

Finding Aid to the
The Movie at the End of the World: Thomas McGrath Field Recordings

The Movie at the End of the World: Thomas McGrath, field recordings, 1980-1981

.2 linear ft. paper records

64 visual cassettes

15 audio cassettes

slides

Collection number: Acc. 2598

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Mike Hazard, 2000 (Acc. 2598).

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

Copyrights: Copyrights to this collection are not held by the Institute for Regional Studies, but anyone may use the field recording to create new media

Citation: [Identification of item]. *The Movie at the End of the World: Thomas McGrath* Audiovisual Material, Acc. 2598, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Related resources: Thomas McGrath Papers (Mss 237), Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU
Thomas McGrath Papers (OGL 308), University of North Dakota, Chester Fritz Library
Thomas McGrath Papers (S2728), Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Minnesota State University Moorhead

HISTORY

The Movie at the End of the World: Thomas McGrath was written, edited and directed by Mike Hazard and Paul Burtness and issued by The Center for International Education, Saint Paul, Minnesota. It is a documentary about the life and work of North Dakota native poet Thomas McGrath. The movie title is also the title of a book of collected poems by McGrath published in 1973.

The production of the movie was funded through grants from the North Dakota Humanities Council and the Minnesota State Arts Board. It was released in 1981 by The Center for International Education, and the premiere showing was held October 31, 1981 at the Plains Art Museum in Moorhead, Minn.

BIOGRAPHY

Thomas McGrath was born November 20, 1916 near Sheldon, North Dakota, the son of James Lang and Catherine (Shea) McGrath. After graduating from local schools, he attended the University of North Dakota in 1935 from where he was graduated in 1939. In 1940 he received an M.A. Degree from Louisiana State University and then taught for a year at Colby College at Waterville, Maine. With the entry of America into World War II, Mr. McGrath served in the U.S. Army Air Forces from 1942 to 1945. In 1947 he was a Rhodes Scholar at New College, Oxford University in England. Mr. McGrath from 1950 to 1954 taught at Los Angeles State College and in 1960 to 1961 at Post College on Long Island, New York. In 1961 he came to North Dakota State University as Assistant Professor of English, and in 1969 he accepted a position at Moorhead State University.

Mr. McGrath's career as a poet made him a leading writer in America. Among his work are *To Walk a Crooked Mile*, *Letter to an Imaginary Friend*, *The Movie at the End of the World: Collected Poems*, *The Gates of Ivory*, and *The Gates of Horn*. He authored some twenty film scripts, was editor of *Crazy Horse* and assistant editor of *California Quarterly* and other literary magazines. Among his awards are the Alan Swallow Poetry Book Award in 1954 for *Figures from a Double World*, the Amy Lowell Traveling Poetry Scholarship (1965-1966) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1967-1969).

Mr. McGrath married Eugenia Johnson on February 13, 1960 and they had one son Thomas Samuel Koan McGrath. Mr. McGrath was a member of the Association of Rhodes Scholars and Phi Beta Kappa. He died September 19, 1990.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection of video and audio tapes consists of the original field recordings, audiocassettes and slides that were used for the creation of *The Movie at the End of the World: Thomas McGrath*. The collection has been organized into eleven series based upon the format and the original markings on the tapes. The tapes have not been viewed in the preparation of this preliminary finding aid; instead this finding aid is based upon the written documentation that came with the collection and on the tapes themselves.

The [Red “M” Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series](#) includes 15 3/4 in. tapes of raw footage of Thomas McGrath shot for the production of the movie. Most of the cassettes and containers have a brief label as to contents which have been transcribed into the container listing section of this finding aid. The ‘M’ numbering scheme is found on the spine of the containers.

The [White “M” Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series](#) includes 24 Scotch UCA20S tapes and contain raw footage shot for the production of the movie. The contents are indicated on the tape container and are included, as written, as part of the container listing of this finding aid. They are scenes of Thomas McGrath in various contexts, as well as some at the Rollag, Minnesota steam threshers site.

The [Green “M” Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series](#) includes nine Scotch MBU-15S tapes with labels marked M201 through M209. There is no identifying information on the tape or container.

The [Brown “M” Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series](#) includes two 3/4 in. video tapes that are marked ‘Dub of Reading’ and ‘Dub of Poems.’

The two 3/4 in. tapes in the [Green Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series](#) have no identifying information with them. The green-colored labels on the outside cover have written ‘M1009A’ and ‘M1114.’

The [Yellow Label Video Cassettes Series](#) consists of three 3/4 in. Sony KCS20 tapes containing a variety of raw footage. With each tape is a handwritten log of its contents.

The [Miscellaneous Video Cassettes Series](#) includes 3/4 in. copy tapes of a number of movies for which Thomas McGrath was involved. They include *Ages of Time* for which Tom McGrath wrote the text. This 18-minute video is a documentary on the history of time and keeping track of time. It was narrated by Burgess Meredith. Others include *Supply Manager’s Dilemma*, *Intelligence*, *A Building is Many Buildings*, and another simply labeled *Pheasant* and *Tom Mantra*.

There are two Scotch MBU-40 Master Broadcast Video cassettes that are labeled simply ‘McGrath #1’ and ‘McGrath #2.’ A Sony KCA-60XBR broadcast master video cassette is labeled simply ‘McGrath.’ Completing this series is a 3/4 in. tape of *The Movie at the End of the World* that is marked ‘Master.’

The [Final Movie Tapes Series](#) includes three 1 inch tapes that contain the final cut of the completed movie.

The [Audio Cassettes Series](#) includes fifteen 60- and 90-minute cassettes. They include tapings of McGrath and others, and music. The ‘M’ numbers indicated on the cassettes correspond with the ‘M’ number on the videotapes.

The [Slides Series](#) consists primarily of printed text used in the production of the movie. There are also copies of several images of McGrath, both as a child and an adult. Some of the slides are sequentially numbered, but there are gaps in this series.

The [Paper Records Series](#) consists primarily of tape logs, notes, and correspondence related to the production of the movie, including the broadside for its premiere showing in 1981. In addition there is a photocopy of the script for *Genesis* by George Casey and Tom McGrath (Fourth draft, 1978), and a copy of the article *Movie Moonlighting, or the Other Career of Tom McGrath*, by Mike Hazard. There are items related to an event celebrating the life of Thomas McGrath, held in Minneapolis, Minn. in 1990.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

1/1 Finding aid

Red "M" Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series

1/1 Tom teaching (M101)
1/2 Tom in office talking about teaching (M102)
1/3 2nd cam reading (M103)
1/4 2nd cam reading outside museum (M104)
1/5 2nd cam reading (M105)
1/6 2nd cam reading (M106)
1/7 2nd cam reading (M107)
1/8 Soccer game (M108)
1/9 Soccer, Horses (M109)
1/10 Tom sleeping, walking, movie (M110)
1/11 (no label) (M111)
1/12 Tom and Tomasito on horses (M112)

2/1 (no label) (M113)
2/2 Tonka #1 (M114)
2/3 Tonka #2 (M115)

White "M" Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series

2/4 McGrath and threshers (M1)
2/5 McGrath & steam engines (M2)
2/6 McGrath, threshing machines (M3)
2/7 McGrath interview (Thurs.) (M4)
2/8 McGrath interview (Thurs.) (M5)
2/9 McGrath interview (Thurs.) (M6)
2/10 McGrath on the road (M7)
2/11 McGrath Fri. (M8)
2/12 McGrath Fri. (M9)
2/13 McGrath Fri. (M10)

3/1 McGrath at work (M11)

- 3/2 McGrath Sat. Eve. (M12)
- 3/3 McGrath Sat. evening (M13)
- 3/4 McGrath Sat. evening (M14)
- 3/5 McGrath Sat. evening (M15)
- 3/6 McGrath Sat. evening (M16)
- 3/7 McGrath Sat. evening (M17)
- 3/8 McGrath Sat. evening (M18)
- 3/9 McGrath Sunday (M19)
- 3/10 McGrath Sunday library (M20)
- 3/11 McGrath Rollag (M21)
- 3/12 Rollag (M22)
- 3/13 Rollag (M23)
- 3/14 Rollag (M24)

Green “M” Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series

- 4/1 9 tapes, no labeling (M201 – M209)

Brown “M” Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series

- 4/2 ‘Dub of poems’ (1001)
- 4/3 ‘Dub of reading’ (1002)

Green Label 3/4 in. Video Cassettes Series

- 4/3 No label (1009)
- 4/4 No label (1114)

Yellow Label Video Cassettes Series

- 5/1 “Tomasito’s ... “ (listing with cassette) (172)
- 5/2 “Tomasito ... “ (listing with cassette) (173)
- 5/3 “Plains D. S. ... “ (listing with cassette) (174)

Miscellaneous Video Cassettes Series

- 5/4 Pheasant, Tom ... (C819)
- 5/5 *Supply Manager’s Dilemma/Ability to Kill Determines Intelligence*
- 5/6 A Building is Many Buildings
- 5/7 *Ages of Time* (text by McGrath, narrated by Burgess Meredith)
- 5/8 McGrath with promos (?)

Final Movie Tapes Series

- 6/1 Work tape (on 1 in. 3M 480xst tape)
- 6/2 No noise reduction (on 1 in. 3M 480xst tape)
- 6/3 No label (on 1 in. Ampex tape)

Audio Cassette Tapes Series

- 6/4 Music- Pop Wagner
- 6/5 M13 – M-20
- 6/6 McGrath poems, 26 Sept. 80
- 6/7 206,208,209
- 6/8 McGrath #3, 16 March 79
- 6/9 Bonnie Raitt
- 6/10 M15, M8, M4; The Words of McGrath
- 6/11 Ages of Time; Supply Manager limit High
- 6/12 Sheperd's song music, and low performers
- 6/13 Thomas McGrath, Irish (?) show '88, KFAI
- 6/14 McGrath #1, 16 March 79
- 6/15 Tom McGrath, Fri.
- 6/16 Manfred- McGrath
- 6/17 Tomasito
- 6/18 202, 202, 203; 203, 205, 207

Slides Series

- 6/19 4 slide boxes

Paper Records Series

- 6/20 Taping logs (photocopies)
- 6/21 "Genesis" by George Casey, Tom McGrath (photocopy)
- 6/22 File of letters, notes and script notes
- 6/23 Contact sheet of photographs
- 6/24 "Movie Moonlighting, or the Other Career of Tom McGrath" by Mike Hazard
- 6/25 Memorial services flyers
- 6/26 Posters for premiere showing of movie, 1981