MSS0327. Edwin G. Frank collection finding aid

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Edwin G. Frank collection

Title: Edwin G. Frank collection
Collection No: MSS.327
Extent: 0.45 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: circa 1890-2016

Abstract: The collection comprises various items collected by Edwin G. Frank, former Curator of the Preservation and Special Collections Department at the University of Memphis Libraries.

Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English, German
Preferred Citation: Edwin G. Frank collection, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: August 2017
Scope and contents

The collection includes a number of unrelated items, mostly publications, including a late nineteenth century German book of song lyrics from the Napoleonic wars imported by J. Gruenewaelder of St. Louis, Missouri; a box of 60 illustrated cards on Chinese maxims published by Joseph Tuck of New York in 1938; a program of actress Sarah Bernhardt’s performances in Memphis in 1906; a copy of “Yank Talk”, a French publication of humorous anecdotes and stories sold to American troops in 1919, and an interior view of the Horner and Company store in Obion, Tennessee, in 1954. A map of the United States with illustrations of folklore and legends from around the country produced by Esso in the early 1960s is also included, along with various road maps of Memphis, Tennessee and the South.

A group of materials, mostly clippings, concern Memphis actor, artist and TV personality Harold Lee Miller and his wife Bernice (1923-2016). Born in Memphis on November 4, 1923, Hal Miller was the son of Mr. and Mrs. D.H. Miller. As a young man, Hal studied dance and performed with the Memphis Open Air Theatre in Overton Park. In the fall of 1941 he enrolled as a freshman at Northwestern University’s School of Speech but his education was interrupted two years later when he went to serve in World War II. Miller married Bernice Eger, a fellow Northwestern student from Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, in 1944. He finished his education at New York University after the war and he returned to Memphis with his family in 1951. He auditioned successfully for a new children’s show that the local ABC-TV affiliate was developing in 1952 and Happy Hal was born. The Happy Hal Funhouse ran five days a week for the next seventeen years on WHBQ-TV Channel 13 in Memphis. With two sock puppets by his side (Little Bo and Monkey), he introduced a new generation of viewers to The Mighty Hercules, Popeye and The Three Stooges. Miller also continued to act in productions of the Memphis Little Theatre in which Bea was also active. He opened his own retail toy business, Happy Hal’s Toy House on Lamar in 1955 which he ran with his wife until 1970. They opened Happy Hal’s Toys and Gifts on Beale Street as an import business, which closed on his retirement in 1986. Hal Miller died of cancer on November 28, 1997.

Bea Miller was elected president of Memphis Little Theatre’s Stage Set in 1967, and president of Theatre Memphis in 1975. She served as president of the American Community Theatre Association in 1973 and was founder and first president of the American Association of Community Theatres in 1986.

Provenance

The collection includes items collected by Edwin Frank, former Curator of the Preservation and Special Collections Department at the University of Memphis Libraries, and a letter collected by Dr. Mark Danley, Cataloger at the University of Memphis Libraries.
Subject terms

American Junior Red Cross.
Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923.
Miller, Bernice, 1923-2016.
Molasses industry—Tennessee.
Tennessee--Maps, Tourist.
Tennessee—Memphis—Maps.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

1 Program: Sarah Bernhardt performances of “La Dame Aux Camelias” and “La Sociere”, Hopkins Grand Opera House, Memphis, 1906 March 7.
5 American Junior Red Cross, “Yours for Victory”, A Schools at War Bulletin prepared by Education Section, War Savings Staff, Treasury Department in collaboration with the American Junior Red Cross, 1943.

Harold “Happy Hal” and Bernice “Bea” Miller:

8 Clippings, 1940-2011.
9 Clippings, 1940-2016 (photocopies).
10 Photographs: Harold Miller, undated.
featuring a drawing of the station building.

OS Maps:

Memphis:


“Graphic’s New All-In-One Map Memphis and East Shelby County”, Graphic Publications, 1990.

“Graphic’s New All-In-One Map Memphis and East Shelby County”, Graphic Services, 1994.

Tennessee, etc.:


Other:

“Official Highway Map State of Alabama 1941”, Alabama State Highway
Department, 1940.
“Arkansas State Highway Map”, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1979.
“1957 Official Kentucky Department of Highways Road Map”, Kentucky Department of Public Relations.
“Shell USA Travel Guide”, San Jose, Ca.: H.M. Gousha Company, undated.

Separated materials

The following materials have been separated from the collection and disposed of as follows:

Transferred to Special Collections stamp collection.