**Language of Material:** English

**Contributing Institution:** William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

**Title:** Allen Press and Dorothy and Lewis Allen Ephemera Collection

**Identifier/Call Number:** Press coll. Archives Allen

**Physical Description:** 2 boxes 2 linear feet

**Date (inclusive):** 1943-1991

**Abstract:** The Allen Press was a private press founded in 1939 by Lewis and Dorothy Allen and based in the San Francisco Bay area. This collection includes printed ephemera (predominantly prospectuses), photographs, and correspondence.

**Biographical Note**

The Allen Press, also referred to as L-D Allen Press, was a private press based in the San Francisco Bay area, founded in 1939 by husband and wife team Lewis and Dorothy Allen. Lewis Allen met Dorothy Caswell when they both studied at the University of California, Berkeley. The Allens were particularly fascinated by books produced by Aldus Manutius, William Morris, John Henry Nash, and the Grabhorns (to name a few). These noted presses served as an inspiration for Lewis and Dorothy's work as full-time hand-press printers.

The Allen Press was founded shortly after their marriage and they produced their first book in 1939. This book, with one hundred copies printed, was The Trail of Beauty by Lewis' father, Harris Sterns Allen. Lewis' father also served as a catalyst for their printing ambitions. The Allen Press performed all facets of bookmaking: selection of text, typography, choice of materials and colors, hand-set types hand-printed on handmade paper, illumination, occasionally illustrations, binding, and marketing. In the selection of text, the Allens favored readability, depth of thought, and imaginative qualities.

The following editions are considered the most successful by Lewis and Dorothy Allen: Roughing It In California; The Noble Knight Paris and the Fair Vienne; Murders in the Rue Morgue; Youth; The Splendid Idle Forties; Four Poems of the Occult; The Mirrour of Genesis; Jealousy; Christopher Columbus; The Bacchae; All For Love; Persian Stories from the Arabian Nights.

Over the course of their careers, the Allens produced a large collection of ephemera consisting of prospectuses of their books, labels, announcements, Christmas cards, and broadsides of various types. Information sourced from the records themselves and from The Allen Press Bibliography that can be found at the William Andrews Clark Library, UCLA.

**Scope and Contents**

The collection is comprised of ephemera created by the Allen Press, particularly prospectuses for their books. Most of the prospectuses are small broadsides folded for mailing. All of the prospectuses served as samples of the Allens's work and provided detailed information about each book. A reply card and return envelope were usually mailed with the prospectuses. Some orders were directed to the Allens and other orders directed to the Argonaut Bookshop in San Francisco.

The collection also includes ephemera for the Book Club of California and Roxburghe Club of San Francisco as well as envelopes, labels, announcements, exhibit postcards, and correspondence with Margot and H. Richard Archer, the latter of whom was a librarian at the Clark Library in the 1940s and 1950s.

**Arrangement**

The collection is organized into the following series:

- Series 1. Correspondence
- Series 2. Prospectuses
- Series 3. Book Club of California
- Series 4. Roxburghe Club of San Francisco
- Series 5. Miscellaneous Ephemera

**Conditions Governing Access**

Collection is open for research.

**Provenance**

The provenance of this collection is unclear. It is possible that this collection was formed over time by Clark Library staff, with donations from H. Richard Archer.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Small presses -- California -- 20th century
- Private presses -- California -- 20th century
Correspondence Series 1.

Box 1, Folder 1

Photo of Lew & Dorothy Allen, Hillsborough, July 2 1950
Physical Description: 1 item Black and white photo. 5 1/4 x 3 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 1

Photo of Lew and Dorothy Allen, and Margot Archer, Hillsborough, July 1950
Physical Description: 1 item Black and white photo of Lew and Dorothy Allen, and Margot Archer lounging in a yard 5 1/4 x 3 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 1

Letter from L&D Allen to the Archer, July 5 1950
Physical Description: 1 item Letter describes "hay prints." 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 1

5 "hay prints" 1950
Physical Description: 5 items 5 colored prints of plants and leaves. Some of the prints have the name of the plant on the back, such as sage and bamboo. multiple

Box 1, Folder 2

Postcard from Museum Plantin-Moretus at Antwerpen. Correspondence between L&D Allen to Dr. H. Richard Archer. 1957
Physical Description: 1 item Postcard depicts a black and white image of a plaza surrounded by brick buildings 5 1/2 x 3 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 2

Letter from L&D Allen, December 20 1977
Physical Description: 1 item Allen press heart logo on upper-left corner of letter. "Dear Richard, We just learned of your illness, and are terribly distraught and unhappy..." 8 1/2 x 10 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 2

Letter from Lew Allen, "Dear Archer, something ought to be done about Wichy..." n.d.
Physical Description: 1 item Contain additional annotation: "and we need copy apr 15"8 1/2 x 5 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 2

Letter from Lew Allen to Richard Archer, May 3 1969
Physical Description: 1 item "Dear Richard, We've nailed down a couple of cots at Hotel Shoreham..." 5 x 8 in.
Letter from Lew Allen to Richard Archer, October 27 1970

Physical Description: 1 itemLetter contains Allen Press footer. Printing press logo on bottom-right corner of letter. “Dear Richard, From your communications I gather that you haven’t had much time for the pool halls…” 8 x 11 in.

Handwritten letter addressed to Lewis Allen from Will Chevey. Bottom of letter is a message from Richard Archer. 1953

Physical Description: 1 itemBottom of has a message from Richard Archer to Lewis Allen. Header is “Nine forty-two Alandele Avenue, Los Angeles, California.” 7 1/4 x 10 1/2 in.


Physical Description: 1 itemResponse letter from Richard Archer attached. Letter contains Allen press Footer. Additional annotation: “Will put chapin down for GENESIS. Adrian’s Address: 1 Tuscany Alley, S.F. 9A133.” 8 x 10 1/2 in.

Letter from Richard archer to L&D Allen, August 11 1970

Physical Description: 1 itemIn Response to the letter from Lew Allen, May 30, 1970 8 1/2 x 11 in.

Letter addressed to Lew and Dorothy, 20 May Decoration Day 1969

Physical Description: 1 item5 1/2 x 8 3/4 in.

Letter addressed to Lew and Dorothy, July 17 1969

Physical Description: 1 item5 1/2 x 8 1/2 in.


Physical Description: 1 item

Prospectuses: A-B

Aeschylus. The Oresteian Trilogy, Volume 1 - Agamemnon. 1982

Physical Description: 1 item7 x 10 in.

Aeschylus. The Oresteian Trilogy, Comprising the Libation Bearers and the Furies. 1982

Physical Description: 1 item7 x 10 in.
Box 2, Folder 1  The Allen Press Bibliography 1981  
Physical Description: 1 item 6 3/4 x 14 3/4"

Box 1, folder 5  Allen Press Bibliography: A facsimile. Book Club of California. 1985  
Physical Description: 1 itemWith a notice inside. 6 1/2 x 9 in.

Box 1, folder 5  Atherton, Gertrude. The Splendid Idle Forties. 1960  
Physical Description: 1 item 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.

Box 2, Folder 1  All for love: Antony - Cleopatra 1976  
Physical Description: 1 item 6 1/4 x 15"

Box 2, Folder 1  Antigone: A Tragedy of Sophocles 1978  
Physical Description: 1 item 3/4 x 14 3/4"

Box 2, Folder 1  The Bacchae by Euripides n.d.  
Physical Description: 1 item 7 1/2 x 15 3/4"

Box 1, Folder 5  Balzac, Honore de. The Hidden Treasures, or The Adventncture of Maitre Cornelius. 1953  
Physical Description: 1 item 1/2 x 7 3/4 in.

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Prospectuses: C

Box 1, Folder 6  Clemens, Samuel. Mark Twain: San Francisco Correspondent. Book Club of California. 1957  
Physical Description: 1 item In an envelope addressed to "Mr. Ward Ritchie" from The Book Club of California. Envelope footer: "The Book Club Of California Announces Its Spring Publication." With order reply card inside prospectus. 8 x 11 1/4 in.

Box 1, Folder 6  Clemens, Samuel. Roughing it in California. 1953  
Physical Description: 1 item Third copy. Other 2 copies housed in envelopes. 6 3/4 x 10 in.

Box 1, Folder 6  Clemens, Samuel. Roughing it in California. (in an envelope addressed to "Mr. H. Richard Archer") 1953  
Physical Description: 1 item In an envelope addressed to "Mr. H. Richard Archer" from the L-D Allen Press 3/4 x 10 in.

Box 1, Folder 6  Clemens, Samuel. Roughing it in California. (in an envelope addressed to "Mr. H. Richard Archer, curator of Spl. Coll.") 1953  
Physical Description: 1 item In an envelope addressed to "Mr. H. Richard Archer, curator of Spl. Coll." from L-D Allen Press. With reply order card. 6 3/4 x 10 in.

Box 1, Folder 6  Crucial Essay on Cowan's 1914 Bibliography of the History of California and the West. Book Club of California. 1993  
Physical Description: 1 item 8 x 10 1/2 in.

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Prospectuses: E-H

Box 1, Folder 7  Essays of Montaigne 1948  
Physical Description: 1 item With reply card and envelope to Dawson's Book Shop 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2, Folder 1</td>
<td>From a Good-Humoured Christmas Chapter n.d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item Broadside 11 x 14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, Folder 1</td>
<td>Four Fictions 1973</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 6 1/2 x 15 1/2&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Harte, Bret. A millionaire of rough-and-ready 1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item in an envelope addressed to &quot;The Library, UCLA.&quot; With a reply card to L-D Allen Press.5 1/4 x 4 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Hawthorne, Nathaniel. Rappaccini's Daughter. 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 3/4 x 10 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Herodotus. Egypt: fifth century B.C. 1989</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 7 x 10 1/4 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prospectuses: L-M</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Lewis, Oscar. On Reaching Seventy. 1982</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 8 1/4 x 13 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Lewis, Oscar. On Reaching Seventy. 1982</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 8 1/4 x 12 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Lewis, Oscar. On Reaching Seventy. (with marking) 1982</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item Yellow mark at bottom of page. 8 1/4 x 12 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, Folder 1</td>
<td>A Legend of India: The Transposed Heads 1977</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 6 1/4 x 14 3/4&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, Folder 1</td>
<td>The Mirror of the World 1964</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item 3/4 x 15 3/4&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prospectuses: O-R</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 9</td>
<td>On the ambitious projects of Russia (copy to Clark Library) 1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item (copy) In an envelope addressed to &quot;William Andrews Clark Memorial Library&quot; from The Book Club of California.8 x 11 1/4 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 9</td>
<td>On the ambitious projects of Russia (copy to Ward Ritchie) 1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item In an envelope addressed to &quot;Mr. Ward Ritchie&quot; from The Book Club of California. With order reply card.6 1/2 x 10 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 9</td>
<td>Private Journal of Stendhal n.d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item Another copy. 5 1/2 x 7 3/4 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, Folder 9</td>
<td>Private Journals of Stendhal (with reply cards) 1954</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 item 2 copies in an envelope addressed to &quot;William Andrews Clark Library.&quot; Both copies have a reply card.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prospectuses Series 2.

Prospectuses: O-R

Box 1, Folder 9

Rich, Adrienne. Knight. 1957
Physical Description: 1 item 6 1/2 x 10 in.

Box 2, Folder 1

Persian Stories from the Arabian Nights 1980
Physical Description: 1 item 7 x 15".

Box 2, Folder 1

Printing with the handpress: announcing a definitive manual by Lewis M. Allen 1969
Physical Description: 1 item 7 1/4 x 15 1/2".

Box 2, Folder 1

Quartet: Four Stories 1975
Physical Description: 1 item 6 1/2 x 15".

Prospectuses: S

Box 1, Folder 10

Physical Description: 1 item 7 x 10 in.

Box 1, Folder 10

Steinbeck, John. Flight. 1984
Physical Description: 1 item With reader newsletter from Carolyn and James Robertson (the publishers), an order card to Yolla Bolly Press, and order envelope addressed to Yolla Bolly Press 10 x 12 in.

Box 1, Folder 10

Stevenson, Robert Louis. Across the Plains. (with an annotation) 1950
Physical Description: 1 item Annotation "HRA" at upper-left corner on front page. 6 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.

Box 1, Folder 10

Stevenson, Robert Louis. Across the Plains. (with reply postcard) 1950
Physical Description: 1 item With reply postcard to L-D Allen Press 6 1/4 x 9 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 10

Stevenson, Robert Louis. Across the Plains. (with 2 reply cards) 1950
Physical Description: 1 item With a reply card to L-D Allen Press and another reply card to Chiswick Book Shop 6 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.

Prospectuses: T-Y

Box 1, Folder 11

The noble knight paris & the fair vienne 1956
Physical Description: 1 item In an envelope addressed to "William Andrews Clark Memorial Library" from The Allen Press 7 1/2 x 11 in.

Box 1, Folder 11

Tolstoy, Leo. What men live by. n. d.
Physical Description: 1 item 4 1/4 x 5 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 11

Tolstoy, Leo. What men live by. (with reply cards) n.d.
Physical Description: 2 item 2 copies with reply cards. 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 in.

Box 2, Folder 1

Youth n.d.
Physical Description: 1 item Broadsides 10 1/2 x 14".

Book Club of California Series 3.
Box 1, Folder 12

John Bidwell, Josiah Royce: A letter from Mary Clement Leavitt to Bidwell on behalf of Royce 1943

Physical Description: 1 item 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 in.

Box 1, Folder 12


Physical Description: 1 item 8 1/4 x 10 in.

Roxburghe Club of San Francisco Series 4.

Box 1, Folder 13

Good for one admission to the Roxburghe Club Meeting, December 8 1947

Physical Description: 1 item 6 1/2 x 10 in.

Box 1, Folder 13

Judge Louis E. Goodman on the foibles and whimsies of book collectors, May 15. 1956

Physical Description: 1 item Allen press heart logo on back. 7 x 10 in.

Box 1, Folder 13

October 3. Lawrence Clark Powell Bibliophile & Bibiliomaniac. 2 copies. 1947

Physical Description: 2 item 2 copies. Both copies in envelopes. 3 3/4 x 7 1/7 in.

Box 1, Folder 13

San Francisco Roxburghe Club, Christmas MCMXLVI [1946], Palms XXIII. 1946

Physical Description: 1 item Broadside. On back-side at the bottom left corner, "Printed by Lewis & Dorothy Allen on English hand-made paper. Stephen Allen, printer's devil" 9 x 13 in.

Box 1, Folder 13

Roxburghe Club of San Francisco Meetings & Programs Schedule 1945-1946

Physical Description: 1 item 11 x 15 1/4" in.

Box 1, Folder 14

Miscellaneous Ephemera Series 5.

516 Woodland Road Kentfield California (Envelope Piece) n.d.

Physical Description: 1 item A separated envelope piece.

A very merry Christmas. The L.D. Allen Press. n.d.

Physical Description: 1 item Recto: "There is such a thing as taking ourselves and the world too seriously..." 6 1/2 x 10 in.

The Allen Press order reply card for Allen Press edition of "Dialogues of Creatures Moralised" n.d.

Physical Description: 1 item 6 x 7 in.

Award of Merit Twelfth Western Books Exhibition Nineteen Fifty-Three 1953

Physical Description: 1 item Broadside. 7 x 10 in.

Envelope with Ward Ritchie Label n.d.

Physical Description: 1 item Found Empty. 10 x 13 in.

Some Passengers are introduced...The Wreck of the Golden Mary n.d.

Physical Description: 1 item Woodblock print illustration under the header "Some Passengers are Introduced" 7 x 10 1/2 in.


Physical Description: 1 item 2 pages.

Toy Sale! Sale, Tuesday June 28th, Place - 20 Laureldale Rd near Bridge Rd. Hillsborough, in Steve Allen's green house n.d.

Physical Description: 2 item Small broadside. 2 copies. 5 x 9 1/2 in.
Box 1, Folder 4  

First comprehensive exhibit of books, hand-bindings and ephemera of the L-D Allen Press 1951

Physical Description: 1 item 5 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.

Box 1, Folder 4  

Four folios produced by hand...an exhibit starting March 9, 1964 1964

Physical Description: 1 item 5 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.