

Edgar Kobak Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Raymond H. Geselbracht



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2012

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Collection Summary

Title: Edgar Kobak Papers

Span Dates: 1916-1966

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1949-1962)

ID No.: MSS28878

Creator: Kobak, Edgar, 1895-1962

Extent: 2,000 items ; 9 containers ; 3.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Publicist, broadcasting executive, and consultant. Correspondence, autobiographical memoir, speeches and writings, business papers, clippings, and scrapbooks relating primarily to Kobak's work with McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, the National Broadcasting Company, and the Mutual Broadcasting System and to the early years of radio and television broadcasting and to his expertise in the field of public relations and communications.

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

Clark, Tom C. (Tom Campbell), 1899-1977--Correspondence.

Clay, Lucius D. (Lucius DuBignon), 1897-1978--Correspondence.

Conrad, John, b. 1915-16--Correspondence.

Conrad, Nicholas J., d. 1956--Correspondence.

Denny, George Vernon, 1899-1959--Correspondence.

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--Correspondence.

Kobak, Edgar H.--Correspondence.

Kobak, Edgar, 1895-1962.

Mehren, Edward J. (Edward John), b. 1881--Correspondence.

Nielsen, A. C. (Arthur Charles), 1897-1980--Correspondence.

Stevenson, Adlai E. (Adlai Ewing), 1900-1965--Correspondence.

Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.

Organizations

A.C. Nielsen Company--Correspondence.

McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., inc.

Mutual Broadcasting System.

National Association of Broadcasters--Correspondence.

National Broadcasting Company.

S&C Electric Company--Correspondence.

Subjects

Communication.

Public relations.

Radio broadcasting.

Television broadcasting.

Occupations

Consultants.

Executives.

Publicists.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Edgar Kobak, publicist, broadcasting executive, and consultant, were given to the Library of Congress by Evelyn H. Kobak in 1967.

Processing History

The papers of Edgar Kobak were arranged and described in 1974. The finding aid was revised in 1979 and again in 2012.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Edgar Kobak is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Edgar Kobak 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, Edgar Kobak Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1895, 18 Apr.	Born, Chicago, Ill.
circa 1912-1916	Employed in testing department, Georgia Railway and Electric Co.
1914-1915	Attended Georgia School of Technology
1916	Married Evelyn Elizabeth Hubert
1916-1922	Employed by McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., became successively assistant engineering editor, advertising sales representative, and business manager of the firm's publication, <i>Electrical World</i>
1922	Elected vice president and director of McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.; also appointed publisher of electrical and radio publications and put in charge of sales of the firm's publications
1934-1936	Vice president in charge of sales, National Broadcasting Co.
1936-1940	Vice president, Lord and Thomas advertising agency
1940-1942	Vice president, sales, National Broadcasting Co's. Blue Network
1942-1944	Executive vice president of the Blue Network Co. (later the American Broadcasting Co.)
1944-1949	President, Mutual Broadcasting System
1949-1958	Business consultant, New York, N.Y.

1962, June 3 .

Died, Atlantic City, N.J

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edgar Kobak span the years 1916-1966, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1949-1962, during Kobak's semi-retirement as a business consultant and communications expert in New York. The collection consists of five series: [Autobiographical Interview](#), [General Correspondence and Related Papers](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), [Business Papers](#), and [Miscellany](#). Included are subject files of personal business affairs and miscellaneous clippings and scrapbooks. In the correspondence is an autograph file of letters from prominent individuals who wrote to Kobak during his career with McGraw-Hill, the National Broadcasting Company, and other business firms for which he was either a consultant or director.

A key feature of the collection is an autobiographical account of the years Kobak spent at McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. Also of importance is the [General Correspondence](#) of letters sent and received from notable politicians, philanthropists, and military figures, mostly from the 1950s. The main portion of the correspondence, however, deals with companies that used Kobak's consulting service and with the various advertising and philanthropic organizations with which Kobak was associated in the last fifteen years of his life. Among the most significant and substantive of these letters are those from the National Association of Broadcasters, the S & C Electric Company, and the A. C. Nielsen Company. There are also several folders of papers for the period before 1949, as for example the correspondence files for the Mutual Broadcasting System and the National Broadcasting Company. Only a small amount of Kobak's personal correspondence is present in these papers, most of it with his son, Edgar H. Kobak.

The [Speeches and Writings](#) series, which covers the years 1928-1962, offers perhaps the best representation of Kobak's work in broadcasting. In them can be found material relating to the first generation of radio and television, to Kobak's expertise in public relations, and to federal policy concerning communications. A smaller and less significant part of the collection is the [Business Papers](#) file. It is devoted exclusively to Kobak's private business ventures with a farm and radio station in Thomson, Georgia.

Correspondents in addition to those cited include John Conrad, Nicholas J. Conrad, George Vernon Denny, Edward J. Mehren, and A. C. Nielsen. The autograph file contains brief notes, usually thank-you letters, from individuals such as John F. Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson (1900-1964), Harry S. Truman, Lucius D. Clay, and Tom Clark.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- [Autobiographical Interview, circa 1916-1934](#)
- [General Correspondence and Related Papers, 1916-1966](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1928-1962](#)
- [Business Papers, 1948-1962](#)
- [Miscellany, circa 1929-1962](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1	<u>Autobiographical Interview, circa 1916-1934</u> Autobiographical document primarily covering Kobak's years at McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.
BOX 1-3	<u>General Correspondence and Related Papers, 1916-1966</u> Letters sent or received by Edgar Kobak, including interoffice memoranda, public relations publications, and a few speeches, articles, and clippings. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically thereunder. Miscellaneous correspondence is gathered separately and arranged alphabetically, as is an autograph file.
BOX 4	<u>Speeches and Writings, 1928-1962</u> Reprints, clippings, typescripts, and near-print duplications of Kobak's articles, speeches, and public statements, including notes for speeches and a transcript of a discussion. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 5	<u>Business Papers, 1948-1962</u> Correspondence and miscellaneous business papers. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 6-9	<u>Miscellany, circa 1929-1962</u> Scrapbooks, clippings, experience records, sketches of Kobak, memorabilia, fragments, miscellaneous tributes, and photographs. Arranged by type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Autobiographical Interview, circa 1916-1934 Autobiographical document primarily covering Kobak's years at McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.
BOX 1	Autobiography
BOX 1-3	General Correspondence and Related Papers, 1916-1966 Letters sent or received by Edgar Kobak, including interoffice memoranda, public relations publications, and a few speeches, articles, and clippings. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically thereunder. Miscellaneous correspondence is gathered separately and arranged alphabetically, as is an autograph file.
BOX 1	Advertising Federation of America, 1934-1956, undated
BOX 1	Advertising Research Foundation, 1953-1955
BOX 1	Autograph file, 1933-1961
BOX 1	Blue Network (American Broadcasting Co.), 1944, 1957-1960
BOX 1	Broadcasters' Advisory Council, 1947
BOX 1	Federal Communications Commission, 1960-1961
BOX 1	General Mills, Inc., 1949-1954
BOX 1	Kobak, Edgar H., 1934-1945, 1959-1962
BOX 1	McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1949-1962 (3 folders)
BOX 2	Mehren, Edward J., 1953-1961
BOX 2	Mutual Broadcasting System, 1944-1962
BOX 2	National Association of Broadcasters, 1950-1962
BOX 2	National Broadcasting Co.
BOX 2	Interdepartmental correspondence, 1935
BOX 2	General, 1934-1960
BOX 2	National Recovery Administration, 1933-1934
BOX 2	National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, 1950-1962
BOX 2	Nielsen (AC) Co., 1949-1962
BOX 3	Peabody Awards, 1961
BOX 3	S & C Electric Co., 1952-1962
BOX 3	Toll (subscription) television, 1955
BOX 3	Town Hall, 1951
BOX 3	Variety, 1955-1961
BOX 3	Miscellaneous
BOX 3	A-E, 1940-1962
BOX 3	F-L, 1916-1962
BOX 3	M-S, 1933-1962

General Correspondence and Related Papers, 1916-1966

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 3	T-Z, 1949-1966
BOX 4	Speeches and Writings, 1928-1962 Reprints, clippings, typescripts, and near-print duplications of Kobak's articles, speeches, and public statements, including notes for speeches and a transcript of a discussion. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 4	1928-1962, undated (7 folders)
BOX 5	Business Papers, 1948-1962 Correspondence and miscellaneous business papers. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 5	Business affairs, Thomson, Ga., 1948-1962, undated (8 folders)
BOX 6-9	Miscellany, circa 1929-1962 Scrapbooks, clippings, experience records, sketches of Kobak, memorabilia, fragments, miscellaneous tributes, and photographs. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 6	Business, financial, and personal papers
BOX 6	Printed material, memorabilia, and photographs
BOX 6	Clippings, 1932-1962, undated (6 folders)
BOX 7	Scrapbooks
BOX 7	1929-1945
BOX 8	1945-1954
BOX 9	1953-1962