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Summary information

Repository: York University Archives & Special Collections (CTASC)
Title: James and Margaret Beveridge fonds
ID: F0099
Date: [ca. 1954]-1990 (date of creation)
Date: 1926-1990 (date of creation)
Physical description: 3.88 m of photographs, textual records, and films

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

[from Wikipedia entry]
James Beveridge (August 12, 1917 – February 16, 1993) was a Canadian filmmaker, author and educator. Beveridge was a pioneering filmmaker at the fledgling National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and rose to become Head of Production and Executive Producer at the NFB in postwar years.

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When the Second World War broke out, Grierson sent Beveridge to Ottawa, to help establish the National Film Board of Canada. He was initially hired as a film cutter, then as an editor.[2] During the war, in various duties as editor, director and producer, Beveridge worked on more than 80 documentary films.[3] Films he directed, include The Voice of Action (1942), Banshees Over Canada (1943) and Look to the North (1944).[4]

Beveridge later became a war correspondent in the Royal Canadian Air Force, serving in Europe from 1944–1945. While working on the NFB documentary film, Inside Fighting Canada (1942), he had met fellow NFB colleague Jane Smart, also a director, scriptwriter and editor. Coming back to Canada after the Second World War, Beveridge married Jane Marsh (going by her married name, but divorced at the time), but their marriage was short-lived. [Note 1] According to Beveridge's daughter, he recounted that "I think Jane couldn't resist a man in an aviator's jacket. They had a brief and disastrous marriage after the war was over. When I once asked him about it, Dad told me that 'they were both too nutty' and so they went their separate ways."[4]

From 1947 to 1949, Beveridge was Head of Production and Executive Producer at the NFB. From 1951–1954, he was in charge of the European Office of the National Film Board, based in London. After 1954, Beveridge worked occasionally as an independent producer on contract to the NFB, before leaving the Board completely in 1962.[5]

Seeking work internationally, in 1954, Beveridge first began a project in India for the Burmah Shell Oil Company where he produced and directed 40 training films. In the same year, he had married Margaret Coventry, a colleague from his NFB days, and his son Alexander was born; Nicholas and Nina would
During his sojourn in India, his film, *Himalayan Tapestry: The Craftsmen of Kashmir* (1957) won the 1957 President's Gold Medal Award for Best Documentary Film.[5]

After a brief role as host and moderator on *Let's Face It*, the CBC public affairs television series in 1961, Beveridge became the Director, North Carolina Film Board where he produced 15 half-hour documentary and educational films from 1962–1964.[6]

Beveridge returned to Canada to head his own production company in 1965, producing a multi-screen presentation in the "Man in Control" theme pavilion at Expo 1967. From 1970, his filmmaking work again took him back to the Far East. While in Japan, Beveridge produced *Hands* (1975) for Mobil Sekiyu Oil Company, winning the Grand Prize, World Craft Council Film Festival, New York, 1975. Beveridge was also the scriptwriter on *Transformations* (1977) for Heavy Industries of India (Ministry of Industry, Government of India).[6]

Beveridge continued to be active as a filmmaker for the rest of his life, contributing as a screenwriter, consultant and advisor on a number of international projects. Increasingly, he collaborated with his wife, Margaret, on his many projects.[7][Note 2]

In 1970, Beveridge began teaching, as well as acting as a consultant to nascent rural television programs for UNESCO in India.[6] In the same year, he established the Department of Film at York University, Toronto and went on to launch the university's graduate film studies program, the first of its kind in Canada. While maintaining an active international career as a filmmaker, advocate and educator, he also taught at York University intermittently until 1987. During his tenure, Beveridge promoted joint ventures with India and developed a national program for adult literacy, sponsored by UNESCO.[9]

In recounting his work at the NFB and his close association with John Grierson, Beveridge was the author of *John Grierson: Film Master* (1978).[4] He was also the author of *Script Writing for Short Films* (1969) and co-author with Wilbur Lang Schramm, of *Television and the Social Education of Women: A First Report on the Unesco-Senegal Pilot Project at Dakar, Issues 49-58* (1967). In 2006, Beveridge's life was made the subject of a film written and directed by his daughter, York alumna Nina Beveridge, entitled *The Idealist: James Beveridge, Film Guru*, which won the Platinum Remi Award for World Peace and Understanding at the 39th WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival.[9]

Scope and content

Fonds consists of personal correspondence (1932-1990), project files (1926-1981), slides, photographs, films, videos, and publications by or about the Beveridges.

Notes

Title notes

Restrictions on access

No restrictions on access. Some audiovisual items are stored off-site for preservation and will require advance notice for retrieval and access.

Finding aids


Accruals

The fonds comprises the following accession: 1994-036. Further accruals may be expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status**: Published
- **Level of detail**: Partial
- **Status description**: Revised
- **Description identifier**: F0099
- **Institution identifier**: ON00370

Access points

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Moving images (documentary form)
- Film (subject)
- Performing arts (subject)
- Documentary film (subject)