Finding Aid for the William Lewis Papers, 1918-1947

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Descriptive Summary

**Title:** William Lewis Papers, 1918-1947

**Date (inclusive):** 1918-1947

**Collection number:** 1496

**Creator:** Lewis, William

**Extent:** 1 oversize box

**Repository:** University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Dept. of Special Collections. Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

**Abstract:** William Lewis decided on a dancing career after seeing the Frisco Kid perform in the early 1920s. He began in vaudeville with the group, Sunshowers, and later with a travelling minstrel show. His wife Elsie studied Russian ballet and tap dancing. The collection consists of photographs, theater programs, and ephemera relating to the vaudeville careers of William and Elsie Lewis, and to vaudeville in America in the 1920s.

**Physical location:** Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

**Language:** English.

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Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Advance notice required for access.

Provenance/Source of Acquisition


Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], William Lewis Papers (Collection 496). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

UCLA Catalog Record ID: 1973134

Biography

William Lewis was born in Providence, Rhode Island; he decided on a dancing career after seeing the Frisco Kid perform in the early 1920s; began in vaudeville with the group, Sunshowers, and later with a travelling minstrel show; his wife Elsie studied Russian ballet and tap dancing; danced at Capital Music Hall in New York with the Chester Hale Girls; William and Elsie joined a touring group, Gobs of joy; after 1932, William Lewis returned to Rhode Island and opened a dancing
school; after their baby was born, Lewis danced and served as an MC throughout the state; after the U.S. became involved in World War II, he took a job in an ammunition factory; continued to do MC work until 1960, after which he continued to perform in nursing homes.

**Scope and Content**
Collection consists of photographs, theater programs, and ephemera relating to the vaudeville careers of William and Elsie Lewis, and to vaudeville in America in the 1920s.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
- Lewis, William--Archives.
- Lewis, Elsie--Archives.
- Vaudeville--United States--Archival resources.

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**Papers, ca. 1920-1981**
Creator/Collector: Lewis, William
Physical Description: (1 box, 88 items)
Scope and Content Note
Contains photographs, theater programs, and ephemera from the vaudeville careers of William and Elsie Lewis.
I. Lewis, Elsie.
1. Vaudeville x. Variety shows (Theater)
2. Minstrel shows.