



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Helene Champlain papers, Additions

1925-1971

*T-Mss 1986-013

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

Summary

Creator: Champlain, Helene

Title: Helene Champlain papers, Additions

Date: 1925-1971

Size: .92 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: Donated by Helene Champlain, 1986.

Abstract: Helene Champlain was a book dealer and collector in the New York City area active from the 1930s to the early 1970s. She worked at the book shop at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel for many years. The Helene Champlain papers, Additions date from 1956 to the early 1970s. The collection contains photographs, a scrapbook, theater programs and letters documenting the career of Maurice Chevalier and other celebrity visitors to the Waldorf-Astoria.

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Processing note: Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

Related Materials:

Helene Champlain papers, *T-Mss 1986-013. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator History

Helene Champlain was a book dealer and collector in the New York City area active from the 1930s to the early 1970s. In the early 1930s she wrote a column for Harper's Magazine. From at least the late 1940s until 1962, she worked at the book shop at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, ending her time there as manager. Champlain was an acquaintance or friend of many figures in literature and the performing arts, including Maurice Chevalier and Rollo Peters.

Scope and Content Note

The Helene Champlain papers, Additions date from 1925 to 1971. They contain a photograph album and a scrapbook documenting celebrity visits to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and the career of Maurice Chevalier, whom Champlain met several times at the Waldorf-Astoria and on other occasions. The collection also holds programs for theatrical productions in New York, London, and Connecticut, souvenir programs for films and musicals, and loose photographs. The loose photographs include a signed postcard from the actor and female impersonator Julian Eltinge dating from 1925.

The bulk of the collection consists of photographs of, correspondence from, and memorabilia regarding Maurice Chevalier dating from 1956 to 1967. A scrapbook devoted to him includes publicity and informal photographs, film stills, clippings, and letters to Champlain thanking her for helping to sell his memoirs. Other Chevalier-related material includes loose photographs, clippings, and concert programs. Some of the items are autographed.

A scrapbook of photographs and clippings dating from the late 1950s to the early 1960s documents other celebrity visits to the hotel. These include Marius Goring, Conrad Hilton, Carl Sandburg, Cole Porter, Herman Wouk, Jessica Dragonette, and the theatrical funder Marguerite Cullman. Some photographs are autographed. Much of this content was produced by the Waldorf-Astoria publicity department.

Arrangement: The collection is in three divisions: Photographs and Programs, Maurice Chevalier, and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Key Terms

Occupations

Book dealers

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Personal correspondence

Photographs

Programs (documents)

Scrapbooks

Names

Chevalier, Maurice, 1888-1972

Cullman, Marguerite

Dragonette, Jessica, 1900-1980

Goring, Marius, 1912-1988

Porter, Cole, 1891-1964

Sandburg, Carl, 1878-1967

Wouk, Herman, 1915-

Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (New York, N.Y.), dates only -- History

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-2 Photographs and Programs 1925-1971, undated
Chevalier, Maurice
- b. 1 f. 3-4 Loose Photographs 1956-1960s
 - b. 2 Photograph Album 1950s - 1960s
- b. 2 f. 1 Programs and Letters 1955-1967
 - b. 3 Waldorf-Astoria Hotel late 1950s-1960s