

MORRIS HALPERN PAPERS, 1893-1963

The Morris Halpern Papers consist primarily of correspondence between Morris Halpern (1878-1963) and his common law wife, Vera Gladstone, nee Rocklin, (1868?-1948) from 1902-1948. They include letters to the Halperns from soprano Elsa Alsen (1880-1975), composer and NBC orchestra leader, Rex Dunn and his wife Frances, actress and singer, Kitty Carlisle (1914-), and Carolyn Eisele (1902-2000). Morris Halpern emigrated from Russia to the United States in 1891 at the age of 13. He supported himself through a variety of odd jobs including selling newspapers, polishing guitars and working in factories where he later became a labor organizer and social worker. Despite a lack of formal education Halpern's intellectual ability gained him admittance into Columbia University in 1906. He was awarded a MA in 1909 and a Ph.D. in 1911.

In the 1920s(?) Morris and Vera Halpern left New York and moved to Los Angeles where they opened a millinery shop named Madame Vera. Financial difficulties and Vera's sojourn in a sanitarium in 1927 forced the closure of the shop in 1928/29(?). Halpern then served as music director for KHJ, a Los Angeles radio station, where he selected the music and wrote the scripts for the weekly "To the Ladies" classical music program hosted by Globe Mills. After the loss of this position Halpern began teaching voice. Among his students were Elsa Alsen, Kitty Carlisle and Carolyn Eisele. Halpern moved to New York with Eisele in August 1936. They were married June 24, 1943. Halpern continued the former's voice training until the early 1950s. The Halpern papers contain biographical material for Morris and Vera Halpern, miscellaneous writings by Halpern (mostly fragmentary), financial and legal documents, comments by Halpern on his work with Eisele, ephemera, photographs, letters of condolence, and memorials upon Halpern's death. The papers are arranged in four series: I. Correspondence; II. Writings; III. Personal; and IV. Printed Material. The Halpern Papers constitute Series XII. of the Carolyn Eisele Collection.

I. Correspondence

The correspondence between Morris and Vera Halpern, in addition to discussing health and everyday life experiences, contains biographical information about Morris and Vera, portrays the progress of Eisele's voice training and health problems, and comments upon the careers of Alsen and Carlisle, as well as contemporary symphony and opera performances. Since the letters span World War II there are discussions of rationing, the availability of food and other goods, air raid drills and blackouts. The letters from Alsen to the Halperns contain information about her career, including her assessment of her own performances and the concerts she attended. The Carlisle material relates to Halpern's brief tenure as Carlisle's voice teacher (1934-1936). Alsen introduced Eisele to Halpern in June 1934 and she became his student. The Halpern-Eisele correspondence from 1934-1935 consists of love letters that Eisele packaged along with the 1942 letters relating to her mother's illness and subsequent committal to a sanitarium. The packages were marked with written instructions to destroy in the event of Eisele's death. These letters are boxed separately and marked "Restricted." The Eisele-Halpern

correspondence of the 1950s relates to Eisele's European travels and her attendance at international conferences. The correspondence from the Dunns provides limited information about conditions at NBC in San Francisco where Dunn served as orchestra leader for a time. For the most part, these letters are personal notes of friendship with occasional commentary on musical performances.

Box 1

Morris Halpern to Editors of "The Nation," May- Aug. 1933 (includes May 24, 1933 issue of "The Nation")
Morris Halpern to misc. arranged alphabetically
Misc. to Morris Halpern arranged alphabetically
Elsa Alsen to Carolyn Eisele, 1933, [n.d.]
Elsa Alsen to Morris Halpern, 1929-1936, [n.d.]

Box 2

Elsa Alsen to Morris and Vera Halpern, 1931-1936
Elsa Alsen to Vera Halpern, 1932-1947

Kitty Carlisle correspondence (includes correspondence to and from Edward Otterbourg and photographs), 1934-1936; Letters (1936) from Carlisle to Halpern [RESTRICTED]

Box 3

Frances Dunn to Morris Halpern, 1932, 1956, 1958
Frances and Rex Dunn to Morris Halpern, 1958
Rex Dunn to Morris Halpern, 1931-1935, 1940-1943, 1957, [n.d.]
Frances and Rex Dunn to Vera Halpern, 1933-1935, [n.d.]
Rex Dunn to Vera Halpern, 1932-1933, 1937

Box 4

Morris Halpern to Carolyn Eisele, 1958-1959, [n.d.]
Carolyn Eisele to Morris Halpern, March-June 1942, Sept. 1942; Jan., Aug.-Sept. 1954; Aug.-Sept. 1955; Aug.-Sept. 1958; Aug.-Sept. 1959; Aug. 1960; Aug. 1962; Jan.-Feb. 1963, [n.d.]

Box 4A

Morris Halpern to Carolyn Eisele, 1934-1935 [RESTRICTED], Sept. 1942 [RESTRICTED]

Box 5

Misc. to Vera Halpern arranged alphabetically
Carolyn Eisele to Vera Halpern, 1936, 1943, [194-?]
Morris Halpern to Vera Halpern, 1902, 1934-1944

Box 6

Morris Halpern to Vera Halpern, 1945-1948, [194-?]
Leo Rocklin to Vera Halpern, 1932-1948

Box 7

Vera Halpern to Caroline Eisele, Aug. 20, 1936
Vera Halpern to Carolyn Eisele, 1934, 1936-1946, [194-?], [n.d.]
Vera Halpern to Morris Halpern, 1934-1936, 1938-1939, 1941

Box 8

Vera Halpern to Morris Halpern, 1942-August 1943

Box 9

Vera Halpern to Morris Halpern, September 1943-April 1945

Box 10

Vera Halpern to Morris Halpern, May 1945-1946

Box 11

Vera Halpern to Morris Halpern, 1947-1948, [n.d.]
Misc. letters of condolence to Carolyn Eisele, unarranged, 1963
[Unidentified correspondence]

II. WRITINGS

Box 1

Olin Downes, "Some Aspects of Modern Singing" CBS script, June 17, 1945
Olin Downes, "The Art of Teaching" CBS script, July 22, 1945
Morris Halpern, [Comments on teaching singing to Carolyn Eisele] mostly [n.d.] and
fragmentary
Morris Halpern, "To the Ladies" radio scripts, April 29-Oct. 1932
Morris Halpern, [Misc. writings] mostly [n.d.] and fragmentary

Box 2

Morris Halpern, College Notebooks, no. 1-5, 10-18 (1906-1908, [n.d.]); misc. notes
[n.d.]

Box 3

Morris Halpern, College Notebooks, no. 6-9 (1907-1908); "Notes on Roman Law,"
"History of European Law," "Elements of Law," [n.d.]

III. PERSONAL

Box 1

Morris Halpern
Biographical material

Financial statements and receipts, including checkbook for Madame Vera
Legal documents relating to transit bus accident Sept. 29, 1962
Documents relating to funeral arrangements and memorials
Ephemera
Photographs

Vera Halpern

Biographical material, including letters of condolence to Halpern
Ephemera
Photographs
Misc. writings (fragmentary)

Box 1A

Halpern unidentified photographs

IV. PRINTED MATERIAL

Box 1

Newspaper clippings
"Tomorrow" June, July 1924
"Liberty," May 1907, v. 16, no. 2
The Van Sant System of Touch Typewriting for the L.C. Smith & Bros. Typewriter;
abridged edition, 1907