Finding Aid for the Albert E. Smith Papers, 1897-1933

Collection number: 2004

UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division

Los Angeles, CA

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Albert E. Smith Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1897-1933
Collection number: 2004
Creator: Smith, Albert E.
Extent: 15 boxes (7.5 linear ft.) 6 oversize boxes
Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Abstract: Albert E. Smith (1875-1958) co-founded the Vitagraph Company of America as the Reader, Smith, and Blackton Combination in 1894. He invented the Vitagraph, one of the first successful motion picture projectors, in 1896. The collection consists of correspondence, scrapbooks, albums, photographs, auditor's reports, and trade agreements pertaining to the business of the Vitagraph Company of America, of which Smith was co-founder.

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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Additional Physical Form Available
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A copy of the original version of this online finding aid is available at the UCLA Department of Special Collections for in-house consultation and may be obtained for a fee. Please contact:

Public Services Division
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Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Gift of Lucile Smith, 1959.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Albert E. Smith Papers (Collection 2004). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 2976927

Biography
Smith was born in 1875 in Faversham, England; co-founded the Vitagraph Company of America as the Reader, Smith, and Blackton Combination in 1894; Vitagraph producer, writer, and executive with actor and director J. Stuart Blackton until sale of the company to Warner Brothers in 1925; invented the Vitagraph, one of the first successful motion picture projectors, in 1896; had a wife, Lucile, and 6 children; died August 1, 1958 in Los Angeles.

Scope and Content
Collection consists of correspondence, scrapbooks, albums, photographs, auditor's reports, and trade agreements pertaining to the business of the Vitagraph Company of America, of which Smith was co-founder. Runs of ephemeral publications, Vitagraph releases (1916-1920) and six bound volumes of the Vitagraph Bulletin (1906-1916) complete the Vitagraph documentation. There are 17 reels of audiotapes recorded by Smith on the subject of motion picture history, as well as a copy of his autobiography.

Organization and Arrangement
Arranged in the following series:
1. Collection arranged chronologically.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Smith, Albert E.--Archives.
Blackton, James Stuart, 1875-1941.
Vitagraph Company of America--Archives.
Motion picture producers and directors--United States--Archival resources.
Motion picture industry--History--Archival resources.
Audiotapes.
Scrapbooks.
Photographs.
Vitagraph Company of America.
Vitagraph bulletin. Vitagraph releases.

Box 1

Early beginnings. 1897-1904.
Physical Description: 291pp.
Scope and Content Note
Newspaper clippings, documents, early film catalogs (1901-1904), folder of notes for book and typescript manuscripts of history of Vitagraph Company by Albert E. Smith.
Container List

Box 2  
**1908-1916.**  
Scope and Content Note  
Correspondence, ephemera and clippings, auditor's reports, stock certificates, agreements (bound volume) re ownership of Vitagraph Company and By-Laws of Smith-Blackton Company, 1916.

Box 3  
**Vitagraph Bulletins. 1909-1916.**  
Physical Description: Six bound volumes.

Box 4  
**1916.**  
Scope and Content Note  

Box 5  
**1915-1918.**  
Scope and Content Note  

Box 6  
**1917-1920.**  
Scope and Content Note  

Box 7  
**1920-1922.**  
Scope and Content Note  
Correspondence, contracts and agreements, copies of legal briefs involving Vitagraph Company, auditor's reports. Typescript of Releases 1920 (bound) containing synopses and credits.

Box 8  
**1923-1924.**  
Scope and Content Note  
Legal documents, correspondence.

Box 9  
**1924-1929.**  
Scope and Content Note  
Correspondence, publicity releases.

Box 10  
**1925-1956.**  
Scope and Content Note  

Box 11  
**Notebooks containing story ideas. Reports on individual theatres. 1920. Legal contracts. 1924.**

Boxes 12, 15  
**Stills.**

Box 13  
**Scrapbook of clippings on the death of John Bunny. 1915.**

Box 13  
**Scrapbook of newspaper clippings. 1914.**

Box 13  
**Miscellaneous motion-picture publications.**

Box 14  
**History of Vitagraph Company.**  
Physical Description: 17 reels tape.

Box 16  
**Photograph album. Stills from Vitagraph productions of O'Henry stories.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 16</th>
<th>Photograph album. Jean Paige - stills from Vitagraph productions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boxes 17-19</td>
<td>Album of stills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 20</td>
<td>Scrapbook. 1925.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Scope and Content Note</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper clippings covering Vitagraph's break with Hays Office (MPPDA).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box 20  | Scrapbook. Clippings. 1923-1933.                              |
| Box 21  | Panoramic photograph of Vitagraph personnel. 1910.            |
|         | **Note**                                                      |
|         | Missing, January 1990.                                        |