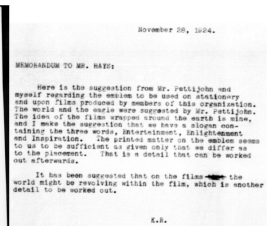


The Digital Archives of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America
<http://mppda.flinders.edu.au>

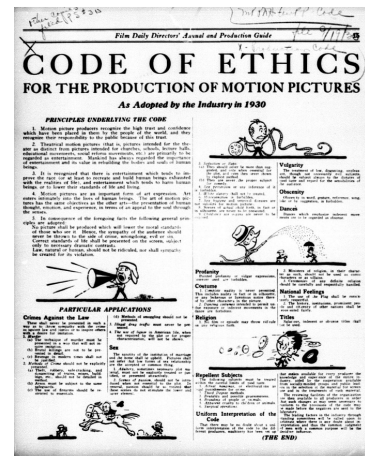
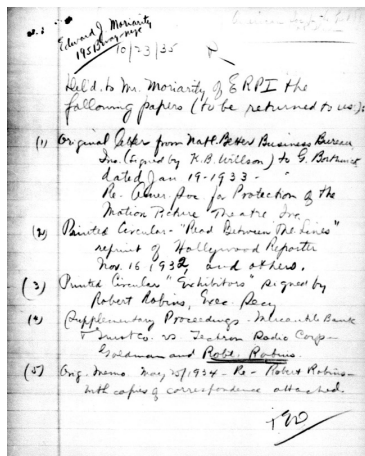
The MPPDA Digital Archives consist of a database of the extant records of the General Correspondence files of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., covering the period from 1922 to 1939.



Established in 1922 and popularly known as the Hays Office, the MPPDA was the trade association for the motion picture industry, changing its name after Hays' retirement in 1945 to its current title, the Motion Picture Association of America.



Although the documents in the MPPDA's General Correspondence files contain only a fraction of the Association's output, they nevertheless represent an immensely rich source of information about the political history of the industry and a number of its key activities and decisions. They include extensive correspondence and other documentation relating to industry policy, public relations, trade practices, external censorship and self-regulation. The great majority of this material is unavailable from other sources.

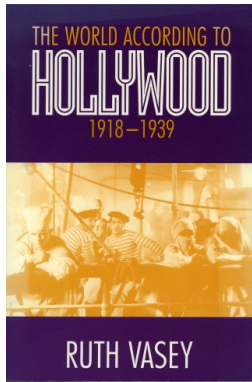


In 1965, the Motion Picture Association of America copied the General Correspondence files onto microfilm, and disposed of the original documents. The archive was then stored in the MPAA's New York offices, where it was largely unavailable to researchers. Other than the heading used on the folder in which the original material was stored, no inventory of the contents was made.

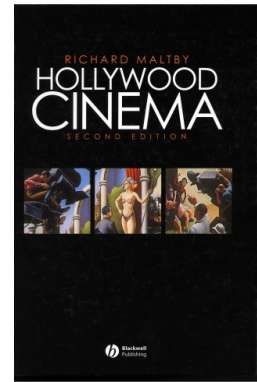
The 16 mm negative microfilm on which the material was recorded, lacked frame or edge numbers, making it difficult to find individual documents on the microfilm even if the researcher knows them to be there.



In 1984, Richard Maltby gained access to the archive in New York and was allowed to copy the twelve reels covering the period from 1922 to 1939, for further study. Subsequently Sam Gill and Barbara Hall, Archivists of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, invited the MPAA to donate the records to the Academy's Special Collections Department. By the time the donation took place, however, several of the microfilm reels, including those covering the 1920s, had been misplaced, and have not subsequently been recovered. The copies taken in 1984 are, therefore, the only surviving copies of the majority of the material in this archive.



Since acquiring the copies, Richard Maltby and Ruth Vasey have built up a catalogue of the archive and published work using the archive's contents. Vasey's *The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1938*, and Richard Maltby's account of the Hays Office in Tino Balio's *Grand Design*, and his articles and documentary essay on "The Genesis of the Production Code," are examples.



Contemporary developments in digital technologies have made it possible to make the original archive material and catalogue much more accessible. With the aid of research grants from Flinders University, the Australian Research Council and the Australian National Data Service a frame by-frame digital copy of the archive has been made. This has led to the indexation of approximately 35,000 pages which have been further categorised into nearly 3500 records (each describing a document or a cluster of related documents).



The contents of this rich, digitised archive are now publicly available in a fully web based version known as the MPPDA Digital Archive (<http://mppda.flinders.edu.au>). Emphasis on a user friendly system has been built into both front and back ends of this archive. Users are able to view records in "snapshot" view or they can download full versions by completing a simple on-line registration process.

Currently the archive contains the following materials and has a broad user group:

- 35,000 digital images representing a copy of every page from the 12 original 16mm microfilm rolls accessed by Richard Maltby in 1984 categorised into 3379 records
- 1169 referenced people with additional biographical information supplied for over 130 leading MPPDA characters
- 757 referenced organisations, many with additional information included and associated with relevant records
- 671 referenced films, many with additional date and studio details appended
- over 275 associated transcriptions (in PDF format)
- a searchable classification of all records according to type (eg letter, memo, minutes)
- numerous legacy notes, editorial comments and over 200 keywords associated with records
- there are currently 268 registered MPPDA users, including 260 file viewers and 8 administrators
- 31 people have logged in 10 times or more (excluding Administrators)
- registered users come from all over the world with 175 Universities and Professional Organisations represented
- the archive is clearly used for teaching purposes at several universities such as DePaul and St Joseph's
- most common nominated 'Research Interests' include keywords "Hollywood", "American Cinema", "Film History", "Censorship", "Production Code", "Film Sound and Colour", "Exhibition", "MPPDA", "Pre Code Cinema", "Trade" and "Will Hays"