Willys A. Myers collection of material about magic, 1900-1960

Finding aid prepared by Alexandra Levitan, 2014; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.
UCLA Library Special Collections
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Title: Willys A. Myers collection of material about magic
Collection number: 972
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 3.6 linear ft. (9 document boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1900-1960
Abstract: Willys A. Myers was a U.S. Vice Consul in the first half of the twentieth century. Also an amateur magician, he collected a number of materials related to magic and magic tricks, covering the years from around 1900 to around 1960. This collection contains letters, instructions, books, catalogs, magazines, newspapers, programs, and promotional items on the subject of magic. Among these materials are both commercial items that Myers collected, and items addressed to or written by Myers himself.
Language of Materials: Materials are in English.
Location note: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library Special Collections for paging information.
Creator: Meyers, Willys A.
Restrictions on Access
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Preferred Citation note
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UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 4232771
Immediate Source of Acquisition note
Gift of Willys A. Myers and Peggy Christian.
Processing Information
Processed in the CFPRT by Alexandra Levitan in 2014 with assistance from Jillian Cuellar.
Biography/History
Willys A. Myers was a member of the United States Foreign Service. He served as a Vice Consul in Veracruz, Veracruz, Mexico in the 1920s, and in Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico in the 1930s. He was also an amateur magician.
Scope and Content
This collection consists of letters, instructions, books, catalogs, magazines, newspapers, programs, and promotional items on the subject of magic and magic tricks. The collection offers descriptions of magic tricks as they were marketed for sale, as well as detailed explanations of how some magic tricks were performed. Many of the included publications also mention original prices for the tricks and items sold. Several publications are associated with specific shops or vendors, such as the Thayer Magic Company and Silk King Studios, or with specific organizations, such as the International Brotherhood of Magicians. Other included materials promote specific magicians or shows. The collection's coverage of magic publications, and especially of catalogs and magazines, is more extensive than its coverage of performers, and it does not contain a great deal of promotional material for any one magician. The highest concentration of promotional material for a single individual is for the Great Sorcar. Some of the material, including letters and plans for magic tricks, also reflects collector Willys A. Myers' own interest in and practice of magic. The collection covers the period from around 1900 to around 1960.
Arrangement
This collection has been arranged in the following series:
   Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1930s-1950s
   Series 2: Plans and instructions for magic tricks, circa 1930s-1960s
   Series 3: Publications and ephemera, circa 1900s-1960s
The materials have been arranged by format, and then chronologically within each series.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Magic tricks--Archives.

Series 1: Correspondence. circa 1930s-1950s.
Physical Description: 1 folder
Scope and Content Note
This series contains replies to letters and orders by Willys A. Myers, as well as requests that Myers contribute to shows and/or events. Multiple items in this series respond to Myers's orders from catalogs elsewhere in the collection, confirming his orders or advising him as to the availability of given items. Other items include responses to Myers's fan mail, received from magicians such as Dell O'Dell.

Box 1, Folder 1
Requests and responses. circa 1930s-1950s.

Series 2: Plans and instructions for magic tricks. circa 1930s-1960s.
Physical Description: 23 folders
Scope and Content Note
This series consists of printed instructions as to the execution and performance of magic tricks. These are generally step-by-step instructions, and many of them are illustrated with diagrams. Several also contain advice about patter, explaining how best to sell a specific trick to an audience. The majority of the instructions in this series are commercial in nature, and seem to have been ordered from catalogs or purchased in a booklike format. The Ireland's Year Books, in particular, come from the same publisher as several catalogs in the collection. Other instructions apparently consist of Willys A. Myers's own typed plans and notes for magic tricks.

Box 1, Folder 2
Instructions for magic tricks, including Trick of the Month Club. circa 1930s.
Box 1, Folders 3-9
Instructions for magic tricks. circa 1930s.
Box 2, Folders 1-7
Instructions for magic tricks. 1930s.
Box 2, Folder 8
Instructions for magic tricks. circa 1930s-1940s.
Box 2, Folder 9
Instructions for magic tricks, including Forty Four Foolers and Flower Magic. circa 1940s.
Box 6, Folder 1
Instructions for magic tricks. circa 1930s.
Box 6, Folder 2
Instructions for magic tricks. circa 1940s.
Box 3, Folders 1-3
Instructions for magic tricks. circa 1940s.
Box 3, Folder 4
Box 3, Folder 5

Series 3: Publications and ephemera. circa 1900s-1960s.
Physical Description: 57 folders, .5 boxes of books
Scope and Content Note
This series consists of publications and ephemera on the subject of magic, including books, catalogs, magazines, newspapers, programs, and other promotional items. The catalogs primarily contain listings for magic tricks and items used in the performance of magic tricks, although some catalogs of magic books are also included. Most catalog entries include a description of the trick being sold and a price for that trick, and many are also illustrated. The magazines include titles such as The Linking Ring, associated with the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and Goodliffe's Abracadabra, as well as some titles from the same publishers as catalogs in the collection. These magazines often include instructions for magic tricks, but they may also feature interviews and general news items on the subject of magic. Some of the publications included in this series, especially The Dragon magazine, are particularly targeted at young or child magicians.

Box 6
Books on magic. circa 1920s-1940s.

Willys A. Myers collection of material about magic, 1900-1960
Series 3: Publications and ephemera. circa 1900s-1960s.

Willys A. Myers collection of material about magic, 1900-1960

Box 11
Books on magic. circa 1920s-1940s.

Box 3, Folder 6
Catalogs and advertisements, including Lists number 1-4 from Abbott’s. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 3, Folder 7
Catalogs and advertisements, including Owen Magic Supreme and Magic Art Company. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 6, Folder 4
Catalogs and advertisements, including Tiny’s Magic Company. circa 1940s.

Box 3, Folder 8
Catalogs, including the Book of 1000 Wonders. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 1
Catalogs, including the Demon Telegraph. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 2
Catalogs, including Ireland’s, Max Andrew’s, and Thayer’s. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 3
Catalogs from L.L. Ireland number 7-9. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 4
Catalogs, including Lyle Douglas and the Latest Catalogue of Modern Magic. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 5
Catalogs, including Lyle Douglas and the Silk King. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 6
Catalogs, including Thayer’s. circa 1930s.

Box 4, Folder 7
Catalogs, including Owen Magic Supreme and Magic Art Company. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 5, Folder 1
Impromptu and Pocket Tricks catalog. circa 1930s.

Box 5, Folder 2
Catalogs, including L.L. Ireland’s number 10-11 and Golden’s Magic Wand. circa 1930s-1940s.

Box 5, Folder 3
Catalogs, including Max Holden’s. circa 1930s-1940s.

Box 5, Folder 4
Catalogs, including 500 Tricks. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 5, Folder 5
Catalogs, including Catalog of Popular Magic, Krinog’s Magic Shop, and Silk King Studios. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 5, Folder 6
Catalogs, including Greater Magic. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 5, Folder 7
Catalogs, including Robbins’ and the Book of 1000 Wonders. circa 1930s-1950s.

Box 7, Folder 1
Catalogs, including Ireland’s, Silk King and George Krinog. 1932-1941.

Box 7, Folder 2
The Demon Telegraph catalog. 1934-1946.

Box 7, Folder 3
Johnson Smith and Company catalog. 1938.

Box 7, Folder 4
Catalogs, including Allen’s Attic and the Grant Gazette. circa 1940s.

Box 7, Folder 5
Catalogs, including Ireland’s Trick Talk and Robbins’ Magic Catalog. circa 1940s.

Box 7, Folder 6
Catalogs, including Nelson Enterprises. circa 1940s.

Box 7, Folder 7
Catalogs, including Thayer’s, the Catalogue of Professional Magic, and the Mystery Mart. circa 1930s.

Box 8, Folder 1
Catalogs, including Thayer’s and L. Davenport and Company. circa 1940s.

Box 8, Folder 2
Catalogs, including E-Z Magic Catalog. circa 1950s.

Box 8, Folder 3
Catalogs, including Ireland’s Trick Talk. circa 1950s.

Box 8, Folder 4
Catalogs, including Lines from Lawton. circa 1950s.

Box 8, Folder 5
Catalogs, including U.F. Grant. circa 1950s.

Box 6, Folder 3
Catalogs and magazines, including Magic is Fun, Silk King, and H.C. Evans and Company. circa 1930s-1940s.

Box 8, Folder 6
Magazines, including the Magazine of Magic and Felsman’s Magical Review. 1904-1925.

Box 8, Folder 7
The Sphinx magazine. 1916-1932.

Box 8, Folders 8-9
The Sphinx magazine. 1927.

Box 8, Folder 10

Box 9, Folder 1
Linking Ring magazine. 1932-1933.

Box 9, Folder 2
Magic Wand and Magical Review magazine. 1933-1941.

Box 9, Folder 3
The Dragon magazine. 1935-1938.

Box 9, Folder 4
The “Tops” magazine. 1937 January-June.

Box 9, Folder 5
The “Tops” magazine. 1937 July-December.

Box 9, Folder 6
Magazines, including The Corsair and Magic Wand and Magical Review. 1937-1954.

Box 9, Folder 7
Hugard’s Magic Monthly. circa 1940s.

Box 9, Folder 8
Magazines, including Magic is Fun. circa 1940s.

Box 10, Folder 1
The “Tops” magazine. 1941 January-June.

Box 10, Folder 2
The “Tops” magazine. 1941 July-December.

Box 10, Folder 3

Box 10, Folder 4
The Dragon magazine. 1943.

Box 10, Folder 5
Demon Telegraph Magazine. 1943-1946.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 10, Folder 6</th>
<th>The Bat magazine. 1946-1947.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 7</td>
<td>Goodliffe's Abracadabra magazine. 1946-1954.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 8</td>
<td>The Wizard magazine. 1948-1954.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 9</td>
<td>The Magic Wand and Magical Review magazine. 1952 June-December.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 1</td>
<td>Magazines, including The Hollow Tree and The Gen. 1953-1954.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 2</td>
<td>The Magnet Newspaper and clippings. circa 1930s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 3</td>
<td>Programs and memorabilia, including about the Great Sorcar. circa 1940s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 4</td>
<td>Programs and memorabilia, including Playgoer Magazine. circa 1940s.</td>
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