

Yale University Library  
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

# Frank L. Smith Collection

YCAL MSS 1123



by Susan Brady

February 2018

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

---

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	4
Immediate Source of Acquisition .....	4
Conditions Governing Access .....	4
Conditions Governing Use .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Processing Information .....	4
Frank L. Smith (1882-1953) .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Collection Contents .....	6
Selected Search Terms .....	8

---

## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 1123

**CREATOR:** Smith, Frank L., 1882-1953

**TITLE:** Frank L. Smith collection

**DATES:** 1911-1936

**BULK DATES:** 1911-1919

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 5.75 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Collection consists of correspondence, typescripts, photographs, performance programs and other ephemera primarily relating to Frank L. Smith's career as a theatrical press and advance agent for burlesque shows produced by Max Spiegel on the burlesque theater circuit from circa 1916 to 1919. Correspondence chiefly consists of Smith's communications with theaters in which the shows were to perform, and with Max Spiegel regarding issues concerning the productions. Typescripts include press releases and articles by Smith publicizing performers and productions including George Armstrong, Florence Mills, Abe Reynolds, the Watson Sisters and the Merry Rounders. Photographs include portrait and candid photographs of Smith, Spiegel, and unidentified male and female performers. The collection also includes Spiegel production playbills and programs and publicity materials; mock-ups of posters and original pen and ink caricatures of Smith; a small group of personal papers; and a scrapbook containing newspaper clippings relating to Smith's work on the burlesque theater circuit.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.smithfrank>

---

## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.smithfrank>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

f. folder

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from William Reese Co. on the George B. Alvord Fund, 2012.

---

### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

---

### Conditions Governing Use

The Frank L. Smith Collection is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

---

### Preferred Citation

Frank L. Smith Collection. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

---

### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

---

## Frank L. Smith (1882-1953)

Frank L. Smith was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1882. As a boy Smith worked in various capacities for travelling circuses and other entertainments. After meeting John M. "Major" Burke (renowned for his general management of William Cody's Wild West Show), Smith worked under Burke's tutelage in his company's press department. In the mid 1900's Smith joined Max Spiegel's New York City-based burlesque production company as a press and advance agent, travelling the burlesque theater circuit from the East Coast to the Midwest. He later managed theaters for Lee and J. J. Shubert in Newark, New Jersey, and New York City. Smith served on the board of governors of the Association of the Theatrical Press Agents and Managers Union from its establishment in 1928, and as president from 1949 until his death in 1953. He was married to Mildred Tyson, a former performer in one of the Spiegel productions.

---

## Scope and Contents

Collection consists of correspondence, typescripts, photographs, performance programs and other ephemera primarily relating to Frank L. Smith's career as a theatrical press and advance agent for burlesque shows produced by Max Spiegel on the burlesque theater circuit from circa 1916 to 1919. Correspondence chiefly consists of Smith's communications with theaters in which the shows were to perform, and with Max Spiegel regarding issues concerning the productions. Typescripts include press releases and

articles by Smith publicizing performers and productions including George Armstrong, Florence Mills, Abe Reynolds, the Watson Sisters and the Merry Rounders. Photographs include portrait and candid photographs of Smith, Spiegel, and unidentified male and female performers. The collection also includes Spiegel production playbills and programs and publicity materials; mock-ups of posters and pen and ink caricatures of Smith; a small group of personal papers; and a scrapbook containing newspaper clippings relating to Smith's work on the burlesque theater circuit.

---

## **Arrangement**

Arranged by type of material.

## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1-2	Correspondence Chiefly related to Smith's work as press and advance agent for Max Spiegel productions	1911-1919, undated
b. 1, f. 3-6	Typescript publicity articles Includes articles and press releases on performers and productions, and the history of burlesque; most untitled	undated
b. 1, f. 7-9	Photographs Includes photographs of Smith, Spiegel, and unidentified male and female performers	undated
b. 4 (Oversize), f. 32	Group photograph of actors and actresses Includes John Drew and William Cody	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Production programs and flyers Chiefly programs and flyers for Max Spiegel burlesque touring productions	1913-1919, undated
b. 1, f. 11	Advertisement flongs Two flongs for Max Spiegel's <i>Abe Reynolds' Revue</i>	undated
b. 1, f. 12-13	Theater-related ephemera Includes brochures, advertisements, menus, etc.	1913-1920, undated
b. 1, f. 14-16	Personal papers Includes bank books, business card, New Jersey vehicle registration, certificate of incorporation of Civic Light Opera Company, Newark, New Jersey (undated); and material relating to his grand jury service in Newark, New Jersey	1913-1929, undated
b. 1, f. 17	Souvenir performance programs Includes <i>Tobacco Road</i> and <i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i> starring Walter Hampden	1936, undated
b. 1, f. 18	<i>Captain Billy's Whiz Bang</i> Issue of "America's Magazine of Wit, Humor and Philosophy" published by W. H. Fawcett, Robbinsdale, Minnesota	1921 August
b. 2 (Oversize), f. 19	Scrapbook Includes clippings regarding Smith, Spiegel, and their burlesque productions and stars Florence Mills and Abe Reynolds; clippings pasted into blank electors' enrollment list ledger for Rochester, New York	1916-1919, undated
b. 2 (Oversize), f. 20-22	Loose clippings from scrapbook	1916-1933, undated
b. 2 (Oversize), f. 23	Playbills from scrapbook	1910-1919, undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 24-29	Caricatures of Frank Smith Includes original posters advertising annual parties hosted by Smith	undated
b. 4 (Oversize), f. 33-36	Caricatures of Frank Smith	undated

b. 3 (Oversize), f. Mock-up of poster for *Abe Reynolds' Revue*  
30

undated

---

b. 3 (Oversize), f. Mock-up of poster for *Merry Rounders*  
31

undated

---

b. 4 (Oversize), f. Drawing of Evelyn Herbert  
37

undated

---

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Actors -- United States  
Actors -- United States  
Burlesque (Theater) -- United States  
Press agents -- United States  
Theatrical managers -- United States  
Theatrical producers and directors -- United States  
Theatrical producers and directors -- United States

### **Genres / Formats**

Drawings (visual works)  
Photographic prints  
Scrapbooks

### **Occupations**

Press agents -- United States  
Theatrical managers -- United States

### **Names**

Armstrong, George, active 1916  
Mills, Florence  
Reynolds, Abe  
Smith, Frank L., 1882-1953  
Spiegel, Max