

# Introduction

Motion pictures present a special problem to the library that attempts to document theatre history in its collections. Films differ from traditional plays in that they record particular performances rather than texts of dramatic works. The plays of Shakespeare and Shaw or O'Neill and Williams are published and available for study or reinterpretation in new performances. But films as *Gone With the Wind* or *The Wizard of Oz* are fixed entities. Hamlet could be played by Garrick or Irving or Gielgud but Rhett Butler always will be Clark Gable. Even when a film is remade, as *Ben Hur* in 1926 and 1957, or *The Great Gatsby* in 1948 and 1973, it is from a new script.

Technology may someday make available in libraries, or even in one's home, access to films as we today have access to books. Even with such developments, however, the serious student of films will still need access to the scripts. The accurate study of dialogue, of stage directions, or of technical matters such as camera and lighting instructions can best be done from the script. While the increasing interest in film study has prompted the publication of a few scripts, they represent but a handful amidst the many the scholar may wish to consult.

It was with this situation in mind that, early in the 1970s, the Lilly Library began to assemble its collection of original film scripts. The object was, where possible, to obtain scripts for film classes and to acquire representative examples from the 1920s to our own time from various film genres (westerns, comedies, musicals, detective films, adventure films, serials, etc.). A later development was acquiring scripts based on literary works represented in our collections. The James Bond scripts, for example, were added because Ian Fleming's manuscripts are in the Lilly collections.

The general collection now includes 833 scripts with an additional 84 variants. (We discovered early in our collecting that two scripts for the same film could vary substantially; not only were there revised scripts prepared as production went along, but interim individual sheets containing changes could be inserted in one copy and not in another.) Though it appears to be a long list of films, it is only a beginning. Scripts for many important films remain to be found.

In 1978 the acquisition of the Orson Welles papers and in 1981 of the John Ford papers added a new dimension to the Lilly Library film related holdings. A good teaching collection became a major research collection. Each of these archives is described in some detail in the following pages. Other smaller but important collections which support the research function of the Library also should be mentioned briefly. In the Upton Sinclair papers are approximately two thousand items concerning the making of Sergei Eisenstein's *Thunder over Mexico*, as well as fifteen hundred photos and negatives made while shooting the film. *The Wizard of Oz* is represented by a collection of 227 items including drafts and revisions of the screenplay, story outlines, temporary set lists, tests, and other production related materials. Author and television personality Shirley Thomas has given the Lilly Library the tapes and transcripts from her programs *Travelling Stars* and *Shirley Thomas from Hollywood*, both of which contain detailed interviews with film celebrities. Radio, television, and motion picture writer John McGreevey (Class of '42) presented his papers to the Library in 1975. Best known for his television writing, including *Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys* (1976) and several scripts for *The Waltons*, McGreevey also has written a number of motion picture scripts.

The film industry is first and foremost a business and as such its principal concern must be with profits and losses, not with the history of its past activities. The filmscripts it creates are temporary working documents and, while copies may be filed in the studio archives, their long term survival and availability depend on their finding their way into research libraries. We hope these collections in the Lilly Library will be useful to students and scholars with an interest in film studies.

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