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# Guide to the Wesley H. Greene Papers 1900-1996



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## **Descriptive Summary**

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.WHGREENE
<b>Title</b>	Greene, Wesley H. Papers
<b>Date</b>	1900-1996
<b>Size</b>	27.5 linear feet (38 boxes, 2 oversize folders)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract** Wesley H. Greene operated a Chicago-based film distributorship, and also worked as an educator, administrator and activist focused on film and the visual arts. His distribution concerns, including International Film Bureau, College Film Center, and Trans-World Films, handled a variety of film genres and served schools, colleges and universities, churches, clubs and businesses. This collection includes records of Greene's film distribution companies; posters and other movie publicity material; records of the Chicago Film Council; programs from Greene's international film series at University of Chicago; records of the Committee to Preserve the Ferguson Fund for Sculpture and Greene's litigation against the Art Institute of Chicago; and personal correspondence and memorabilia.

## **Information on Use**

### **Access**

Series VI includes financial records of the International Film Bureau, and financial records of the Greene family. This material is restricted until 2046.

Series VI also includes medical records. This material is restricted until 2076.

The remainder of the collection is open for research, with no restrictions.

### **Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Greene, Wesley H. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

## **Biographical Note**

Wesley Hammond Greene was born in Romney, West Virginia in 1907, and educated at Randolph-Macon College (A.B. 1927) and University of Virginia (A.M. 1929). He began his career in education as a history and social sciences teacher, working in Virginia high schools, Allegheny College, and the University of Chicago's Laboratory Schools.

Through work with the University of Chicago's International House, Greene became interested in film as an educational medium. In 1937, he incorporated International Film Bureau, an importer and exporter of educational films. Greene subsequently created additional branches of his distributorship, including College Film Center, which specialized in low-cost rentals of classroom films, and Trans-World Films, which distributed foreign films and general entertainment titles. Greene's companies handled a variety of film genres, particularly European and Latin American features, art and experimental films, foreign language instruction series, vocational guidance films, and classic entertainment titles. Greene's clients included schools, colleges and universities, churches, clubs and businesses.

In the 1930s, Greene developed film series in coordination with University of Chicago affiliated organizations such as International House, the Renaissance Society, and the University Film Society. During the early 1940s, Greene and his family moved to Canada, where he served on the National Film Board. In Chicago, he was active on the Chicago Film Council, and organized the group's Films of the World Festival in 1947.

In 1957, Greene led the Committee to Preserve the Ferguson Fund for Sculpture in challenging the Art Institute of Chicago's administration of the Benjamin F. Ferguson Fund. Established in 1905 for the development of the Chicago's sculpture and monument collections, the fund had been used by the Art Institute of Chicago for building construction, maintenance and other administrative and operational costs. The committee's efforts culminated in *Wesley Greene vs. the Art Institute of Chicago and the Northern Trust Company*.

Greene married the artist Marie Zoe Greene-Mercier in 1937; the couple lived in Hyde Park and raised three sons.

### **Scope Note**

Series I: Film Distribution, contains records of Greene's film distribution companies, particularly those of the International Film Bureau and Trans World Films. Much of the material in this series consists of publicity material for films and film distributorships, including catalogs, press books, print advertisements, stills, lobby cards, inserts, clippings, posters and press releases. Also included is correspondence negotiating distribution rights; internal reviews of films; scripts and translations of dialogue; artwork and layouts for catalogs; and files on business and film equipment. This series includes material in German, Spanish, French and Italian.

Series II: Chicago Film Council, includes correspondence, minutes, membership records, programs and announcements, spanning the years 1946-1949. Also included is related material from other regional film councils and their sponsoring organization, the Film Council of America. Greene's work in organizing the 1947 Films of the World Festival is represented in this series.

Series III: University of Chicago, documents campus film series that Greene organized from 1932-1941. Included are programs and publications from series hosted by the University Film Society, International House and the Renaissance Society.

Series IV: Committee to Preserve the Ferguson Fund for Sculpture, includes the group's financial and administrative records, correspondence, publicity material, background research on the Art Institute and the Ferguson Fund, clippings, and records of legal proceedings.

Series V: Personal, includes correspondence, biographical material, yearbooks, maps and other travel material, political material, periodicals and clippings. Several unidentified files containing notes, correspondence, periodicals, clippings and publicity material are included at the end of the series.

Series VI: Restricted, contains financial records of International Film Bureau, as well as personal financial and medical records.

## **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Marie Zoe Greene-Mercier. Papers

Charles Benton. Papers

William Benton. Papers

## **Subject Headings**

- Greene, Wesley H.
- Art Institute of Chicago
- Chicago Film Council
- International Film Bureau, Inc.
- International House (Chicago, Ill.)
- National Film Board of Canada

- Trans-World Films
- Educational films
- Film festivals
- Film posters
- Foreign films
- Language and languages -- Study and teaching
- Motion picture industry
- Motion pictures -- Distribution
- Motion pictures -- Marketing
- Motion pictures in education
- Visual education

## **INVENTORY**

### **Series I: Film Distribution**

This series contains records of Greene's film distribution companies, particularly those of the International Film Bureau and Trans World Films. Much of the material in this series consists of publicity material for films and film distributorships, including catalogs, press books, print advertisements, stills, lobby cards, inserts, clippings, posters and press releases. German films of the 1930s are particularly well represented in this series, as are Mexican and other Spanish-language films of the 1930s-1950s . Also included is correspondence negotiating distribution rights; internal reviews of films; scripts and translations of dialogue; artwork and layouts for catalogs; and files on business and film equipment.

Dates given in the inventory are for the materials contained in the file, and do not document the release dates of films.

Subseries 1: Subject File, includes files organized alphabetically. Administrative records are usually filed by business name ("International Film Bureau" or "Trans-World Films"). Other typical subjects include the names of clients, vendors, products, films and film genres. Unidentified files are collected at the end of this subseries.

Subseries 2: Movie Posters and Oversize Publicity Material, contains print material such as large posters, press books, lobby cards, inserts and photographs. Also included is a set of English subtitle cards, circa 1950s-1960s, for the 1931 production of *Brothers Karamazov*. Material in this subseries is organized by size, then alphabetically by subject.

Restricted material from this series has been transferred to Series VI.

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