Little Leather Library Collection

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California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo. Special Collections and Archives
Robert E. Kennedy Library, Rm 409
San Luis Obispo, California 93407
(805) 756-2305
archives@calpoly.edu
http://www.lib.calpoly.edu/specialcollections
2019
Descriptive Summary
Title: Little Leather Library Collection
Dates: Circa 1920-1924
Collection Number: MS0160
Creator/Collector: Little Leather Library Corporation of New York
Extent: 2LF, 2 boxes, 101 titles
Repository: California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo. Special Collections and Archives
San Luis Obispo, California 93407
Abstract: The Little Leather Library Collection consists of 101 books, 3-1/4” x 4,” published by the Little Leather Library Corporation of New York. The miniature books are bound in imitation leather and characteristic of the Redcroft edition published between 1920-1924. There were over 100 miniature book titles published in the various editions of the Little Leather Library, but it is not known if all of these titles were included in the Redcroft edition.
Language of Material: English
Access
Collection is open to researchers by appointment. For more information on visiting, access policies, and reproduction requests, please visit our Reference Services page online at http://lib.calpoly.edu/search-and-find/collections-and-archives/reference-services/.
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Preferred Citation
Little Leather Library Collection. California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo. Special Collections and Archives
Acquisition Information
Gift
Biography/Administrative History
The Little Leather Library Corporation of New York was the first company to mass-market inexpensive books in the United States. The corporation, founded in 1916 by Albert Boni, Harry Scherman and Maxwell Sackheim, made available a wide variety of classics by authors including Rudyard Kipling, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Morris, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Henry James, Leo Tolstoy, Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats in miniature editions. The 101 books in this collection are brownish green in color, bound in imitation leather, and characteristic of the Redcroft edition published between 1920-1924. Only the first two editions were bound in real leather. When first published, the little books were sold at the Woolworth’s chain. By the early 1920s, the books were advertised in popular magazines, selling in National Geographic from 1922 to 1924. Sometimes a miniature classic might appear in a cereal box as a promotion. Robert K. Hass, Inc., Publishers took control of the Little Leather Library Corporation in 1924. Boni later established Modern Library Publishing Company, of which Random House Publishers would become a subsidiary company. Scherman and Sackheim as well as Hass were later involved in the establishment of the Book of the Month Club.
Scope and Content of Collection
The Little Leather Library Collection consists of 101 books, 3-1/4” x 4,” published by the Little Leather Library Corporation of New York. The miniature books are bound in imitation leather and characteristic of the Redcroft edition published between 1920-1924.