Benjamin Holzman Papers

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Benjamin Holzman Papers

Collection number: MS107

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Benjamin Holzman Papers
Dates: 1917-1963
Collection number: MS107
Creator: Holzman, Benjamin
Collection Size: 8 linear feet (5 archival document boxes, 4 oversize archival flat boxes, 1 map case drawer)
Repository: Loyola Marymount University. Library. Department of Archives and Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90045-2659
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Series number, Box and Folder number, Benjamin Holzman Papers, MS107, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

Acquisition Information

Biography
Benjamin Holzman (1891-1963) was a New York newspaper Broadway and vaudeville critic; press agent, both in Los Angeles and New York; and the personal business manager of Eddie Cantor. A native New Yorker, Holzman began his newspaper work with the New York Press in 1910 or 1911 as the “cabaret editor,” and then joined the New York Evening Mail in the same position in 1916, eventually becoming its “dramatic editor” (theater critic). In 1924, fearing the demise of the newspaper because of its purchase by Frank Munsey, Holzman became the head of the publicity department of the great producer Florenz Ziegfeld (1867-1932). In 1926 or 1927 Holzman then teamed with fellow newspaperman Nat Dorfman to form the first independent publicity firm for theater on Broadway. The two men represented the Broadway producer George White (1892-1968); Florenz Ziegfeld (again); Fox Film; the actor, comedian, and radio star Eddie Cantor (1892-1964); and the actor Jackie Coogan (1914-1984).

The Great Depression’s dreadful impact on theater attendance in New York left Holzman’s and Dorfman’s publicity firm wanting for clients, which led Holzman to leave the partnership to become Eddie Cantor’s business manager in 1932. For
this position he moved to Los Angeles. He stayed in this position with his close friend Cantor until 1941, when he joined the
William Morris Agency as a press agent and represented such show business stars as Betty Hutton (1921-2007) and
Maurice Chevalier (1888-1972). He stayed at William Morris until his death in 1963. The actor, producer, and songwriter
George Jessel delivered the eulogy at the funeral of Benjamin Holzman, testifying to the latter’s stature and connections in
the show business world. Benjamin Holzman was survived by his wife Harriett and a daughter.

Collection Description
The collection consists of textual and non-textual material related to the life and professional career of Benjamin Holzman
(1891-1963), a newspaper show business critic and press agent, who worked and lived on both the East and West Coasts.
Materials include professional and personal correspondence, photographs, publicity releases for New York plays, theater
programs, newspaper clippings, and autobiographical statements on Holzman’s career. This last material (see Box 1, Folders
4 and 5) offers glimpses into life on Broadway and the United States theater in the 1920s. Of particular value is the
 correspondence and telegrams between Holzman and Florenz Ziegfeld (1867-1932), the great Broadway and show business
producer. They treat publicity for the Ziegfeld Follies and musicals (“Kid Boots”) and the promotion of Billie Burke. Also of
interest are theater programs for such theater productions as "Showboat," "Kid Boots," and "Whoopee." The latter two
productions starred Eddie Cantor, whose materials are found Series 2. Materials in this series include, among other things,
Cantor's personal joke book, some correspondence, and film stills from the film "Roman Scandals."
The theater section of the New York Evening Mail includes a column by Benjamin F. Holzman and much information on
Broadway and movies in New York. Newspaper clippings in Series 5 contain pieces on or by the American humorist Will
Rogers (1879-1935), and advertisements for New York theater. The fragility of the newspaper clippings required the
substitution of the originals with photocopies for research use.
All photographs are black and white, unless noted otherwise.

Arrangement
With the original order not discernable, the Benjamin Holzman Papers are arranged into six series based on subjects and
types of material:

• Series 1: Benjamin Holzman
• Series 2: Eddie Cantor
• Series 3: Florenz Ziegfeld
• Series 4: Photographs
• Series 5: Printed Ephemera, Theater Programs, and Newspaper Clippings
• Series 6: Scrapbooks

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
Holzman, Benjamin, 1891-1963
Cantor, Eddie, 1892-1964
Ziegfeld, Florenz, 1869-1932
Vaudeville -- United States
William Morris Agency
Press agents
Theater programs
Ziegfeld Follies
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Series 1: Benjamin Holzman. 1917-1963

Physical Description: 17 folders. 1 box.

Series Description
This series consists of correspondence, photographs, scrapbook leaves, publicity releases related to the career of Benjamin Holzman as a press agent and newspaper writer. The correspondence is mostly personal, although the celebrities writing Holzman often would combine business matters with personal affairs. Photographs include Holzman at parties with possible clients and personal photographs. Autobiographical statements in Box 1, Folders 4 and 5, provide insight into his career as well as the business of show business in the 1920s.

Of special interest (Box 1, Folder 11) are the publicity releases for Broadway plays that Holzman and partner Nat Dorfman issued for such theater producers as Sam H. Grisman and Phillip Goodman in the 1920s. Also noteworthy is the eulogy that George Jessel delivered at Al Jolson's funeral (Box 1, Folder 3). The theater section of the New York Evening Mail that Holzman edited provides extensive information on Broadway shows, movies, stage and movie stars and producers, and corresponding publicity for the New York City theater scene and film.

Some material in this series comes from folders that Benjamin Holzman created and labelled. The titles that Holzman assigned to these folders are noted in the box and folder list.

Names of note in the series include Maurice Chevalier (1888-1972), John Decker (1895-1947), George Jessel (1898-1981), and Betty Hutton (1921-2007).

Box:Folder 1:1
Incoming personal and business correspondence, telegram, and memorandum; includes notes from Betty Hutton, Susan and Harpo Marx, Maurice Chevalier, Joe E. Lewis, and Fred Allen. 1917-1962 (dates broken)

Box:Folder 1:2
Incoming telegrams and correspondence of condolence to Harriett Holzman re death of Benjamin Holzman. 1963

Box:Folder 1:3

Box:Folder 1:4
Benjamin Holzman autobiographical statement re early career in newspapers and as publicity agent. Caricature of Fanny Brice by John Decker. Al Jolson 8x10 photograph. undated

Box:Folder 1:5

Box:Folder 1:6

Box:Folder 1:7
Outgoing (copies) and incoming correspondence re publicity for John Decker. William Morris advertisements. Eddie Cantor talk on 60th birthday. Trade journal clippings. From folder labelled "Publicity." 1942, 1943, 1954

Box:Folder 1:8
Benjamin Holzman photographs: personal and with clients. 1949

Box:Folder 1:9

Box:Folder 1:10
Correspondence from Maurice Chevalier. Benjamin Holzman speech re Maurice Chevalier birthday. Personal notes. Separated from photograph album in Box 1, Folder 9, this series. 1925, 1960, 1963

Box:Folder 1:11
Benjamin Holzman and Nat Dorfman publicity releases re Broadway plays. 1920s

Box:Folder 1:12
Incoming and outgoing (copy) correspondence re Benjamin Holzman letter to Time magazine. Copy of Time magazine with Holzman letter. Incoming letter from Eddie Davis, comedy writer. 1951, 1952

Box:Folder 1:13
Letter of rebuttal (copy) from Benjamin Holzman to columnist O. O. McIntyre re Eddie Cantor and column facts. Newspaper clippings re same (photocopies for research use). 1934
Leaves from scrapbooks with telegrams, correspondence, and newspaper clippings re career and personal life of Benjamin Holzman (photocopies for research use). 1912-1925

Draft of cartoon strip re "Abe" (sic) and "Dr. Marvelle," with newspaper doctor's advice to B(Benjamin?) Holzman. undated

Theater sections for the New York Evening Mail; edited by Benjamin F. Holzman. (photocopies for research use). Time magazine cover with excerpts of Benjamin Holzman letters to the editor. 1921, 1924, 1945

Rube Goldberg cartoon strip (printer's mock-up). Autographed by Rube Goldberg to Benjamin Holzman. 1918

Poster for satirical dinner party. 1920s

"Abie" comic strip by Harry Hershfield (printer's mock-up) with reference to Benjamin Holzman. undated


Film stills from "Roman Scandals," starring Eddie Cantor. probably 1933

Photographs of Eddie Cantor with wife Ida and with wife Ida and five daughters. Ida Cantor portraits. undated

Miscellaneous Eddie Cantor photographs. undated

Eddie Cantor and Benjamin F. Holzman bill of complaint against Goldman Sachs. 1932

Sheet music for Eddie Cantor songs, including those for Ziegfeld Follies. 1918-1920, 1922

Eddie Cantor outgoing correspondence to Benjamin Holzman re B'nai B'rith dinner and grandchild. Eddie Cantor joke sheets. Advertising flyers for Eddie Cantor show "Forty Years of Show Business." Newspaper clippings re Eddie Cantor (photocopies). 1940-1958 (dates broken)

Eddie Cantor private joke book. undated

Loose sheets with jokes, some by Jessie Kaplan. 1938

Galley proofs and Collier's magazine re Eddie Cantor and David Freedman article on Al Jolson. "The Real Story of Al Jolson," with foreword by Eddie Cantor. 1934

Eddie Cantor and in scene from Ziegfeld Follies of 1908. 1908

Florenz Ziegfeld, Edward Royce, and Billie Burke telegrams (photocopies) to Benjamin Holzman re advertising for Ziegfeld Follies and "Kid Boots." 1924
| Box:Folder 2:2 | Florenz Ziegfeld telegram to Benjamin Holzman, and Stanley Sharpe to Charles Christie, re production of "Kid Boots" as movie. 1925 |
| Box:Folder 2:3 | Benjamin Holzman incoming correspondence from Florenz Ziegfeld re advertising, Billie Burke, and Ziegfeld Follies. 1920s |

**Series 4: Photographs. Undated**

- **Physical Description:** 6 folders.
- **Series Description**
  
  Found in this series are publicity photographs for such show business stars as Danny Kaye; Sammy Davis, Jr.; Jimmy Durante; and George Jessel, whom may have been clients of Benjamin Holzman. The series also holds two photographs containing George Burns and Jack Benny, one at possible business meeting, the other at a banquet. The latter photograph also includes George Jessel, Groucho Marx, and Eddie Cantor.

- **Box:Folder 2:5**
  
  Film star publicity portraits, including Melvyn Douglass, Charles Boyer, Chuck Connors, Betty Hutton, Mona Freeman, Jan Clayton, Will Rogers. undated

- **Box:Folder 2:6**
  
  Joey Bishop, Buddy Hackett, and George Jessel publicity portraits. undated

- **Box:Folder 2:7**
  
  Danny Kaye publicity portraits and film stills. Sammy Davis, Jr., publicity portraits. Jimmy Durante publicity booklet with photographs. undated

- **Box:Folder 2:8**
  
  George Burns, George Jessel, Jack Benny, Groucho Marx, and Eddie Cantor at banquet. George Burns and Jack Benny at table with producers and agents. "MGM Girls" publicity photograph? undated

- **Box:Folder 2:9**
  
  Miscellaneous photographs. undated

- **Box:Folder 2:10**
  
  Autographed picture of Jackie Coogan, to Bennjamin Holzman. undated

- **Box:Folder 2:16**
  
  Autographed picture of Al Jolson, to Bennjamin Holzman. undated

**Series 5: Printed Ephemera and Newspaper Clippings. 1930-1960**

- **Physical Description:** 6 folders.
- **Series Description**
  
  A miscellany of printed materials comprise this series: theater programs, especially for George White musicals, flyers for musical revues, a program for the famous French nightclub the "Moulin Rouge," and a "Features" booklet for the *New York Mail* with a piece on Benjamin Holzman as a theater critic for the newspaper.

  This series also holds newspaper clippings (all photocopies for reasons of preservation) on show business matters that Benjamin Holzman most likely collected, including a run of newspaper commentaries of Will Rogers (1879-1935), the famous American humorist.

- **Box:Folder 2:10**
  
  Curran Theatre program "The Playgoer" for "Betty Hutton and Her International Variety Revue." Includes flyer for "Affairs of State." (2 copies). Flyer re same for Seattle appearance of Betty Hutton program. 1953

- **Box:Folder 2:11**
  

- **Box:Folder 2:12**
  
  Flyers and theater programs for George White musical comedies "Flying High" and "Scandals." Union flyers re George White use of non-union employees for "Scandals." probably 1930

- **Box:Folder 2:13**
  
  Jewish Theatrical Guild certificates and lifetime membership roster. Restaurant menus and flyers. "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" promotional campaign booklet. 1953

- **Box:Folder 2:14**
  
  Newspaper clippings re show business, including Will Rogers and Harpo Marx (photocopies). 1950, 1960

- **Box 10v**
  
  December 8, 1941 edition of *Los Angeles Herald Express* on Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. 1941
Series 6: **Scrapbooks. 1916-1959**

**Physical Description:** 1 archival document box. 2 oversize boxes.

**Series Description**

This series contains two scrapbooks with much loose material not added by Benjamin Holzman to the scrapbooks. Items of interest include a Friars Club program, a speech by Eddie Cantor on the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, and business correspondence. Folder 1, Box 4, houses material on the end of the business relationship between Eddie Cantor and Benjamin Holzman. Photographs in this series mostly duplicate those found in Series 4. In the box and folder list, the scrapbook with which the loose materials came from is noted.

2ov

Scrapbook with newspaper clippings; telegrams; photographs; testimonial dinner re career of Benjamin Holzman; Eddie Cantor youth camp ball program; birth announcement for Eddie Cantor daughter; Friars Club invitations; notes from Jack Coogan; B. F. Keith's personal card. 1921-1931 (dates broken)

4:1

Incoming correspondence, telegrams, article re Benjamin Holzman and Eddie Cantor split. Separated from original folder. 1940

4:2

Benjamin Holzman incoming correspondence. "Rufus LeMaire's Affairs" letterhead with names of Nat Dorfman and Benjamin Holzman as press representatives. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1919, 1953, 1959

4:3

Typed drafts of press columns or press releases, including re Eddie Cantor. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. undated

4:4

Eddie Cantor songbook. Eddie Cantor Redbook article (reprint). Studebaker advertising booklet with Eddie Cantor. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1930, 1932

4:5

Earl Carroll Theatre program. Tournament of Roses Golden Jubilee program. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1925, 1928, 1939

4:6

Miscellaneous Eddie Cantor (some with wife Ida and daughters) and Benjamin Holzman photographs; Herbert Hoover photograph. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. probably 1930s (bulk)

4:7

Benjamin Holzman photographs, with clients. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. undated

2ov:1

Loose scrapbook leaves with correspondence, military record. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1916-1917

2ov:2

Separated Variety Pages and newspaper articles re Eddie Cantor. Photograph montage of "The Association of Theatre Managers of Greater New York." Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1938-1950 (dates broken)

2ov:3

"Able" comic strip with reference to Benjamin Holzman. From New York Journal newspaper. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1924

2ov:4

Paul Gregory photograph. Friars Club program for Buster Collier. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 2ov. 1928

3ov

Scrapbook with personal ephemera, vaudeville photograph and personal photographs, newspaper clippings, Benny Leonard birthday party invitation. "Benny Holzman" stamped on front cover. 1919-1932 (dates broken)

4:8


4:9

Benjamin Holzman incoming business correspondence. Eddie Cantor letter. George White letter re Ed Wynn contract. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 3ov. 1924-1948 (dates broken)

4:10

Probable Benjamin Holzman press releases. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 3ov. undated

4:11

Benjamin Holzman incoming correspondence from Eddie Cantor. Photograph of a young Eddie Cantor. Will Rogers photograph. Originally a folder with scrapbook in Box 3ov. 1940

3ov:1  Leaves, with *New York Times* and *Tribune* clippings. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 3ov. 1920

4ov  Newspapers and newspaper articles. Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 3ov. 1941-1950 (dates broken)

Map Case 4  Frank Webb cartoon strip "The Good Humor Man." "The Keith Flyer" (for dedication of Keith Palace Theater, Cleveland). "The Chafing Dish" (humor newspaper). Loose materials originally with scrapbook in Box 3ov. 1922, 1924