

# George Snell papers, 1928-1984

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	Snell, George D.(George Dixon), 1909-
<b>Title</b>	George Snell papers
<b>Dates</b>	1928-1984 (inclusive) 1928 1984
<b>Quantity</b>	2.5 linear feet
<b>Collection Number</b>	Ms0556
<b>Summary</b>	The George Snell papers (1928-1984) document early radio in Salt Lake City, Utah, at station KDYL and the development of United Broadcasting Company in San Jose, California. A majority of the collection documents early radio programming through radio scripts that Snell wrote. The collection also covers the developmental phase, sale, and acquisition of radio stations. George Snell (b. 1909) was born on 4 April 1909. He developed a love for the radio at an early age and played a major role in the development of Utah and California Radio.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Utah Libraries, Special Collections.</a> Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library University of Utah 295 South 1500 East Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0860 Telephone: 801-581-8863 <a href="mailto:SPCreference@lists.utah.edu">SPCreference@lists.utah.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	Twenty-four hour advanced notice encouraged. Materials must be used on-site. Access to parts of this collection may be restricted under provisions of state or federal law.
<b>Languages</b>	English

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## Historical Note

George Snell (b. 1909) was born on 4 April 1909, to George Dixon and Ivy Belle Price Dixon. Snell was raised mainly in Utah, and for a time in St. Anthony, Idaho. Snell's interest in radio began early in the 1920s when he first constructed an oatmeal box crystal set and when he later became well acquainted with Stan Stoule, a West High classmate and licensed ham. With Stoule's basement radio station and license, Snell became proficient in Morse code and was quickly bitten by the radio bug. In 1925, Snell passed an examination by the Federal Radio Commission and received an operating license with the call 6AKM. Phil Lasky, general manager of KDYL, took advantage of the young man's skills, contacted him, and made Snell part of the KDYL staff in 1927. Eventually, Snell's career at KDYL would run the gambit from program announcer and script writer to program director, from 1938 until he left in 1944.

Snell left Salt Lake City in 1945 to write and produce "The Standard Hour" and "The Standard School Broadcast" for KPO NBC in San Francisco, California. While at NBC, Snell and Floyd Farr developed plans to build a radio station in San Jose, California, a small, burgeoning town with only one radio

station. With a hold on construction permits after World War II (WWII), Farr and Snell, with the monetary help of philanthropist George Mardikian, were fortunate enough to be awarded a permit from the FCC and began construction and formation of radio KEEN in 1947. KEEN struggled with a network emulated station format until Snell and Farr broke the mold and tried an all country and western format of popular, recorded music. The birth of modern radio had been witnessed. The new formula proved to be the success of KEEN, and was later applied to the development of KBAY, KVEG, KFIG, KFOA, and KAHU under the parent image of United Broadcasting Company.

Snell continued to be active in radio, even when his sons controlled KBAY and KEEN. Alongside Snell's radio career is his literary career as an author and respected literary critic. From 1934-1968, Snell corresponded with well known writer Vardis Fisher. Snell published three novels in the 1930s: *The Great Adam* (1934), *Root, Hog and Die* (1936), and *And If Man Triumph* (1938). He also had lengthy discussions with Fisher about many literary matters, especially the value of Steinbeck and Hemingway. In addition, in 1947 he published *Shapers of American*, a still used anthology of biographies of well known American authors. In 1988, he

Far from containing his life to two main interests, Snell supported community activities. Among many activities, he was on the board of directors of the Salvation Army, a member of the San Jose Light Opera Association, president of the board of directors of the San Jose City Library, member of the San Jose Chamber of Commerce, and president of the San Jose Advertising Club. The diversity and entrepreneurial genius of Snell is readily depicted in his collection: the radio ham, the "format" genius, the published author, and the sensitive literary critic are equally displayed.

## Content Description

The George Snell papers (1928-1984) document early radio in Salt Lake City, Utah, at station KDYL and the development of United Broadcasting Company in San Jose, California. A majority of the collection documents early radio programming through radio scripts that Snell wrote. The collection also covers the developmental phase, sale, and acquisition of radio stations. Although the collection centers on radio scripts, the preparation papers for the sale of radio stations are a useful insight into modern radio developments and concerns. Another large section includes correspondence from Vardis Fisher, Ellis Foote, Grant H. Redford, and other western writers.

The collection is divided into three sections: Personal Materials, Early Radio Days, 1927-1947, and United Broadcasting Company. The first section, Personal Materials, contains biographical materials that portray both the radio and literary sides of George Snell. One of the largest categories in this section is the Vardis Fisher material, box two. Fisher and Snell had extensive correspondence from 1934 until Fisher's death in 1968. The correspondence delineates Snell's reviewing ability, Snell's and Fisher's reactions to several world wide events, a wager over their literary disagreement about Steinbeck and Hemingway, Fisher's *Testament of Man* series, and other topics. In addition to the correspondence are reviews, interviews, biographical materials, and other miscellanea.

The personal materials section also contains correspondence from Ellis Foote, Grant H. Redford, Ira J. Kaar, and others. Snell's correspondence with Foote, a western poet, was colorful and, at times, demonstrably graphic. The Foote correspondence characterizes Foote as a troubled and struggling poet with a vengeance for expletives. The Kaar correspondence is a smaller file with several letters about the early Utah radio days at KDYL where Kaar built its first radio transmitter. The Redford correspondence deals with the administrative and selective matters of the *Rocky Mountain Review*, a literary publication controlled by Snell and Redford.

The second section, Early Radio Days, 1927-1947, documents the early portion of Snell's radio career at KDYL in Salt Lake City and at KPO NBC in San Francisco. The majority of material in this section is radio scripts written by Snell. At KDYL, Snell wrote scripts for advertising companies and products. These scripts are listed alphabetically by company name. Snell was affiliated with KDYL for almost twenty years and served in many capacities: announcer, program director, writer, and others. KDYL radio scripts are in box three. In 1945, Snell left Salt Lake to write for NBC in San Francisco. As part of his duties, Snell wrote and produced "The Standard Hour" and "The Standard School Broadcast" from 1945 until he left in 1947. KPO NBC scripts are located in boxes four and five. Snell characterized his radio days at NBC as some of the best in his career. For a brief period, he continued to write and produce "The Standard" scripts, even after he left NBC in 1947 to form station KEEN in San Jose, California, with Floyd Farr and George Mardikian.

The third section, United Broadcasting Company, documents the formation of KEEN in San Jose and the sale of KFIG, KVEG, KFOA, and KAHU. The United Broadcasting Company was formed by Snell, Floyd Farr, George Mardikian, owner of "Omar Kharryam," a popular restaurant with its own radio show, and several others. The company began with KEEN, and the initial formation is documented in box six. The sale of later acquired stations is documented in boxes six and seven. This section provides the most business related information of radio in the collection. It is a good source of material documenting in the sale and acquisition of radio stations.

Although the Snell collection leans heavily toward the script production of early radio in Salt Lake City and San Francisco, it also documents and portrays the early entrepreneurial spirit of post World War II radio geniuses. Snell, Farr, and George Mardikian, their philanthropist friend/business partner, developed some of the most popular music formats, including "beautiful music" and cowboy western, across the country. The collection, in addition to portraying early radio scripts, captures the aggressive beginnings of popular radio from the early 1920s to the present.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain any necessary copyright clearances.

Permission to publish material from the George Snell papers must be obtained from the Special Collections Manuscript Curator.

### Preferred Citation

*Initial Citation:* George Snell papers, Ms 556, Box [ ]. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Following Citations:* Ms 556.

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Gift of George and Althea Snell in 1984.

## Processing Note

Processed by Julie Reiser in 1989.

## Separated Materials

Photographs were removed and placed in the Multimedia collection (P0152).

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Personal Materials

Container(s)	Description	Dates
<b>Box</b>		
1	<p>Personal Materials</p> <p>This box contains a collection of biographies and reminiscences, by George Snell, about his early days in radio in Salt Lake City, Utah, and San Jose and San Francisco, California. Also included are business cards, newsclippings, several photocopies of newspaper columns written by Snell, and correspondence with Ellis Foote, Ira J. Kaar, and Grant H. Redford.</p>	1928-1984
<b>Folder</b>		
1	<p>Biographical Material</p> <p>The folder contains "Personal Reminiscences" of Snell's youth, San Jose radio experience, and NBC days in San Francisco and a terse biography in brief galley.</p>	
2	Biographical Material and Newspaper Clippings	
3	Ad Club Newspaper Clippings	1948-1949
4	<p>Business Cards</p> <p>This folder contains business cards documenting Snell's affiliations with several radio stations: KAHU, KEEN, KBAY, KCVR, KVEG, United Broadcasting Company, and The Golden Pacific Group. Also included is a business card from Sidney S. Fox.</p>	
5	Columns	1953-1957

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	This folder contains Snell's "Here 'Tis" columns in <i>The San Jose Mercury</i> .	
6	Ellis Foote Correspondence This folder contains colorful correspondence concerning Foote's poetry, reviews of Foote's work, criticisms about the poetry published in the <i>Rocky Mountain Review</i> , and Foote's decision to stop writing poetry. Also included is a poem dedicated to Snell entitled "Coruscations."	1942-1948
7	Ira J. Kaar Correspondence This folder contains correspondence about the beginnings of KDYL in Salt Lake City and the beginnings of both Snell and Kaar in the radio business.	1980-1981
8-13	Grant H. Redford Correspondence Folder 8 contains correspondence regarding story selection, advertising, and subscription to of the <i>Rocky Mountain Review</i> .	1939-1960
14	Broadcasters Hall of Fame Newsclippings This folder contains newsclipping about the Broadcasters Hall of Fame project conducted by Dr. Timothy L. Larson, University of Utah Department of Communication, to collect early Utah radio papers.	
15	Occupational Review and Exhibit A written portfolio delineating Snell's abilities as a radio executive and his responsibilities and achievements at KDYL. The portfolio was written by Snell for the purpose of seeking employment with NBC radio in San Francisco, California.	
16	Photographs The folder contains photocopies of these photographs. The original photographs were removed and placed in the Audio Visual/Photographic Archives.	
17	Radio Operator Licenses	1928-1984
18	Snell Radio Plays	
2	Vardis Fisher Material This box contains spirited correspondence concerning Fisher's Testament of Man book series, Snell's review of his work, a debate over the authorial merit of Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck, and general topics. Also included are clippings of Fisher's column, biographical material, interviews, publication	1934-1974

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	notices, reviews, two small publications, and correspondence with Fisher's widow, Opal Laurel Holmes Fisher.	
Folder		
1	Biographical Material This folder contains articles and publications concerning Fisher's life and work. Also included is the un cashed check payment of the wager between Snell and Fisher on the literary career and merit of both Steinbeck and Hemingway.	
2	Column Newspaper Clippings	
3-10	Vardis Fisher Correspondence	1934-1968
11	Opal Fisher Correspondence	1968
12	Vardis Fisher and Harry Schwartz Correspondence This folder contains published correspondence in "The Bookmark."	1974
13	Correspondence	
14	Richard J. Pead Correspondence This folder contains correspondence with George Snell regarding Pead's biography of Fisher.	1952-1955
15	Interviews of Vardis Fisher	
16	Publication Notices	
17	Fisher Publications This folder contains two short publications: "The Novelist and His Background," <i>Western Folklore</i> , January 1953, and "Excerpt from a Letter from the Author to the Publisher," 21 December 1942.	1942-1953
18	Reviews of Vardis Fisher This folder contains newsclippings of reviews of <i>The Golden Rooms</i> , <i>Orphans in Gethsemane</i> , and <i>The Island of the Innocent</i> . Also included is a pamphlet "Vardis Fisher News" with favorable and unfavorable reviews of <i>We Are Betrayed</i> . Some reviews are written by Snell.	1944-1960

## Early Radio Days

This section documents the early days of Snell's radio career while he resided in Salt Lake City and later in San Francisco, California. The materials cover his career at KDYL in Salt Lake City, Utah, and his brief stay at KPO NBC radio in San Francisco. Most of the early materials are radio scripts advertising both companies and products. Because the company is the focus of each production, the scripts have been listed alphabetically by company name. The later materials, at KPO, are radio scripts of "The Standard School Broadcast" and "The Standard Hour."

Container(s)	Description	Dates
<b>Box</b>		
3	KDYL Radio Folders 5-55 contains Radio Scripts.	1937-1941
<b>Folder</b>		
1	KCPX This folder contains correspondence and a newspaper article concerning the new broadcasting center for KCPX, originally KDYL.	
2	Newsletters	1937
3	Program Sheets	1940-1941
4	"Who's Dancing Tonight?" Radio Programs This folder contains a proposal for one of the first out of studio broadcasts produced for publicity purposes in the Starlight Gardens of the Hotel Utah.	
5	Altocest Memorial Corporation	
6	American Fur Company	
7	American Mutual Building and Loan Company	
8	Anderson Lumber Company	
9	Arthur Frank	
10	Bailey and Sons Company	
11	Barnett and Weiss Jewelers	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
12	Becker Brewing Company	
13	Beneficial Life Insurance Company	
14	Boyd Park Jewelers	
15	J. S. Burnham	
16	Capitol Cleaners and Dyers	
17	Coconut Grove, Covey Amusement Company	
18	Deseret Federal Savings and Loan Association	
19	Dinwoodey Furniture Company	
20	E. B. Wicks Company	
21	Eureka Vacuum Cleaner Company	
22	Firestone Auto Supply and Service	
23	Fisher Baking Company	
24	Furmbilt of New York	
25	Grand Central Markets	
26	Hewlett Brothers	
27	Jensen Jewelers	
28	Junior Chamber of Commerce and Sponsors	
29	Dr. E. E. Keller	
30	Kitchen Kwizz Presentation	
31	Mutual Loan Company	
32	Nehi Beverage Company of Utah	



Container(s)	Description	Dates
33	New Myers Cleaning and Dyeing Company	
34	Paint Dealers	
35	Panek Fur Company	
36	Par Soap	
37	Participating Coal Company	
38	People's Finance and Thrift Company	
39	Porter Walton Company	
40	Professional Pharmacy	
41	Prudential Federal Savings and Loan Association	
42	Retail Lumber Dealers Association	
43	Star Laundry	
44	State Building and Loan Association	
45	Success Markets	
46	Thompson Indian Trading Post	
47	Tracy Loan and Trust Company	
48	Union Trust Company	
49	Used Car Dealers	
50	Utah Finance Company	
51	Utah Oil Refining Company	
52	Walker Bank and Trust Company	
53	Westinghouse Company	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
54	Yellow Cab Company	
55	Radio Scripts	
4	KPO NBC, San Francisco Radio This box is a collection of radio scripts, information concerning the Stanford NBC KPO Radio Institute, and miscellaneous administrative and advertising material for KPO radio. Folders 8-15 contain radio scripts.	1945-1947
<b>Folder</b>		
1	Miscellaneous	
2	Annual Review	1946-1947
3-4	Interdepartmental Correspondence	1945-1947
5	Rate Cards This folder contains a proposal for one of the first out of studio broadcasts produced for publicity purposes in the Starlight Gardens of the Hotel Utah.	
6	Service Newsletters	1946
7	Stanford NBC KPO Radio Institute This folder contains bulletins, correspondence, and other material concerning the institute.	
8	"Barbara Tate for Golden State"	1946
9	"The Friends"	1946
10	"How Does Your Garden Grow"	1945-1946
11	"Jolly Bill and Jane"	1946
12	Miscellaneous	
13	"Through a Woman's Eyes"	1946
14-15	"Tonight at Nine Thirty"	1946

Container(s)	Description	Dates
5	KPO NBC, San Francisco Radio, Standard Radio Scripts	1945-1948
Folder		
1	"The Standard Hour"	1946-1947
2-4	"Standard School Broadcast" Folder 2 contains the "18th Annual Course Guide." Folder 3 contains the "20th Annual Course Guide."	1945-1948

## United Broadcasting Company

The United Broadcasting Company was formed by Snell, Floyd Farr, and George Mardikian. The company began with one station, radio KEEN in San Jose, and expanded to include KEEN, KBAY, KAHU, KCVR, KFOA and KVEG stations across the United States. This section documents the sale of several stations and the initial formation of KEEN.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
6	KAHU, KBAY, KCVR, KEEN This box contains business papers, correspondence, and reports concerning the sale of KAHU and the default on payment by Russell M. Withers, Jr. There are also materials concerning the partnership of KCVR, and the formation of KEEN and later KEEN KBAY station. Folders 1-7 contain KAHU materials. Folder 8 contains KCVR materials. Folders 9-22 contain KEEN materials.	1944-1980
Folder		
1	Amortization Report	1975
2	Stock	1974-1975
3	Preparation Papers This folder contains information concerning the sale of stock and several revised copies of the promissory note.	
4-7	Preparation Papers These folders contain business papers documenting the financial aspects, legal concerns, and other arrangements regarding the sale of KAHU radio station.	1965-1980

Container(s)	Description	Dates
8	Partnership Agreement	
9	General Summary This folder contains a general summary of the formation of KEEN and its activities in the public sphere of San Jose, California, in the publication <i>San Jose: California's First City</i> , by Edwin A. Beilharz and Donald O. DeMers, Jr.	
10-12	<i>Broadcasting</i> Articles	1946-1978
13	Newspaper Clippings	
14	Application for Operating Permit	1945
15	Correspondence This folder contains correspondence with Floyd Farr about forming a new radio station in San Jose, California.	1944
16	Financial Material	
17	Incorporation Information	
18	Miscellaneous	
19	Opening Publicity	
20	Radio Scripts	
21	Rate Cards	
22	Schedules	
7	KFIG, KFOA, KVEG Folders 1-11 contain KFIG materials. Folder 12 contains KFOA materials. Folders 13-18 contain KVEG materials.	1971-1981
<b>Folder</b>		
1	Agreement	
2-4	Kadota Wireless Financial statements	1976-1977
5	Ownership Report	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
6-9	Preparation Papers	1975-1980
10	Promissory Note	1976
11	Universal Broadcasting Company Financial Statement	1976
12	Sale Contract	1971
13	Promissory Payments This folder contains check stubs of payments applied to promissory note.	
14	Escrow, Promissory Note	
15-17	Preparation Papers	1971-1981
18	Stock	

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Radio broadcasting--West (U.S.)--History--Sources

### Personal Names :

Snell, George Dixon, 1909- --Archives

### Corporate Names :

KDYL (Radio station: Salt Lake City, Utah)

KPO (Radio station: San Francisco, California)

### Form or Genre Terms :

Brochures

Contracts

Correspondence

Memorandums

Newsletters

Radio scripts

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