Frank L. Smith Collection

YCAL MSS 1123

by Susan Brady

February 2018

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1123

CREATOR: Smith, Frank L., 1882-1953

TITLE: Frank L. Smith collection

DATES: 1911–1936

BULK DATES: 1911–1919

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.75 linear feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Collection consists of correspondence, typescripts, photographs, performance programs and other ephemera primarily relating to Frank L. Smith's career as a theatrical press and advance agent for burlesque shows produced by Max Spiegel on the burlesque theater circuit from circa 1916 to 1919. Correspondence chiefly consists of Smith's communications with theaters in which the shows were to perform, and with Max Spiegel regarding issues concerning the productions. Typescripts include press releases and articles by Smith publicizing performers and productions including George Armstrong, Florence Mills, Abe Reynolds, the Watson Sisters and the Merry Rounders. Photographs include portrait and candid photographs of Smith, Spiegel, and unidentified male and female performers. The collection also includes Spiegel production playbills and programs and publicity materials; mock-ups of posters and original pen and ink caricatures of Smith; a small group of personal papers; and a scrapbook containing newspaper clippings relating to Smith's work on the burlesque theater circuit.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.smithfrank

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.smithfrank.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
b. box
f. folder
Frank L. Smith (1882-1953)

Frank L. Smith was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1882. As a boy Smith worked in various capacities for travelling circuses and other entertainments. After meeting John M. "Major" Burke (renowned for his general management of William Cody’s Wild West Show), Smith worked under Burke’s tutelage in his company’s press department. In the mid 1900’s Smith joined Max Spiegel’s New York City-based burlesque production company as a press and advance agent, travelling the burlesque theater circuit from the East Coast to the Midwest. He later managed theaters for Lee and J. J. Shubert in Newark, New Jersey, and New York City. Smith served on the board of governors of the Association of the Theatrical Press Agents and Managers Union from its establishment in 1928, and as president from 1949 until his death in 1953. He was married to Mildred Tyson, a former performer in one of the Spiegel productions.

Scope and Contents

Collection consists of correspondence, typescripts, photographs, performance programs and other ephemera primarily relating to Frank L. Smith’s career as a theatrical press and advance agent for burlesque shows produced by Max Spiegel on the burlesque theater circuit from circa 1916 to 1919. Correspondence chiefly consists of Smith’s communications with theaters in which the shows were to perform, and with Max Spiegel regarding issues concerning the productions. Typescripts include press releases and articles by Smith publicizing performers and productions including George Armstrong, Florence Mills, Abe Reynolds, the Watson Sisters and the Merry Rounders. Photographs include portrait and candid
photographs of Smith, Spiegel, and unidentified male and female performers. The collection also includes Spiegel production playbills and programs and publicity materials; mock-ups of posters and pen and ink caricatures of Smith; a small group of personal papers; and a scrapbook containing newspaper clippings relating to Smith’s work on the burlesque theater circuit.

**Arrangement**

Arranged by type of material.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1-2</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1911–1919, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corr. Chiefly related to Smith’s work as press and advance agent for Max Spiegel productions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 3-6</td>
<td>Typescript publicity articles</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typescript publicity articles</td>
<td>Includes articles and press releases on performers and productions, and the history of burlesque; most untitled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 7-9</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Includes photographs of Smith, Spiegel, and unidentified male and female performers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4 (Oversize), f. 32</td>
<td>Group photograph of actors and actresses</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group photograph of actors and actresses</td>
<td>Includes John Drew and William Cody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 10</td>
<td>Production programs and flyers</td>
<td>1913–1919, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production programs and flyers</td>
<td>Chiefly programs and flyers for Max Spiegel burlesque touring productions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 11</td>
<td>Advertisement flongs</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement flongs</td>
<td>Two flongs for Max Spiegel’s Abe Reynolds’ Revue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 12-13</td>
<td>Theater-related ephemera</td>
<td>1913–1920, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater-related ephemera</td>
<td>Includes brochures, advertisements, menus, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 14-16</td>
<td>Personal papers</td>
<td>1913–1929, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal papers</td>
<td>Includes bank books, business card, New Jersey vehicle registration, certificate of incorporation of Civic Light Opera Company, Newark, New Jersey (undated); and material relating to his grand jury service in Newark, New Jersey</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 17</td>
<td>Souvenir performance programs</td>
<td>1936, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Souvenir performance programs</td>
<td>Includes Tobacco Road and Cyrano de Bergerac starring Walter Hampden</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 18</td>
<td>Captain Billy’s Whiz Bang</td>
<td>1921 August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue of “America’s Magazine of Wit, Humor and Philosophy” published by W. H. Fawcett, Robbinsdale, Minnesota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 2 (Oversize), f. 19</td>
<td>Scrapbook</td>
<td>1916–1919, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrapbook</td>
<td>Includes clippings regarding Smith, Spiegel, and their burlesque productions and stars Florence Mills and Abe Reynolds; clippings pasted into blank elector’s enrollment list ledger for Rochester, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2 (Oversize), f. 20-22</td>
<td>Loose clippings from scrapbook</td>
<td>1916–1933, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loose clippings from scrapbook</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2 (Oversize), f. 23</td>
<td>Playbills from scrapbook</td>
<td>1910–1919, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playbills from scrapbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3 (Oversize), f. 24-29</td>
<td>Caricatures of Frank Smith</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caricatures of Frank Smith</td>
<td>Includes original posters advertising annual parties hosted by Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4 (Oversize), f. 33-36</td>
<td>Caricatures of Frank Smith</td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Container</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3 (Oversize), f.</td>
<td>Mock-up of poster for <em>Abe Renoolds’ Revue</em></td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3 (Oversize), f.</td>
<td>Mock-up of poster for <em>Merry Rounders</em></td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4 (Oversize), f.</td>
<td>Drawing of Evelyn Herbert</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
Actors -- United States
Actors -- United States
Burlesque (Theater) -- United States
Press agents -- United States
Theatrical managers -- United States
Theatrical producers and directors -- United States
Theatrical producers and directors -- United States

Genres / Formats
Drawings (visual works)
Photographic prints
Scrapbooks

Occupations
Press agents -- United States
Theatrical managers -- United States

Names
Armstrong, George, active 1916
Mills, Florence
Reynolds, Abe
Smith, Frank L., 1882-1953
Spiegel, Max