

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the Ellery Queen Papers

YCAL MSS 335



by Theresa Battaglio

July 2009

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 335

CREATOR: Queen, Ellery

TITLE: Ellery Queen papers

DATES: 1929–1972

BULK DATES: 1946–1971

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.7 linear feet (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Ellery Queen Papers document the mystery writing career of Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee, writing as "Ellery Queen." The collection includes correspondence, fan mail, telegrams, advertisements, proposals for ventures, photographs, and ephemera relating to Ellery Queen. The collection does not include drafts of manuscripts, but includes American Weekly newspaper articles, likely written by Lee, with clippings describing authentic murder cases, and fan mail documenting their 1948 radio play "A Question of Color." Some of Manfred B. Lee's personal papers such as correspondence and photographs are also included.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.elleryqueen>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.elleryqueen>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Manfred B. Lee, 1976.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Ellery Queen Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Ellery Queen Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

The Ellery Queen Papers contain material formerly listed as Uncat.ZA MS.154.

This collection was processed as part of an internship through Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science in July 2009.

Ellery Queen

Ellery Queen is a pseudonym for the writing team of Frederic Dannay (1905-1982) and Manfred B. Lee (1905-1971). Dannay and Lee were cousins who entered a writing contest co-sponsored by McClure's Magazine and Lippincott's publishing house, and formed the joint venture of Ellery Queen. Although they did not win the contest, the cousins were rewarded with a book publication deal. Between 1928 and 1971, "Ellery Queen" wrote radio shows, a monthly magazine, a weekly newspaper series, novels, and television series all centered around the investigator "Ellery Queen." In the beginning of their writing career, Dannay and Lee kept their identities secret, but revealed their authorship in 1936. Although their work tended to be a "whodunit" type of story, the authors did address current issues or problems. Their most controversial work was a radio show called "A Question of Color", which debuted on February 12, 1948, and confronted the issue of racism in America. Dannay and Lee were also the co-writers of the Barnaby Ross mystery novels.

Scope and Contents

The Ellery Queen Papers document the mystery writing career of Ellery Queen, a pseudonym for Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee. The collection includes correspondence, fan mail, telegrams, advertisements, proposals for ventures, photographs, and ephemera relating to Ellery Queen. The collection does not include drafts of manuscripts, but includes *American Weekly* newspaper articles, likely written by Lee, with clippings describing authentic murder cases. Some of Manfred B. Lee's personal papers such as letters, photographs, and cards are also included in the collection. The collection dates from 1929 to 1972, with the bulk of the material falling between 1946 and 1971.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1929-1971. II. Writings, 1931-1961. III. Other Papers, 1939-1972.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1929-1971

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Series I, Correspondence consists of professional correspondence related to Ellery Queen and some personal correspondence of Manfred B. Lee. Much of the correspondence consists of outgoing carbon-copied letters.

The first subseries consists of general correspondence documenting the work of Ellery Queen. Correspondence with Jan Broberg includes a substantive response from "Ellery Queen" to interview questions. General correspondence also includes a folder of fan mail which documents the strong stance that Ellery Queen took against racism with the 1948 radio program "A Question of Color." Insight into Manfred B. Lee's personal opinion about this can be gained in a response letter. Also of interest are Lee's responses to fans in which he gives suggestions about how to start writing a mystery novel.

The second subseries consists of Manfred B. Lee's personal correspondence. A 1947 outgoing letter to Bennett Cerf of Random House, written as a response to an article in *SRL*, details Lee's feelings towards political and social problems in the Bahamas at the time. Other substantive outgoing correspondence includes a 1961 letter to First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy regarding motherhood, with a response from her social secretary.

Series I is organized into two subseries: General Correspondence and Manfred B. Lee Correspondence.

General correspondence

General correspondence is organized alphabetically, with folders for "A Question of Color" fan mail and telegrams filed at the end.

b. 1, f. 1	Allen, Fred	1955 March 17
b. 1, f. 2	Borge, Victor	1959 March 07
b. 1, f. 3	Broberg, Jan Includes a Swedish review of an Ellery Queen book	1968
b. 1, f. 4	Buchanan, John D.	1967
b. 1, f. 5	Cheran, Mary	1969 May
b. 1, f. 6	Clemens, Cyril	1969 October 03
b. 1, f. 7	J. Walter Thompson Company	1952 October 29
b. 1, f. 8	Mann, Jacob	1960 May 13
b. 1, f. 9	Munn, James Buell	1950 September
b. 1, f. 10	New American Library, Inc. Includes proof of <i>Face to Face</i> dust jacket	1966-1967
b. 1, f. 11	Playboy Enterprises	1971 February 08
b. 1, f. 12	Wallace, Mike Includes interview with Ellery Queen	1958 May 09
b. 1, f. 13	Other correspondents A-Z	1950-1971

General correspondence (continued)

b. 1, f. 14-15	"A Question of Color" fan mail	1948
b. 1, f. 16	Telegrams	1929-1948
	Manfred Lee correspondence	1947-1969
b. 1, f. 17	Cerf, Bennett Outgoing letter only	1947 January 17
b. 1, f. 18	Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy Outgoing letter with response from Letitia Baldrige.	1961 November
b. 1, f. 19	General correspondence A-Z	1947-1969
b. 1, f. 20	Cards	1953, undated

Series II: Writings, 1931-1961*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Series II consists of mystery stories published in *American Weekly* based upon authentic murder cases. *American Weekly* articles are often annotated, most likely by Lee, and most are accompanied by clippings documenting the original crimes. The majority of files were labeled with the name of the victim (V) and killer (K), and the original organization has been maintained.

Arranged alphabetically by last name of murder victim.

b. 2, f. 21	K. Green, Major	1937-1948
b. 2, f. 22	K. Thompson, Thomas A.	1961
b. 2, f. 23	K. Fraden, Harlow	1961
b. 2, f. 24	K. Gardner, Ray D. Dempsey	1952
b. 2, f. 25	K. Snook, James H., Dr.	1950-1956
b. 2, f. 26	K. Bannister, May	1936-1946
b. 2, f. 27	K. Schoplin, John	1931
b. 2, f. 28	K. Mascari, Joseph	1953-1954
b. 2, f. 29	K. Seiler, Peter	1936
b. 2, f. 30	K. Selz, Jerry	1948-1953
b. 2, f. 31	K. Saisi, Mary	1960
b. 2, f. 32	K. Small, Frederick	1945-1946
b. 2, f. 33	K. Stott, Sam	1943-1944
b. 2, f. 34	Post Office Detectives	1936-1945
b. 2, f. 35	K. Crawford, Jim	1954
b. 2, f. 36	K. Kirby, Harry A. (James J. Crawford)	1952-1954
b. 2, f. 37	K. Smith, Winford	1947
b. 2, f. 38	D'Autremont Brothers	1947-1952
b. 2, f. 39	PA. Turnpike Murders	1944-1955
b. 2, f. 40-42	Miscellaneous	1935-1958

Series III: Other Papers, 1939-1972

Series III consists of photographs, awards, and other material documenting the career of Ellery Queen. The photographs include an individual portrait of Frederic Dannay, a portrait of both Ellery Queen writers, the 1951 Mystery Writers of America, the 1946 Sherlock Holmes literary society called the Baker Street Irregulars, and photos of Lee at home with his family. The photographs of his family were taken for the *Sunday Republican Magazine*, and are undated.

Materials documenting the Ellery Queen radio shows include a copy of a CBS advertisement and a listing of the dates and titles of the broadcasted shows, as well as casting cards. Ephemera includes the Ellery Queen letterhead, business card, envelope, and the Library of Congress catalog cards for *Ellery Queen's Challenge to the Reader: an anthology*. Materials documenting the Ellery Queen contest consist of a press release by NBC.

Arranged by format.

b. 1, f. 43	Awards	1963-1972
b. 1, f. 44	Biographies of Manfred B. Lee	undated, after 1971
b. 1, f. 45	Ephemera	1943, undated
b. 1, f. 46-47	Radio shows	1939-1948
b. 1, f. 48	Photographs Portrait of Frederic Dannay, photographs of Lee at home with his family	undated
b. 2, f. 49	Photographs Photographs of Ellery Queen, the Mystery Writers of America, and the Baker Street Irregulars	1946-1951, undated
b. 1, f. 50	Press release	1958

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.

Subjects

Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Detective and mystery stories, American --
20th Century
True crime stories -- United States

Genres / Formats

Clippings (information artifacts)
Photographic prints

Names

Dannay, Frederic, 1905-1982
Lee, Manfred B. (Manfred Bennington),
1905-1971
Queen, Ellery

Corporate Bodies

Baker Street Irregulars (Organization : U.S.) --
Pictorial works
Mystery Writers of America -- Pictorial works

Contributors

Queen, Ellery
Dannay, Frederic, 1905-1982
Lee, Manfred B. (Manfred Bennington),
1905-1971