Guide to the A. C. Gilbert Papers

MS 1618

compiled by Carol King

August 1994

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
mssa.assist@yale.edu
http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
mssa.assist@yale.edu
http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/

CALL NUMBER: MS 1618

CREATOR: Gilbert, A. C. (Alfred Carlton), 1884-1961

TITLE: A. C. Gilbert papers

DATES: 1901–1978

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6.25 linear feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of letters, newspaper clippings, printed material, and photographs, originally mounted in three volumes, which document the personal and professional life of A. C. Gilbert. Volume one documents Gilbert’s athletic career, both in Oregon and then at Yale, and his interest in magic arts. Volume two relates to Gilbert’s career as a manufacturer, producing magic toys, Erector sets, model trains, and other toys. The last volume concerns the A. C. Gilbert Company, Yale athletics, and hunting expeditions. An addition to the collection includes personal correspondence.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1618

Requesting Instructions
To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1618.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Jeffrey Gilbert Marsted, 1991, in loving memory of his mother, Lucretia Gilbert Rowbottom. A daughter of A. C. Gilbert and Mary Thompson Gilbert, she devoted many years to their collection and preparation.
Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Copyright has been transferred to Yale University for unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation
A. C. Gilbert Papers (MS 1618). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Processing Information
The scrapbooks were dismantled. Pages were removed from their binders and placed in folders, maintaining the original order of contents.

Biographical / Historical
Alfred Carlton Gilbert was born on February 15, 1884, in Salem, Oregon. He attended Pacific University and graduated from the Yale Medical School in 1909. The same year Gilbert founded the Mysto Manufacturing Company, producer of magic sets. In 1916, he changed the name to A. C. Gilbert Company and expanded his line, the best known toys being the Erector and chemistry sets, and American Flyer trains. In addition to his business accomplishments, Gilbert was known as a great athlete. He was world’s champion and Olympic first-place pole vaulter in 1908, the first man ever to top thirteen feet. He died on January 24, 1961, in Boston.

Scope and Contents
The papers consist of letters, newspaper clippings, printed material, and photographs, originally mounted in three volumes, which document the personal and professional life of A. C. Gilbert. Volume one documents Gilbert’s athletic career, both in Oregon and then at Yale, and his interest in magic arts. Volume two relates to Gilbert’s career as a manufacturer, producing magic toys, Erector sets, model trains, and other toys. The last volume concerns the A. C. Gilbert Company, Yale athletics, and hunting expeditions. An addition to the collection includes personal correspondence.
## Collection Contents

### Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrapbooks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>Volume I: clippings, letters, and endorsements tracing Gilbert’s athletic career, culminating in his participation in the 1908 Olympic Games as a pole vaulter winning the Gold Medal with Ernie Cook; accounts of his interest in magic arts and his performances as an amateur magician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Volume II: clippings, letters, and photographs which chronicle Gilbert’s career as a manufacturer, first as President of the Mysto Manufacturing Company of New Haven and later as founder and President of the A. C. Gilbert Company, producer of Erector sets and American Flyer scale-model electric trains; additional topics are the development of Yale athletics and Gilbert’s interest in the professional breeding of shepherd dogs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3</td>
<td>Volume III: clippings, letters, and photographs relating to the A. C. Gilbert Company, Yale athletics, Gilbert’s hunting expeditions and leisure activities; the levelling of Erector Tower, a local New Haven landmark; obituaries of Gilbert and his son.</td>
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<td>Container</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.1</td>
<td>Correspondence from A. C. Gilbert to Mary Thompson</td>
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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
Businessmen
Magic
Toymakers
Toys
Vaulting

Geographic Names
New Haven (Conn.)

Occupations
Inventors

Names
Gilbert, A. C. (Alfred Carlton), 1884-1961

Corporate Bodies
A.C. Gilbert Company
Yale University -- Sports