



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

James F. Durnell collection of photographs

1840-1970

*T-Mss 2012-076

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Summary

Creator: Durnell, James F.

Title: James F. Durnell collection of photographs

Date: 1840-1970

Size: 2.94 linear feet (7 boxes)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: The collection dates from 1840 to 1970 and contains photographs of actors, film and theater productions, and theater buildings collected by James F. Durnell.

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Creator History

James F. Durnell (b. 1896) was an American real estate agent and photograph collector.

Scope and Content Note

The collection (1840-1970) holds three sets of photographs: actor photographs, arranged alphabetically by actor surname; production photographs, arranged alphabetically by title; and photographs of theater buildings and other film and theater related subjects. Although the collection spans over one hundred years, a large portion of the photographs date from the 1930s to the 1940s. The photographs are original photographs, reproductions, and clippings from publications. Each photograph is annotated with identifying information, such as actor name and birth and death dates; the date of the photograph; and

title and date of production. The photographs have been separated from backings, mounts, or other materials previously used for presentation. While some of the early photographs in the collections are originals or prints, many were clipped or photocopied from publications.

Hundreds of actors and actresses are pictured in the photographs, which consist of headshots, publicity photographs for films and plays, and other portraits of well-known performers who were active between the 1870s and the 1960s. Productions represented in the photographs include those for film and theater. They consist of film and performance stills as well as publicity photographs of individuals and groups of actors. Also included are photographs of less traditional productions, such as a Buffalo Bill Wild West Show located in Seven Presidents Park in Long Branch, New Jersey.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Film stills

Photographs

Subjects

Motion pictures -- United States

Theater -- United States

Container List

Actor Photographs

- b. 1 f. 1-7 A-D 1872-1964
- b. 2 f. 1-6 E-M 1898-1967
- b. 3 f. 1-5 N-Z 1880-1966

Production Photographs

- b. 3 f. 6 A 1932-1958
- b. 4 f. 1-5 B-G 1840-1965
- b. 5 f. 1-6 H-M 1870-1966
- b. 6 f. 1-7 M-T 1840-1969
- b. 7 f. 1-3 U-Z 1882-1964
- b. 7 f. 4-5 Theaters and Miscellaneous Photographs 1877-1970