MSS0430. Lloyd Binford collection finding aid
Lloyd Binford collection

Title: Lloyd Binford collection
Collection No: MSS.430
Extent: 0.25 cubic feet

Abstract: The collection contains copies of letters and articles written by Lloyd Binford, Chairman of the Memphis Board of Censors (1928-1956).

Processed by: James E. Montague, August 2003; Gerald Chaudron, February 2014.
Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: Lloyd Binford collection, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: February 2014
Biographical information

Lloyd Tilgham Binford (1866-1956) was born in Duck Hill, Mississippi, the son of an infantry colonel and future state senator. He left school at the end of the fifth grade and worked for the Illinois Central Railroad before joining the staff of the Woodmen of the World. He then joined the Columbia Mutual Life Insurance Company and rose to become president of the company in 1916. Binford moved the company from Atlanta to Memphis and was responsible for building the Columbia Mutual Tower (later the Lincoln-America Tower) in 1925.

Prominent in many civic organizations, Binford was named chairman of the Memphis Censor Board in 1928 by the city’s political boss, E.H. Crump and stayed in the job for 28 years. The board had been formed in 1911 to "censor, supervise, regulate, or prohibit any entertainment of immoral, lewd, or lascivious character, as well as performances inimical to the public safety, health, morals, or welfare." Though it had broad powers, the board had not used them often until Binford became chairman. By the 1940s, Memphis became known for having the strictest film censorship in the country. Binford opposed any fraternization between blacks and whites and giving prominence to black actors. He was sensitive also to any negative portrayal of Southern life and undermining of public morals. As a result, many films were banned or cut, forcing Memphians to go to Arkansas if they wanted to see them. Though ill-health led him to resign several times, he was persuaded to stay on until finally stepping down in 1956.

Sources:

Scope and contents

The collection contains carbon copies of two typed letters written by Lloyd Binford, Chairman of the Memphis Board of Censors disapproving films. One letter (circa 1946) was written to David O. Selznick regarding “Duel in the Sun”. The other (circa 1947) was written to United Artists Corporation about “The Macomber Affair”. There is also a copy of the public notice disapproving “Duel in the Sun”. The collection also contains copies of articles by Binford and one submitted to Collier’s Magazine in 1950.
Provenance

The carbon copies were donated by Dr. Berkley Kalin in August 1994. The copies of Binford articles were transferred from the Vertical Files, August 2016.

Related materials


Subject terms

Binford, Lloyd T., 1866-1956.
Censorship–Tennessee—Memphis.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder
