

A GUIDE TO THE PAPERS OF NORMAN SWEETSER
LAB 2000-60

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University of Maryland

Processed by Stephanie Allen
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2 lin. ft.

BIOGRAPHY

Norman Sweetser was born in Philadelphia on April 28, 1894. The son of noted clergyman Edward C. Sweetser, Mr. Sweetser attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he appeared in several productions staged by the Mask and Wig Club, a student theatrical organization. After graduation Mr. Sweetser worked in numerous fields, including architecture, banking, advertising, teaching, scenic design, singing and acting. He received a commission as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Service at the outbreak of World War I and sent to Italy, where he earned the Italian War Cross for his service as a pilot in the Caproni bombing squadron.

After the close of the war, Mr. Sweetser returned home and pursued his interests in music and theater. He performed with the Savoy Opera Company and later appeared in such Broadway shows as "Blossom Time," "Ginger," "Mayflowers" and "Annie Dear."

In 1927 Mr. Sweetser began his radio career as an announcer for WJZ New York, one of the first New York City radio stations and an early affiliate in the NBC network. He also performed as a singer on such shows as WJZ's "Among Ourselves." In 1928 he was assigned to accompany presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith on the New York governor's campaign tour of the West, during which he served as the official announcer for all of Gov. Smith's radio speeches. By 1929 he was working primarily as a special announcer for shows such as the Palmolive, Pure Oil and other radio hours and as a production director for NBC broadcasts. His direction credits include "Just Plain Bill," which debuted on CBS in 1932, and "Stella Dallas," the long-running NBC serial drama first broadcast in 1937.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

The Papers of Norman Sweetser contain an assortment of materials that document Mr. Sweetser's experiences in the New York theater and radio broadcasting worlds of the early to mid 20th century. Mr. Sweetser's activities brought him into contact with many show business personalities of the day, from actors to announcers to production crew members, all of whom are captured vividly in photographs and in portrait sketches done by Mr. Sweetser. A set of large portrait sketches forms the first part of the collection. The balance consists of two scrapbooks containing smaller portrait sketches and photographs covering the period from Mr. Sweetser's college days through his radio career, as well as theater programs, newspaper and magazine clippings, correspondence and miscellaneous items such as membership cards. The collection spans the years 1913-1971, with the bulk of the items dating from 1913-1941. A small number of the late items are undated.

The papers have been arranged in the following series:

Series I: Portrait Sketches

Series II: Scrapbooks

PROVENANCE

Mrs. Charles E. Johnson, Mr. Sweetser's niece, donated the Papers of Norman Sweetser to the Library of American Broadcasting in October 1980.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I: Portrait Sketches 1937-1941 (1 linear ft.)

This series consists of 127 large (8 1/2" x 11") portrait sketches done by Mr. Sweetser on the backs of radio show scripts dating from 1937-1941. The subjects of the sketches are radio personalities with whom Mr. Sweetser worked, including Betty Garde, Ed Herlihy, Milton Cross, Ralph Edwards, Ruth Russell and Arthur Hughes from "Just Plain Bill," and Karl Swenson and Lucille Wall from "Lorenzo Jones." There are two sets of sketches, 52 of women and 75 of men, with each set arranged in alphabetical order in Boxes 1 and 2 respectively. Each person is given an individual folder; numbers in parentheses on the upper left side of a folder indicate multiple sketches of the person.

Series II: Scrapbooks, 1913-1934, 1966, 1968, 1975 (1 linear ft.)

This series consists of a much wider variety of materials. The first scrapbook contains materials documenting Mr. Sweetser's involvement in

collegiate and professional theatrical productions and his later radio work with NBC. Photographs include cast and individual shots of performers in the University of Pennsylvania's Mask and Wig productions of the 1910's and snapshots of acquaintances from World War I. Complementing these are 82 small portrait sketches (up to 4" x 6") by Mr. Sweetser of show business personalities, many of them cast members who performed with Mr. Sweetser in 1920's Broadway shows such as "Beggar on Horseback," "Mayflowers," and "Annie Dear." Another set of photographs consists mostly of shots of actors, announcers and production staff involved with NBC radio broadcasts of the late 1920's through 1930's. Among the remaining items are play reviews, theater programs, articles about Mr. Sweetser's radio activities and identification cards certifying his membership in several broadcasting organizations.

The second scrapbook contains photographs and 8 small (under 4" x 6") portrait sketches by Mr. Sweetser of performers and other notables from Mr. Sweetser's career in Broadway theater in the 1920's and radio broadcasting in the 1920's and 1930's. A few items date from the 1960's and 1970's, including an article about a television movie recreating the Orson Welles 1938 "War of the Worlds" broadcast, and several others are undated. Many of the photographs are autographed, including those of Ben Grauer, Eddie Cantor, Billie Burke, Rudy Vallee and Babe Ruth.

The scrapbooks have been rehoused in acid-free binders and maintain the original order of pages.

BOX INVENTORY

SERIES I: PORTRAIT SKETCHES

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	1	Anderson, Marjorie
	2	Atwell, Martha
	3	Bauer, Cherita
	4	Baxter, Betty
	5	Calvert, Pat
	6	Condon, Eva
	7	Day, Elizabeth
	8	Dowling, Janet
	9	Edney, Florence
	10	Elkins, Jeanie (Jeanne)
	11	Erskine, Marilyn
	12	Freeman, Florence
	13	Garde, Betty
	14	Gould, Mitzi
	15	Harrison, Florence

16	Lane, Katherine
17	Leaf, Ann
18	Loring, Ann
19	Malone, Florence
20	McGibbon, Harriet
21	Melchior, Elanie
22	Niday, Kathlyne
23	Palmer, Effie
24	Reinhart, Alice
25	Russell, Ruth
26	Sheehan, Tess
27	Shields, Helen
28	Tompkins, Joan
29	Wall, Lucille
30	Walpole, Helen
31	Ward, Coleen
32	Yorke, Ruth
33	Zinke, Peggy

Box Folder

2	1	Ansbro, George
	2	Bond, Bill
	3	Bond, Ford
	4	Brown, John
	5	Cantor, Charlie
	6	Costello, Don
	7	Costello, Jack
	8	Crockett, Keene
	9	Cross, Milton
	10	Curtain, Joe
	11	Daigneau, Ken
	12	Donald, Peter
	13	Donnelly, Andy
	14	Dressler, Eric
	15	Edmonson, William
	16	Edwards, Ralph
	17	Flemming, James
	18	Hamilton, John
	19	Herlihy, Ed
	20	Holbrook, John
	21	Horine, A. T.
	22	Hughes, Arthur
	23	Jacquinot, Robert
	24	Jamieson, House
	25	Johnson, Ray

26	Kane, Johnny
27	Kelly, Bill
28	Kent, Alan
29	Liss, Ronnie
30	Locke, Ralph
31	Lovejoy, Frank
32	Lowe, Don
33	Manning, Jack
34	Martindale, Ross
35	Matthews, Junius
36	McBride, Jack
37	McCarthy, Jack
38	McDonald, Craig
39	Meighan, James
40	Monroe, Sam
41	Nugent, Paul
42	O'Day, M.
43	Parrish, John
44	Peters, Lowell
45	Provenson, Herluf
46	Provo, Frank
47	Quinn, Billy
48	Reid, Ted
49	Shirley, Tom
50	Slade, Ted
51	Sloan, Everett
52	Smith, Homer
53	Swensen, Karl (Carl)
54	Toney, Jay
55	Van Rooten, Luis
56	Welch, Niles
57	Wolters, Clem
58	Wragge, Eddie

SERIES II: SCRAPBOOKS

(Items are photographs unless otherwise indicated)

Scrapbook 1

<u>Box</u>	<u>Page</u>	
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3	1	Tod Service and Danny Hogan, "The Royal Circus," 1914 Ward Towneley, "Slick," "Maid in Germany," 1913
	2	Cast, "The Royal Circus," 1914
	3	1 st chorus, "The Royal Circus," 1914

- 4 1st chorus, "Maid in Germany"
5 Mask & Wig cast, "Maid in Germany," 1913
6 2nd chorus girls, "Maid in Germany"
7 2nd chorus rehearsal, "The Royal Circus"
8 Unidentified Mask and Wig actress
9 Norman Sweetser with 10 unidentified men, Coney Island,
1914
Ralph Colton
Jack MacInnes, Paris, 1918
Squab Woodruff, 1920
10 Eddie Forbes, 1926 (autographed)
Portrait sketch by N. Sweetser of Eddie Forbes, Cook &
Country, 1925
11 Arthur Pederson
12 Walter Tenney (autographed)
13 Ronnie Liss, Mark Smith* *variant caption on verso
14 Martha Atwell
5 unidentified men with trophies
Unidentified woman in polka-dot blouse and hat
15 Lucille Wall, Karl Swenson, "Lorenzo Jones" rehearsal
16 Funeral services at Floyd Bennet's grave
17 Article "Ivy Sawyer Christens New Forrest Theater with 'May
Flowers,'" *New York Herald Tribune*, November 25,
1925
Article "Sweet Tunes Reign in 'Mayflowers,'" *The New York
Times*, no date
Article "Profiles: Two-Eyed Connelly," *The New Yorker*, April
12, 1930
Article "'Blossom Time' has Music by Schubert," *Public
Ledger*, Philadelphia, October 24, 1922
Unidentified article "The New Plays on Broadway ('Ginger'
and 'White Desert')" (incomplete)
- 18 Program from The Majestic Theatre, "Mayflowers," Week of
October 12, 1925 (cast page only)
Program from Times Square Theatre, "Annie Dear," Week
of January 5, 1925
- 19 Letter from Winthrop Ames to N. Sweetser, April 21 (no
year)
Portrait sketch of Winthrop Ames by N. Sweetser
Unidentified illustration, "'Iolanthe's' Winthrop Ames," drawn
by William Auerbach-Levy
- 20 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
Roland Young, 1924

Osgood Perkins
Spring Byington
Richard Barbee

- 21 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Grethe Ruzt-Nissen
 George Mitchell, 1924
 Pascal Cowan
 Fay Walker
- 22 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Pascal Cowan, 1924
 Robert Crank, A Juror, 1924
 Kay Johnson
 Winthrop Ames
- 23 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Marjorie Peterson, 1924
 Mary Almonte, "Annie Dear"
 NYO or Mona Lee
 Kitty Littlefield
- 24 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Ferguson
 Charlie Mast
 Gayle Mays
 Icabod
 Charlie Schenk
- 25 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Ivy Sawyer
 Bill Valentine
 Robert Woolsey, "Mayflowers"
 William O'Neal, "Mayflowers"
- 26 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Mollie Morrison, "Mayflowers"
 David Higgins, "Mayflowers"
 Nydia Darnell
 David Higgins
- 27 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Virginia Lloyd, "Mayflowers"
 Nancy Carroll
 Hazel Beamer, "Mayflowers"
 Charlotte Ayres, "Mayflowers"

- 28 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Ed Cutler, "Mayflowers"
 Maurie Rubens
 Dixie, "Louis XIV"
 "Dixie"
- 29 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Marion Green, 1924
 Billie Burke, 1925
 Gavin Gordon, 1924
 Spencer Charters, 1924
- 30 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Joan Clement
 Jack Whiting
 Phylis Cleveland, 1924
 Mary Lawler, 1924
- 31 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Roland Young, "Beggar on Horseback," 1925
 Ann Carpenger, "Beggar," 1924
 Winthrop Ames, 1924
 Jim Sumner, 1924
- 32 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Marion Ballou, "Beggar on Horseback"
 George Barbier
 Kay Johnson
- 33 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Max Selsea
 Max
 Charlie Wilton
 Chap Cory
- 34 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Roland Young
 Wally Stewart
 Pascal
- 35 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Clifford Grey, "Annie Dear"
 Edward Royce
 Arthur Henry, Clare Kummer's husband
 Stanley Sharfe, Ziegfield Manager

- 36 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Jake
 John Shubert
 Frank Ranger, "Annie Dear," 1924
 Gus Salzar, "Annie Dear," 1924
- 37 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Hal Kemp
 George Olsen
 Roger Wolfe Kahn, 3/22/27
 Geo Kelley
 Howard Marsh
- 38 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Cantor Rosenblatt, Palace Theatre, N.Y., 12/8/25
 (2 sketches)
 Clara Steiner
- 39 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Godfrey Ludlow
 Keith McCleod
 Milton Cross
 Jim Forman, NBC Engineer
- 40 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
 Frank Black
 Hugo Mariani
 Lolita Cabrera Gainsborg
 Phil Wall
- 41 List of cast for "Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie," "The Pond's
 Program," March 2, 1934
 Unidentified postcard photograph of Peter Pan
- 42 Unidentified clipping, "Season's Greetings from the Radio
 Reporters"
- 43 Unidentified WJZ Radio want ad, "Radio Announcer,"
 February 26, 1927
 Unidentified article, "Norman Sweetser, Penn Graduate, at
 NBC Mike During Political Rallies"
 Article about Norman Sweetser announcing for Governor
 Alfred Smith during his presidential campaign tour,
The Chicago American, no date
 Unidentified radio schedule, "Features"

- Unidentified article, "90,000 Miles of Wire Will Carry Smith's Speeches"
- 44 Unidentified article, "Sweetser Came from Stage to Radio Career," October 27, 1929
- 45 Article "On the Radio Last Night," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 19, 1928
Article "Radiolites," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 11, 1928
Article "Norman Sweetser, NBC Announcer, Filled Many Jobs," *Denver Colorado News*, September 30 (no year)
- 46 Article "Radio Reviews and Previews," *The New York Telegraph*, November 3, 1927
- 47 Unidentified article "I Reckon So"
Unidentified article "NBC Announcer was War Flier"
- 48 Article "Sweetser was Only Visitor," *The Cleveland News*, no date
Article on Norman Sweetser, *The Newark Star-Eagle*, January 3, 1929
Unidentified article about Norman Sweetser
- 49 Unidentified cartoon, "Making the Grade," December, 1930
- 50 NBC softball game, Central Park, 1936: Leon Leak, Gene Hamilton, Nelson Case, Kevin Keech, Ray Diaz, Jim Shellman, Ben Grauer, Lyle Van, Charlie Nobles, Jack McCarthy
- 51 George Ansbro
- 52 George Ansbro, 2 poses
- 53 George Ansbro, 2 poses
- 54 George Ansbro
- 55 Unidentified picture of woman

- 56 Membership card, Norman Sweetser, American Federation of Radio Artists
- Special Employees' Pass, Reception for Captain Hermann Koehl, Major James Fitzmaurice, Baron Guenther von Heunefeld
- Membership card, Norman Sweetser, Radio Directors Guild, 1946-1947

Scrapbook 2

(Items are photographs unless otherwise indicated)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Page</u>	
4	(Inside front cover)	Pat O'Hara Portrait sketch by N. Sweetser of Ziegfeld, 1925 Unidentified magazine photo, Adele Astaire, Fred Astaire, Betty Compton and Gertrude McDonald in "Funny Face," 1927 Portrait sketch by N. Sweetser of Edward Royce, "Annie Dear," 1924
1		Billie Burke, 1924 (autographed)
2		Unidentified dancer (autographed)
3		Anastasia Reilly (autographed) Unidentified newspaper photograph, Anastasia Reilly
4		Molly Morrison, "Mayflowers," (autographed)
5		Ivy Sawyer and Joseph Santley (autographed)
6		Zoe Barnett, "Blossom Time," 1923 (autographed)
7		Babe Ruth (autographed)
8		Ruth Russell and Arthur Hughes, "Just Plain Bill" (photocopy)
9		Eddie Cantor and Rudy Vallee, "Fleischman Hour," WIOD/NBC, Miami, Florida, 1931 (autographed by R. Vallee) Reinhardt and Scotty, WIOD

- 10 Rudy Vallee and Frances Langford
- 11 Rudy Vallee and Frances Langford, 1931
- 12 Group including N. Sweetser, N. Wheilahan, Harry Seymour, "Tea" Fontelieu, Bush Jackson, Gordon Thompson (J. Walter Thompson Co.) and Rudy Vallee, WSMB, New Orleans, 1931
- 13 Ruth Russell, "Just Plain Bill," 1931
Ruth Russell
Ruth Russell, 1966
Unidentified man and Ruth Russell, Birthday party at Ansbro's, April 27, 1968
- 14 James Meighan
Astrid Peters Meighan and James Meighan
Boo and Jim (Astrid Peters Meighan and James Meighan)
- 15 James Meighan
- 16 Unidentified newspaper photo of William Hatton Green
Unidentified article, "Owner of 25,000 Records Lauds Inspiration in Them"
Portrait sketch by N. Sweetser of Bill Green, 1925
George Ansbro
Frank Bartholomew, 1949
- 17 Unidentified young man
Terence and Suzy Golden
Dick McDonough
Claude Thornhill (3 shots)
- 18 Harold Van Emburgh, 1932 (autographed)
Col. William Westlake
Bomar Cramer
Portrait sketch by N. Sweetser of Moll Morrison, "Mayflowers"
- 19 Portrait sketches of the following by N. Sweetser:
Teri Josephi, 1925
Harry Stevens, 1925
Ivy Sawyer, "Mayflowers"
Joseph Santley
- Article, "Dramatic License," *Newsweek*, November 31, 1975

- Eddie Cantor, Rudy Vallee and orchestra, WIOD/NBC
(autographed by Eddie Cantor)
- Ben Grauer, June 1975 (autographed)