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## The Gregory Peck papers: It's Not Just Hollywood

Clare Denk

*Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*, cdenk03@gmail.com

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## The Gregory Peck papers: It's Not Just Hollywood

### Cover Page Footnote

Thanks to Warren Sherk, Manager of Special Collections, for guidance on writing this article.

# The Gregory Peck Papers: It's Not Just Hollywood

Clare Denk

## ABSTRACT

The Gregory Peck papers at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences serve as a case study to demonstrate the value of a collection beyond its expected scope. In this case, four examples are used to highlight how the Peck papers move far beyond the confines of Hollywood by encompassing topics including Hawaii on the eve of its statehood, politics, international fan culture, and post-World War II Japan as seen through the lens of an American GI.

When you hear the name “Gregory Peck,” what comes to mind? *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962)? When you think of the Gregory Peck papers, what would you expect to find? Papers relating to his film work? Maybe some personal correspondence? While an archive may focus on one aspect of history, whether it be The Civil War, literary figures, a university, or film, other aspects of history are always intertwined.

The Gregory Peck papers at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences serve as a prime example in demonstrating the value of a collection beyond its expected scope. This collection takes us far beyond the confines of Hollywood in both a geographical and topical sense and helps us recognize the value of collections that offer something not immediately obvious. In this paper, the focus will be on how judicious item-level cataloging brings to light items of significance that would otherwise be buried in the collection. The items discussed here can be found in the correspondence and subject series of Peck’s papers. The themes reflected through these items include Hawaii on the eve of its statehood, politics, international fan culture, and post-World War II Japan as seen through the lens of an American GI. The last example will be covered more extensively to demonstrate how item-level cataloging can not only shed light on a chapter in history, but serve as a potential research project unto itself.

Before going any further, it should be noted that the Special Collections department at the Academy is unusual in the sense that the archivists, including myself, have the chance to catalog selected material at the item level which is especially beneficial when cataloging correspondence. Records are created in the

Inmagic database using relevant MARC fields and DACS guidelines. The correspondence is grouped together alphabetically and, if there is a significant amount of correspondence from one individual, that correspondence receives its own folder. While there is great value in the idea put forth in the groundbreaking article “More Product, Less Process” by Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner that less time should be spent on arranging and description,<sup>1</sup> in this article one will see the value of more process. Even fan mail can have value at the item level. In fact, all of the examples highlighted here are from the correspondence files with the exception of the first item on Polynesian Productions which came from the subject files. This level of detail and fuller intellectual control allows Special Collections to service in-house needs for reference and access as well as for exhibitions and outreach. It also benefits researchers who live far away since our catalog records can be viewed offsite and help researchers determine if a trip is necessary to further their research. If the trip is worthwhile, they can check off the records they find of interest online and send the department a list in advance before ever setting foot in the library. This is an advanced form of access and outreach which is still rather unusual for an archive, but serves both archivist and researcher.

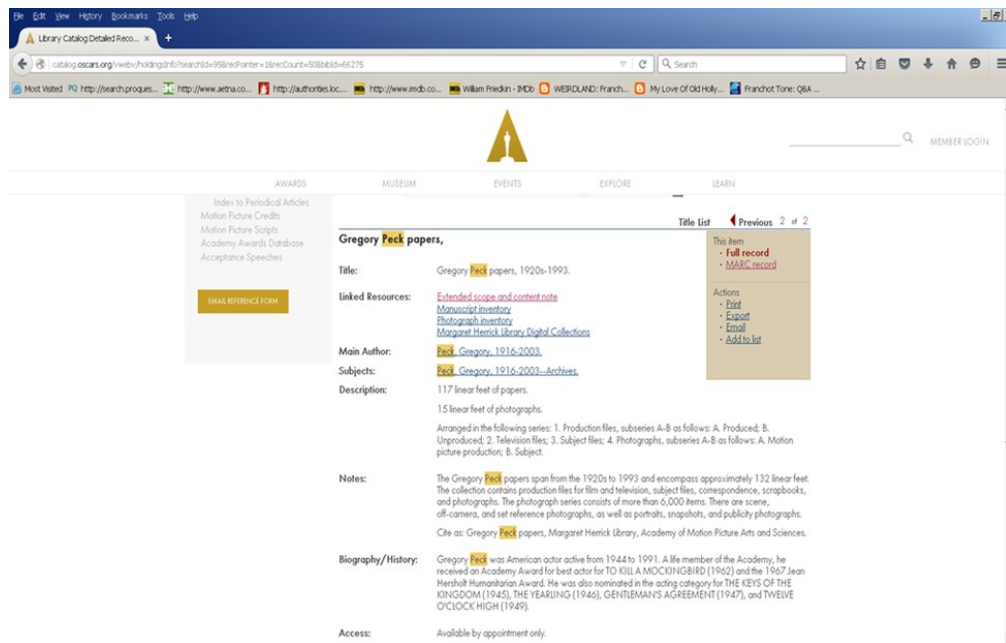


Figure 1. Collection-level record for Gregory Peck papers in Voyager, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

1. Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing,” *American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208-263.

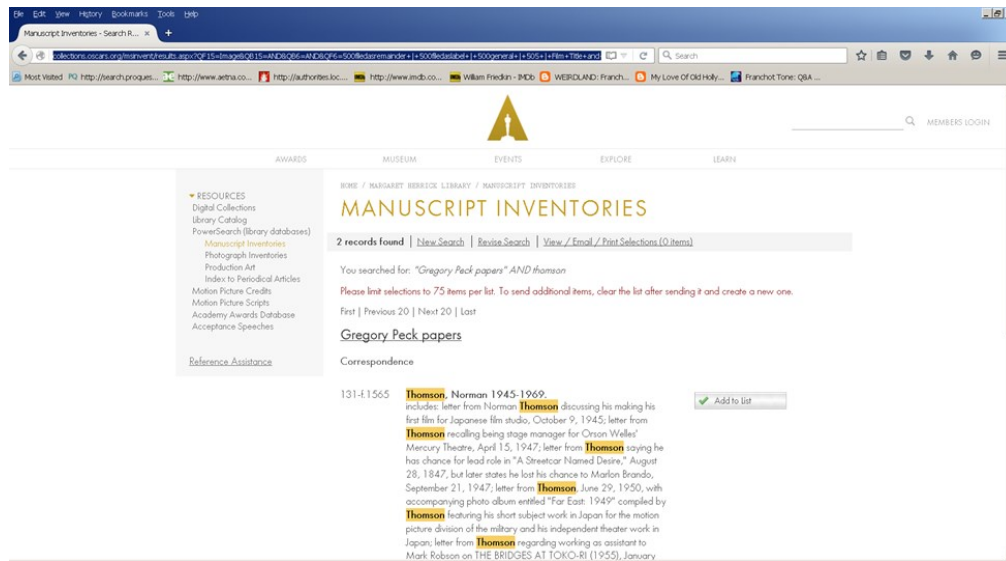


Figure 2. Manuscript inventory record for Norman Thomson from Inmagic WebPublisher, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

While the following items discussed are more tangential to Peck's life than directly related, it is worth providing a brief biography to provide some context. Peck was an actor whose career spanned over several decades. Born on April 5, 1916 in La Jolla, California, he began acting during the late 1930s as a student at the University of California, Berkeley. Moving on to New York, he enrolled in the Neighborhood Playhouse School of Dramatics and worked under the tutelage of Sanford Meisner. Peck performed in several plays before landing the lead role in his first film *Days of Glory* (1944). Peck went on to star in Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945), *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), and *Roman Holiday* (1953), and earned an Academy Award for his performance in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962). He was president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences from 1967 to 1970, politically active, and involved in a variety of organizations including the American Cancer Society, founding the American Film Institute, the Motion Picture and Television Fund, and the National Council on the Arts.

The Gregory Peck papers span from the 1920s to 2003 and encompass approximately 237 linear feet. The papers are broken down into several series which include production files (referring to material directly related to film productions), television files, story files, other media files (narration, audio recordings,

commercials), correspondence, subject files, organization files, clippings, oversize material, scrapbooks, and photographs. The series order is customized in-house and only particular series are used based on the collection. For example, some collections may not have any television material, so a television series would not exist in that collection.

In the cataloging schema, the subject files series encompass a variety of material that fall out of the realm of production files, television files, stage files, radio files, and correspondence. In the archival field, less attention is given to subjects compared to that of libraries in which each book is linked with a variety of subject headings. As Mary Jo Pugh argues in her article “The Illusion of Omniscience,” more attention is given to provenance and original order than by subject. She further states, “subject retrieval of individual documents has not been a primary goal for most archivists.”<sup>2</sup> However, the importance of highlighting items within the subject files is emphasized below when discussing a record on Polynesian Productions. This could have just been filed under the letter “P” with a variety of other documents, but its significance was recognized. In the past, these documents may have been relegated as being mere ephemera, but archivists are recognizing the growing importance of these documents. As Rebecca Altermatt and Adrien Hilton argue in their article “Hidden Collections within Hidden Collections: Providing Access to Printed Ephemera,” ephemera deserves just as much respect and attention as other documents in collections, especially as scholars show increasing interest in ephemera.<sup>3</sup>

While cataloging the subject files, which include material on clubs, organizations, people, and events, a file was found which demonstrated a significant time of transition in the history of Hawaii. While Peck was vacationing in Hawaii, a film production company known as Polynesian Productions sent Peck a letter asking him to consider filming in Hawaii which was on the eve of becoming the 50th state of the United States. The company noted they had been around for five years, providing services such as “locale hunting, casting, equipment, etc.” but they wanted to expand and become a more permanent fixture with a soundstage not quite as splashy as Paramount but as substantial as Republic Pictures.<sup>4</sup> They even included a story treatment for Peck to consider entitled “Vengeance Is a Stranger,” which centered on a criminal cowboy in Texas who decides to move to Hawaii. At the end of the story treatment, they go on to stress the value of the “Kamuela area,” emphasizing that “the

2. Mary Jo Pugh, “The Illusion of Omniscience: Subject Access and the Reference Archivist,” *American Archivist* 45, no 1 (Winter 1982): 33.
3. Rebecca Altermatt and Adrien Hilton, “Hidden Collections within Hidden Collections: Providing Access to Printed Ephemera,” *American Archivist* 75, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2012): 172.
4. Letter from Polynesian Productions, April 11, 1959, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

three great volcanoes...[are] extremely colorful and quite similar to the Western rangelands except for the immense black lava flows that dot the area.”<sup>5</sup>

Of most interest is the brochure that Polynesian Productions compiled which begins with the words “Make Hawaii Greener...How?...Bring More Money....Who?...The Movie Industry....Why?” The brochure, sprinkled with whimsical illustrations, offers reasons why Hollywood should come to Hawaii, such as for story material, locales, transportation, accommodations, communications, technicians, weather, and talent. They used *South Pacific* (1958) as an example of a

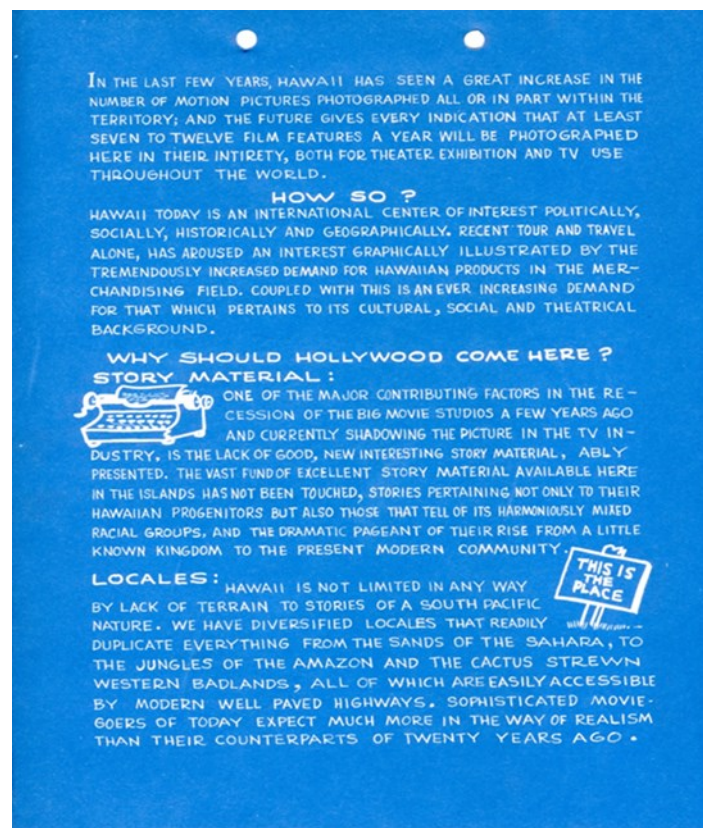


Figure 3. Brochure, “Blueprint for Hawaii,” Polynesian Productions, circa 1958-1959, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

5. Story treatment from Polynesian Productions, “Vengeance is a Stranger,” circa 1958-1959, *ibid.*

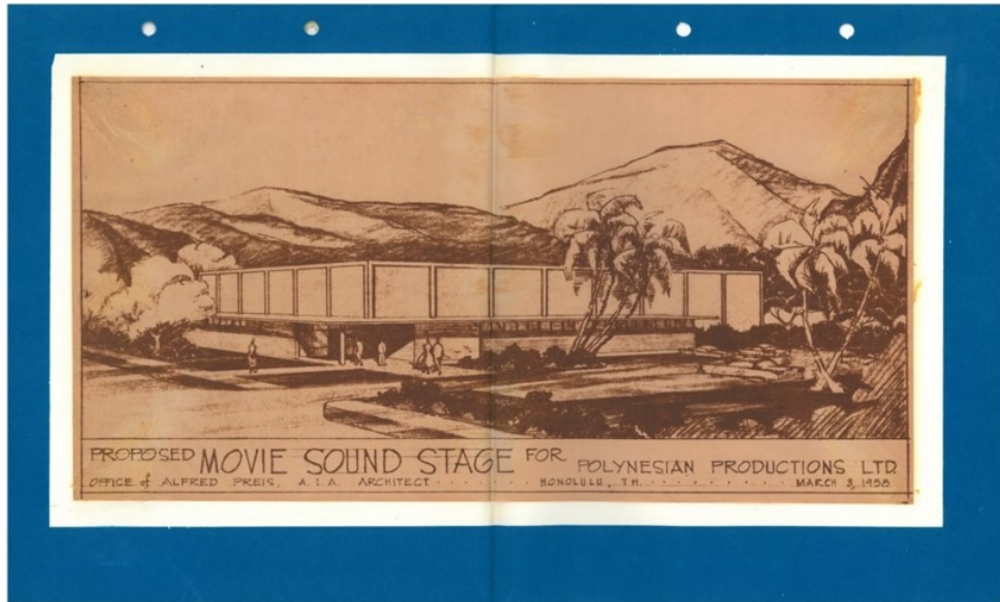


Figure 4. Brochure, "Blueprint for Hawaii," Polynesian Productions, circa 1958-1959, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

film shot in Hawaii that could have brought in more revenue for Hawaii if soundstages had been made available. Interestingly, they wanted to go both into film and television production, recognizing the value of both mediums. The brochure ends with a drawing of a proposed soundstage in Honolulu that never came to fruition.<sup>6</sup>

While this is an obscure chapter in film history, it is also a significant chapter in Hawaiian history reflecting how the soon-to-be-state wanted to move forward and be relevant as part of the United States. What could be more American than having a film studio that manufactured the American dream? The fact that the soundstage was never built and that Polynesian Productions soon ceased to exist makes this material even more valuable. For someone researching Hawaiian film production or Hawaii on the eve of its statehood, the Gregory Peck papers would not be an obvious place to look. However, since this information was highlighted and even assigned its own folder-level record, a researcher can benefit from information that would have otherwise been lost in the shuffle.

6. Brochure, "Blueprint for Hawaii," Polynesian Productions," circa 1958-1959, *ibid.*



In the correspondence files, there are letters from actors, politicians, and personal friends, but what was unexpected was finding a letter from David Niven discussing his weekend with John F. Kennedy. Niven and Peck became good friends while shooting *The Guns of Navarone* (1961). In film, Niven's characterizations often landed somewhere between leading man and the sidekick who always had something witty to say and knew how to keep the party going. His social finesse on film carried over into his real life and allowed the actor to move among a variety of social circles. On June 1, 1963, Niven wrote a letter to Peck discussing his time spent with John F. Kennedy aboard his yacht, celebrating the President's birthday and noting, "It was the greatest possible relaxed fun (Dom Pérignon was aboard too) and we got back to the dock at 3:30 a.m."<sup>7</sup> It was then followed by a weekend at Camp David in which he noted it was "just the four of us," referring to John F. Kennedy, Jackie Kennedy, David Niven, and his wife Hjördis Genberg. As he reflected, "No matter what anybody votes...a most exceptionally brilliant man is running the country. He also has the wonderful gift that Churchill had...he can switch off the worries and either enjoy himself...or go straight to sleep. We really had a marvelous time and were incidentally deeply impressed."<sup>8</sup> Reading Niven's personal impressions provides an intimate glimpse into the personal life of Kennedy not long before the president's assassination later that year. Color photographs of Niven and Kennedy skeet shooting found online confirm his visit to Camp David.<sup>9</sup>

While a researcher may associate Hollywood notables Frank Sinatra and Marilyn Monroe with John F. Kennedy, a personal letter from Niven discussing his weekend with the President would be less expected (see Figure 5). That is why this letter was seen as significant enough to deserve item-level cataloging. While it is up to the researcher to delve further into a collection, it is important for the cataloger to highlight items that the researcher would not expect to find.

The collection's correspondence series also includes a large amount of fan mail that spans from the 1940s through the 2000s. Due to the extensive nature of the fan mail, it was assigned its own subseries within the correspondence series. The significance of the international scope of fan mail cannot be emphasized enough. It is an unusual but useful way for researchers to read about the events and lives of people spanning place and time. While some fan mail is cursory, simply asking for an autograph, other letters reveal more. During the 1940s, Gregory Peck starred in the film *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) which directly dealt with anti-Semitism. In response, a fan letter from Edwin T. Golden recalled how he experienced anti-Semitism when trying to register at a hotel which promoted that their clientele was

7. Letter from David Niven to Gregory Peck and Veronique Peck, June 1, 1963, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

8. Ibid.

9. "Skeet Range," *About Camp David* (blog) August 30, 2010, <http://aboutcampdavid.blogspot.com/2010/08/skeet-range.html> (accessed January 8, 2016).

3.  
possible relaxed fan (Dom  
Perignon was aboard too)  
and we got back to the  
dock at 3-30 A.M.  
The next day ...  
Memorial Day ... we spent  
up at Camp David, just  
the four of us.  
No matter what anybody  
votes ... a most exceptionally  
brilliant man is running  
the country. He also has  
the wonderful gift that  
Churchill had ... he can  
switch off the worries and  
either enjoy himself ... or  
go straight to sleep. he

Figure 5. Letter from David Niven to Gregory Peck, June 1, 1963, page 3, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"100 percent Gentile."<sup>10</sup> The film not only touched the Jewish community. A handwritten letter from Barbara Gardner, a 15-year-old African-American girl, discussed how the film gave her hope in being an actress someday.<sup>11</sup> There is a letter from a teenage Korean girl during the 1960s sharing her dream of moving to the United States and becoming an architect.<sup>12</sup> Another fan shares the story of meeting a

10. Letter from Edwin T. Golden to Gregory Peck, January 28, 1948, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

11. Letter from Barbara Gardner to Gregory Peck, June 7, 1948, *ibid.*

12. Letter from Shyoon Ko to Gregory Peck, April 29, 1965, *ibid.*

man in Ceylon who served as a tailor during the making of Peck's film *The Purple Plain* (1954) and renamed his shop the "Gregory Peck Tailoringmart," with an attached black-and-white photograph of the tailor standing in front of his shop.<sup>13</sup> In 1968, a college student discusses her involvement with the Black Liberation movement on campus.<sup>14</sup> During the 1970s, there was a sudden influx of fan mail from Poland.

The screenshot shows a web-based database interface for the Margaret Herrick Library Manuscript Inventories. The record is for a folder-level inventory of Gregory Peck papers from 1965. The interface includes various tabs like 'Save Record', 'New Record', 'Duplicate Record', 'Search', and 'Change to box-level edit form'. The main form contains fields for 'Collection name display (830)' (Gregory Peck papers), 'Collection sort (830c)' (Peck, Gregory), 'Accession number (049)' (134), 'Box number (852c)' (134), 'Folder number (852d)' (1015), 'MPAA-Cabinet (852a)' (MPAA-Drawer (852b)), and 'MPAA-Drawer (852b)'. There is a 'Box-original (852c\_orig)' field with the value '1001'. A 'Search FTML' button is present. Below the form, there is a 'Film title (no leading article), year and director' field. The 'Added entry film titles (for multiple entries, press F7 after each entry)' section is empty. The 'Filed as (label) (600)' field is set to 'General'. The 'Year span (245)' field is set to '1965'. The 'Display indicator (005ind)' field is set to 'General'. The 'Contents (605)' field contains a list of handwritten letters and documents, including a letter from Donald L. Corveth with an attached drawing of Peck, a letter from Shirley Jean with a drawing of Peck as 'Lew' from DUEL IN THE SUN, a letter from Ethel A. Waters discussing her life, a letter from Annette Cranham sharing a story of meeting Peck, a letter from an unknown person with a napkin from a cocktail lounge, and a letter from Shirley Jean. The 'Personal name index (600a)' field is set to 'Personal name not on list'. The 'Personal name not on list' dropdown menu is open, showing a list of names: 'Cory, Josephine', 'Corveth, Donald L.', 'Cranham, Annette', 'Fay, Robert F.', and 'Jean, Shirley'. The 'Validation required, single only' message is displayed at the bottom.

Figure 6. Inmagic database record for fan mail from 1965, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

One photograph in particular provides an enlightening window into the impact of American culture in Japan—and a missed opportunity in marketing. In 1976, a fan wrote a letter to Peck saying the usual things such as how much he admired his work, but he also included a photograph of an action figure of Peck as his character from *The Guns of Navarone* (1961).<sup>15</sup> The letter was written many years after the film's initial release which demonstrates the film's lasting impact, but it also reflects the ingenuity on the part of the fan since no toys were ever marketed or sold for this film. In the image, the attention to detail is evident in the uniform and the raised eyebrow

13. Letter from Annette Cranham to Gregory Peck, November 9, 1965, *ibid.*

14. Letter from Catherine Phinizy to Gregory Peck, November 10, 1968, *ibid.*

15. Letter from Shinichi Nozaki, June 18, 1976, with attached black-and-white photograph of "action figure" of Peck as the character "Mallory" from *THE GUNS OF NAVARONE* (1961) as made by fan, *ibid.*



Figure 7. Photograph of action figure of Gregory Peck as his character from *The Guns of Navarone* (1961), from fan mail letter, June 18, 1976, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

indicative of Peck (see Figure 7). Though having the actual action figure would be ideal, the photograph still offers a fascinating example of American influence in Japan.

Suddenly fan mail carries more weight than mere gushing over a celebrity. It gives a personal window into the issues anti-Semitism, racism, culture, and politics. If a cataloger did not take the time to highlight these items, a researcher could simply make assumptions about its contents and never request to view them.

Also found in the correspondence were numerous letters, photographs, and an album from Norman Thomson whose initial contact with Peck may have been when he rode a horse in Peck's film *Duel in the Sun* (1946), but their first meeting is

unclear.<sup>16</sup> What is known is that Thomson was a member of Orson Welles' prestigious Mercury Theatre, performing in the infamous "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast, and then serving overseas during World War II. Following the war, he served as an entertainment supervisor for the Department of Defense, booking shows throughout the Far East. He lived in Japan off and on for more than 30 years following the war.<sup>17</sup> He also worked on a variety of film and theater projects throughout his years there.

Norman Thomson's correspondence begins at the end of World War II and provides a unique, albeit sometimes biased, glimpse into life in Kyoto, Japan. His first assignment was as a military policeman, investigating crimes such as murder, rape, and the black market. However, Thomson confessed to being the "worst offender" when it came to the black market, suggesting he bought everything from cigarettes to a "Juro Girl" (prostitute) for cheap.<sup>18</sup> He also made derogatory remarks such as noting "One bad feature the people are only about two ft. high as a rule and so their toilets are built in accordance..."<sup>19</sup>

There are also reproductions of a portfolio of sketches of Kyoto found in Thomson's file entitled "Around Kyoto," drawn by Richard Vrooman for the public relations office under the Sixth Army occupational headquarters of General Walter Krueger (see Figure 8). Most striking is a drawing of a Japanese woman crossing the street as an American soldier looks on, emphasizing the cross-cultural exchange and the impact on fashion due to the war. The caption reads "street scene, Kyoto, girl wearing mompei, wartime dress replacing the kimono."<sup>20</sup>

On October 9, 1945, Thomson was approached by the president of what was apparently the largest film studio in Japan—the studio being next door to his barracks—and asked to produce a feature length film. Thomson agreed, wrote a script, and called it *The Return of Mr. Kinkenolo* because it "sounded Japanese."<sup>21</sup> Thomson later sent a photograph of himself and his crew, a mix of American soldiers and Japanese men and women, to Peck (see Figure 9).<sup>22</sup> There was a significant cultural gap since Thomson didn't speak Japanese. To direct the actors, he would act

16. Letter from Norman Thomson, October 12, 1945, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

17. "Mercury Theatre Actor Norman Thomson is Dead at 84," *Playbill*, February 29, 2000.

18. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, October 5, 1945, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

19. Ibid.

20. "Around Kyoto," sketches by Sergeant Richard Vrooman for the Sixth Army, circa 1945, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

21. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, October 9, 1945, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

22. Photograph of staff from "The Return of Kinkenolo," circa November 1945, *ibid*.



Figure 8. Drawing from portfolio “Around Kyoto” by Sergeant Richard Vrooman for Sixth Army Public Relations Office, circa 1945, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

out scenes to show them what he wanted, then view rushes with interpreters from the army and the film studio to ensure that the dialogue was in sync with his intention.<sup>23</sup>

In 1946, Thomson returned to the United States, moving to New York to work in theatre and even having a chance at the lead role in the stage production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.<sup>24</sup> He ultimately returned to Kyoto in 1948, where he was

23. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, February 19, 1946, *ibid*.

24. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, August 28, 1947, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.





Figure 9. Crew for film *The Return of Kinkenolo*, circa 1945, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

assigned to be in charge of entertainment for the "lower half of Japan."<sup>25</sup> Upon his return, Thomson observed, "The change in Japan is unbelievable. I noticed in Tokyo the war rubble has been cleaned up so that there is not a trace of scrap left and they have begun to rebuild."<sup>26</sup> He married a Japanese woman named Yasuko, noting that she was actually half-Chinese which was considered a mark of shame in Japan but

25. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, February 10, 1948, *ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

that he didn't care.<sup>27</sup> He eventually moved to Tokyo, directing short subjects for the military including *Death on Wheels*, a cautionary tale on reckless driving. Thomson also kept his hand in the theater, directing a stage production of *The Madwoman of Chaillot* with the Tokyo International Players.<sup>28</sup>



Figure 10. Album, "Far East: 1949," compiled by Norman Thomson, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Of most significance in Thomson's file was a sort of album that Thomson compiled entitled "Far East: 1949," with a cover photograph of Buddha facing Thomson and a crew filming in the foreground (see Figure 10). The album includes a clipping wherein Thomson is credited as being the "Noel Coward of Tokyo" with

27. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, October 28, 1948, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

28. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, July 6, 1949, *ibid.*



accompanying photographs of him as an old man performing in what appears to be some sort of Western short with Japanese actors. The rest of the album concerns his production of *The Madwoman of Chaillot*.<sup>29</sup> This bizarre mash-up of cultures immediately following the war is a fascinating and surprising history.

During the early 1950s, Thomson made several attempts to return to the United States, but due to a lack of job opportunities and a lack of success to secure a visa for his new wife Yasuko, Thomson continued to live in Japan, working on a variety of film and theater projects including as assistant director on *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1955). Thomson sent Peck behind-the-scenes photographs of the production featuring Mickey Rooney and William Holden, an unexpected but welcome find in the papers since Peck was not involved in the film (see Figure 11). Since in this case the film title is cataloged in the contents field, it would be found in a keyword search. If cataloged in the production files, it would be found in a film title or keyword search. In 1956, Thomson helped with the filming of *Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) and noted



Figure 11. Photograph of Norman Thomson in foreground during filming of *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1956), Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

29. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, January 16, 1950, *ibid.*

that the production was a disaster partially due to “a refusal to understand or properly evaluate Japan and its people.”<sup>30</sup> Thomson went on to write several books under the pen name “Earl Norman” including *Hang Me in Hong Kong*.<sup>31</sup> According to one letter, his book *Kill Me in Tokyo* was considered by John Huston for a film adaptation.<sup>32</sup> These books appear to sensationalize Japan in the vein of pulp fiction more than being academic works, but nonetheless show one point of view. His correspondence ended in 1969 with Thomson thanking Peck for renewing his membership in the Screen Actors Guild.<sup>33</sup> For any researcher curious about the lives of American soldiers in Japan following the war, this is an invaluable resource with detailed accounts of everyday life.

This last example shows how an entire research project could begin simply from the aid of item-level cataloging. If the researcher simply saw a folder heading for “Thomson, Norman” it is unlikely they would even know who he was beyond an acquaintance of Peck. With keywords such as “Japan,” noting Thomson’s evolving attitude toward the culture, and highlighting the films Thomson worked on, his record suddenly carries more weight and interest. A researcher studying racism, Japan after World War II, soldiers who remained overseas following the war, or Japanese film production would find this personal account an invaluable resource.

Now what comes to mind when you think of the Gregory Peck papers? Suddenly the collection is more than what it appears to be. A collection should never be bound by its collection name. This collection contains a breadth of material and value far beyond what may be immediately obvious. As an actor plays many parts, a collection takes on multiple identities. The archivist’s role is to organize and describe the material to the point that the researcher will have a springboard for discovery. This sometimes requires a degree of item-level cataloging since the material’s significance would otherwise be missed by the researcher. I hope this article will encourage both archivist and researcher to think outside the box and realize that all that glitters is not gold. Sometimes it’s something better.

30. Album, “Far East: 1949,” compiled by Norman Thomson, *ibid*.

31. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, June 4, 1956, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

32. “Mercury Theatre Actor Norman Thomson is Dead at 84,” Playbill, February 29, 2000.

33. Letter from Norman Thomson to Gregory Peck, July 29, 1958, Gregory Peck papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.