

Center for Creative Photography

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Finding aid for the  
Robert S. Harrah collection, 1945-1981

AG 54

**Robert S. Harrah, 1945-1981**

**AG 54**

**Creator**

Harrah, Robert S.

**Abstract**

Papers, 1945 - 1981, of Robert S. Harrah (1925-1989), photojournalist and engineer. Includes a photocopy of his illustrated, unpublished manuscript, *Gene and Me ... and Photojournalism* (1981: 2 vols. 314pp.), which contains Harrah's recollections of his working relationship between 1945 and 1948 with noted photojournalist W. Eugene Smith (1918 - 1978); nine photocopies of correspondence between them in 1945 and 1948; and some research material used in writing the manuscript.

**Quantity/ Extent**

1 linear foot

**Language of Materials**

English

**Biographical/ Historical Note**

Robert S. Harrah (1925-1989) was an American photojournalist and engineer. He worked as a photographer in the Medical Corps in the Pacific Theater during World War II. It was there that he met W. Eugene Smith, who at the time was a photographer for *Life*. After the war, Harrah enrolled in photographic school in California before moving to New York to be W. Eugene Smith's assistant. Harrah worked with Smith from 1947-1949 before returning to California and working as a freelance photojournalist. In 1981 he wrote an unpublished memoir detailing his working relationship with Smith. Robert Harrah died in 1989 at the age of 64.

**Scope and Content Note**

The bulk of this collection consists of a manuscript written by Harrah about his relationship with the noted photojournalist W. Eugene Smith (1918 - 1978). This narrative describes Harrah's first acquaintance with Smith in the hospital on Okinawa, his work as an assistant to Smith in New York City, the life of a photojournalist on the road, their progress with such projects as "Trial by Jury" and "Country Doctor," Harrah's meetings with such notables as Edward Steichen and Lincoln Kirstein, Harrah's apprenticeship in the profession, and events in his personal life.

## Arrangement

Box 1: Folders of like materials

Box 2-3: *Gene and Me ... and Photojournalism*, 2 volumes

## Names and Subject Terms

Harrah, Robert S. [<https://lcn.loc.gov/n90646642>]

Smith, W. Eugene, 1918-1978 [<https://lcn.loc.gov/n50013229>]

## Restrictions

### Conditions Governing Access

Access to this collection requires an appointment with the Volkerding Study Center.

### Conditions Governing Use

It is the responsibility of the user to obtain permission from the copyright owner (which could be the institution, the creator of the record, the author or his/her transferees, heirs, legates or literary executors) prior to any copyright-protected uses of the collection.

The user agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, Center of Creative Photography, including its officers, employees, and agents, from and against all claims made relating to copyright or other intellectual property infringement.

## Provenance

This collection was a gift from Robert Harrah to the Center for Creative Photography beginning in 1982.

## Preferred Citation

Robert S. Harrah, 1945-1981. AG 54. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

## Processing Information

Processed September 1984 by Roger Myers. Revised January 1987. The finding aid was updated by Paloma Phelps in 2017.

**Container List**

Box	Folder	
1	1	Correspondence, 1945 -1948
	2	Research Materials: Printed Matter, 1945-1950
	3	Research Materials: Photographs, 1948
	4	Publication: <i>Medical Economics</i> (Oct. 1, 1973) [contains reproduction from Smith's "Country Doctor" essay]
	5	Portraits of W. Eugene Smith by Harrah, 1947-1948 (7 - 14x11 inch photographs)
	6	Portrait of Ted Castle, New York City, by Harrah, 1984
	7	Photograph of Harrah photographing wine glasses for a commercial assignment in New York City, circa 1948 (signed by Harrah on verso)
	8	Three photographs by Harrah: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. woman brushing her hair</li> <li>b. bust of Beethoven</li> <li>c. wine glasses</li> </ul>
	9	Tearsheets of publications containing Harrah's work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Stravinsky Conducts," <i>Esquire</i> (November 1949), pp. 96-97.</li> <li>"Ezio Pinza: Man of the Hour," <i>Esquire</i> (August 1949), p. 83-?</li> <li>"Auflage: Eine Kleinstadzeitung in Amerika," <i>Heute</i> (August 1949), p. 12-14</li> </ul>
	10	Biographical material including resumes and the negative cataloging system used by Harrah.
Box 2-3		<i>Gene and Me ... and Photojournalism</i> , 2 volumes, with illustrating photographs, 1981