Finding aid of the The Samuel Franklin Cody Papers

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Finding aid of the The Samuel Franklin Cody Papers

Collection number: 96.159

Autry Library
Autry National Center of the American West
Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Samuel Franklin Cody Papers
Dates: 1888-1903
Bulk Dates: 1890-1905
Collection number: 96.159
Creator: Cody, S. F. (Samuel Franklin), 1861-1913
Collection Size: 15 linear feet
Repository: Autry National Center. Institute for the Study of the American West
Los Angeles, CA 90027
Abstract: Posters, clippings, scripts, programs, photographs, lettersheets, sheet music and documents relating to the career of Texan, Samuel Franklin Cody, as a Wild West showman, sharpshooter, actor, playwright, horseman and aviator in Great Britain and Western Europe.
Physical location: Autry Library

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://www.autrynationalcenter.org/research_application.php or contact library staff at (323) 667-2000.

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Preferred Citation
[Item identification] Samuel Franklin Cody Papers, 96.159. Autry Library, Autry National Center, Los Angeles, CA

Acquisition Information
Purchase from Sotheby's, 1996.

Processing Information

Biography / Administrative History
Turn of the century American cowboy, Wild West show performer, playwright, actor and aviation pioneer in England and Europe.

Scope and Content of Collection
Posters, clippings, scripts, programs, photographs, lettersheets, sheet music and documents relating to the career of Texan, Samuel Franklin Cody, as a Wild West showman, sharpshooter, actor, playwright, horseman and aviator in Great Britain and Western Europe.
Britain and Western Europe. The bulk of the collection consists of materials related to the production and advertisement of Mr. Cody's Western melodrama, "The Klondyke Nugget," inspired by his trip to the Klondyke in the 1880s. Included are 7 colored posters (1900-1903), manuscripts for the complete five act play, two sketch versions and individual scripts for various parts; directions for lighting and props, clippings and reviews; and sheet music for various instruments. Other melodramas written by Mr. Cody around the turn of the century are represented by manuscripts for "Calamity Jane" with a Klondyke setting, "Nevada," and "Viva, a Woman of War" set in Cuba. Mr. Cody and his family also toured Great Britain and Western Europe, performing a sharp shooting act and conducting horseman versus cyclist races. Clippings, posters, tickets, and programs (1891-1903), approximately half of which are in French, Italian or German, indicate the wide popular appeal of Cody and his family. A scrapbook of clippings, the majority in French, chronicle Cody's horseman versus cycling racing tournaments of 1893, challenging prominent French cyclists. Four colored posters feature Cody in ca. 1895, racing against one or more cyclists. Reviving a lifelong interest in 1903, Cody turned his energy to designing and building man-carrying kites for reconnaissance by the British Navy. He also designed, built and flew airplanes in the early days of aviation. This phase of his life, which eventually led to his death, is represented by a poster, airplane drawings, clippings, and his patent for improvements in kites.

**Arrangement**

Organized into the following series: I. Plays; II. Racing tournaments; III. Shooting acts; IV. Kites and airplanes; V. Books; VI. Correspondence; VII. Diary; VIII. Music; IX. Photographs.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**

Cody, S.F. (Samuel Franklin), 1861-1913.
Cody, Lela.
Cody family.

*Calamity Jane (Play) Nevada (Play) Viva, a Woman of War (Play) The Klondyke Nugget (Play)*

Wild West shows.
Shooters of firearms.
Trick riding.
Endurance riding (Horsemanship)
Kites (military and naval reconnaissance)--History--Great Britain.
Airplanes--History--Great Britain.

**Genres and Forms of Material**

Advertisements.
Letters.
Photographs.
Clippings.
Programs.
Scores.
Posters.
Scrapbooks.
Sheet music.

**Related Material**

The museum also owns related artifacts.