatives
Conquest Films, 1918-1921
Copyrighted films (select list, 1913-1916)
Edison-Kleine Features
Edison negatives, 1917, 1919
Edison schedules A-D, F-H, K-M (with titles and release dates), 1915-1920, undated
Edison unreleased subjects, 1920, undated
Educational distribution
 Campbell County High School, Gillette, Wyo., 1930
 Central High School, Scranton, Pa., 1929-1930
 Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, 1930
 State College of Washington, Pullman, Wash., 1927-1930
 University of California, Berkeley, Calif., 1922-1930
 University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo., 1922-1928
 University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1930
 University of Indiana, Bloomington, Ind., 1921-1928
 University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1921-1928
 University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kans., 1921-1928, [1930?]
 University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla., 1925
 University of Texas, Austin, Tex., 1924-1928
 University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1925-1928
 University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis., 1921-1928
 Ursuline Academy, Cleveland, Ohio, 1930
Empire City Film Laboratory, 1919-1929
Feature release chart, 1927
Feature releases, [1913?], 1917
Films bought, returned, held for consideration
Furniture, 1924-1926
George Kleine Cycle of Film Classics (brochures)
Griffen-owned films, circa 1915
Historical films, [1900?], [1924?]
Lombard, Ill., storage facility, 1923, 1927
Manuscript files, 1927
Manuscripts sent to Selig, 1928
Master inventory of Kleine records, 1919, 1924
Miscellaneous, 1917-1929
National Archives (films selected for archival value), [1945?]
Negatives, 1918, 1922, undated

BOX 69

Inventories and Lists, circa 1900-1945

Container

Contents

- Old cold foreign copies, 1919
Perfection pictures
Prints, 1919-1928
Publicity stills, 1924, 1927
"The Roosevelt Series of History and Biography," [1912?]
Schedule of releases, 1913-1918
Sixteen millimeter special subjects, circa 1930
Statement of amounts for extra footage credited to manufacturers, 1910-1914
Story rights
- BOX 70** Teitel (A.) Vaults, 1923-1930
Thirty Years Ago, 1928
Titles, 1913-1928
Toronto and Montreal, circa 1920
United States Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means
(educational motion pictures imported by George Kleine), 1913
Value per reel, 1919
Watson, Henry (comedies in Chicago, Ill.), 1925
- BOX 71-77** **Distribution File, 1920-1932**
Correspondence, financial records, and other items relating to the distribution of motion pictures.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material or geographic location.
- BOX 71** "A" miscellaneous
Foreign
Australia, 1926-1930
Bahamas, 1926-1928
Belgium, 1926-1928
Canada, 1923-1930
China, 1921
Czechoslovakia, 1928
England, 1925, 1929
Finland, 1929
France, 1923-1928
Greece, 1920-1921
India, 1925-1928
Japan, 1922-1929
New Zealand, 1927-1929
Philippines, 1922-1925
Puerto Rico, 1922-1927
Spain, 1928
Fox, William (Fox Films, Fox Theatres), 1930
"K" miscellaneous
Kleine credit accounts, 1927-1930
"L" miscellaneous
Service Film Corp., 1925
Sound devices, 1928

Distribution File, 1920-1932

Container

Contents

	Spoor, George K., 1925-1929
	Staehli, Edward, 1924, 1930
	States
	Alabama, 1922-1929
	Arizona, 1927-1929
	Arkansas, 1922-1929
BOX 72	California, 1922-1931 (2 folders)
	Colorado, 1923-1930
	Connecticut, 1925-1929
	Delaware, 1928-1930
	District of Columbia, 1925-1929
	Florida, 1921-1930
	Georgia, 1926-1929
	Hawaii, 1923-1930
	Idaho, 1922
	Illinois, 1922-1930
BOX 73	Indiana, 1922-1929 (2 folders)
	Iowa
	Iowa State College, Ames, 1927-1931
	Miscellaneous, 1929-1930
	State University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1924-1929
	Kansas, 1923-1931 (2 folders)
	Kentucky, 1921-1929
	Louisiana, 1922-1929
	Maine, 1926-1929
	Maryland, 1925-1929
	Massachusetts, 1921-1930 (2 folders)
BOX 74	Detroit public schools, 1925-1929
	Miscellaneous, 1922-1930
	Minnesota
	Miscellaneous, 1921-1930
	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1922-1927
	Mississippi, 1922-1930
	Missouri, 1922-1930
	Montana, 1923-1929
	Nebraska, 1922-1929
	New Hampshire, 1923-1929
	New Jersey, 1925-1930
	New Mexico, 1927
	New York, 1924-1930 (2 folders)
BOX 75	North Carolina, 1921-1930
	North Dakota, 1922-1929

Distribution File, 1920-1932

Container

Contents

	Ohio
	Miscellaneous, 1921-1930
	(2 folders)
	Riegel, Vernon M., 1926-1930
BOX 76	Oklahoma, 1921-1930
	Oregon, 1921-1929
	Pennsylvania, 1925-1930
	(2 folders)
	Rhode Island, 1927
	South Carolina, 1929-1930
	South Dakota, 1922-1927
	Tennessee, 1926-1930
	Texas, 1922-1931
	Utah, 1921-1929
BOX 77	Vermont, 1925-1929
	Virginia, 1929-1930
	Washington, 1921-1932
	West Virginia, 1926-1929
	Wisconsin, 1927-1930
	Wyoming, 1927-1930
	Miscellaneous
	Stern Brothers, 1928-1929
	Tichenor, Frank A., 1923-1927
	Verhoeven, John A., 1924-1928
	Victor Animatograph Co., 1930
	Western Union Telegraph Co., 1929-1930
	Zincograph Co., 1926-1928