



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Alexander H. Cohen papers, Additions

1960-2000 [bulk 1990s]

*T-Mss 1969-001

Compiled by Joyce Joseph, 2014

Summary

Creator: Cohen, Alexander H., 1920-2000

Title: Alexander H. Cohen papers, Additions

Date: 1960-2000 [bulk 1990s]

Size: 4.6 linear feet (11 boxes); 782.336 kb (2 computer files)

Source: Donated by Chris Cohen, 2013

Abstract: Alexander Henry Cohen (1920-2000) was a theater and television producer. The Alexander H. Cohen papers, Additions date from 1960 to 2000 and contain legal documents and case files that supported his successful arbitration against the American Theatre Wing Inc., and contracts, agreements, and clearances related to a few theater productions.

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Processing note: Compiled by Joyce Joseph, 2014

Related Materials:

Alexander H. Cohen papers, 1880-2003. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Creator History

Alexander Henry Cohen (1920-2000) was a theater and television producer who put on more than 100 productions in both New York and the United Kingdom during his career.

Cohen was introduced to theater at a young age by an uncle. By the time he was twenty-one, he had spent most of his inheritance on unsuccessful theater projects, such as running two summer theaters

on Long Island. Cohen's first success came when he invested \$5,000 in *Angel Street* (1941) by Patrick Hamilton, which later became the film *Gaslight* (1944).

Cohen honed his producing skills under veteran Broadway producer Herman Levin, working as the company manager for *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1949) and as the general manager for *My Three Angels* (1954).

In 1956, Cohen married Hildy Parks, an actress who became his professional partner, both as a producer and a scriptwriter. Through his production company, Bentwood Television Corporation, Cohen created the first national Tony Awards telecast in 1967, and both he and Hildy Parks produced the awards until 1986.

In 1999, Cohen filed a petition against the American Theatre Wing, Inc. concerning the Tony Awards name and logo. Cohen argued that he was the sole proprietor of the awards footage from the first 20 years of broadcasts. TAP productions (a teaming of the American Theatre Wing, Inc. and the League of American Theatres and Producers) worked with Cohen to produce the Tony Awards, and believed they were co-owners of the footage and entitled to consent on potential profitable usage. In 2000, Cohen won arbitration in the dispute, but he had died of respiratory failure weeks before it was resolved.

Scope and Content Note

The Alexander H. Cohen papers, Additions date from 1960 to 2000 (bulk dates 1990s) and contain legal documents and case files that supported his successful arbitration against the American Theatre Wing, Inc., and contracts, agreements, and clearances related to a few theater productions.

The bulk of the collection relates to Cohen's arbitration against the American Theatre Wing, Inc. and consists of case files such as correspondence, notes and copies of documents used as exhibits to win the dispute; and legal documents such as official petitions, affirmations, memorandum and affidavits created during the case.

There are some documents related to another arbitration case between Partners in Crime, Inc. and Cohen regarding a breach in the written agreement for the *Accomplice* production (1991). There are also financial records, budgets, contracts, agreements, and clearances related to a few productions such as *Sacrilege* (1995), *Taking Sides* (1996), and *The Herbal Bed* (1998).

There are some photographs of Cohen, and a few bronze awards, a 1963 Shubert Foundation Award and two 1982 Christopher Awards each for Cohen and Parks.

This collection shares the same provenance as the Alexander H. Cohen Papers, 1880-2003 [bulk 1938-2003] that document his career as a producer in theater and television. The Additions primarily document legal matters and are unique to this collection.

Arrangement: The collection will be arranged by file type: case files and production papers.

Key Terms

Subjects

Arbitration (Administrative law)

Television broadcasting -- Awards -- United States
Theater -- Production and direction
Tony Awards

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Case files
Certificates
Contracts
Financial records
Legal documents
Letters (correspondence)

Occupations

Television producers and directors
Theatrical producers and directors

Names

Parks, Hildy, 1926-
American Theatre Wing
League of American Theatres and Producers

Container List

Case Files

Partners in Crime, Inc. vs. Alexander Cohen

- b. 1 f. 1 Arbitration Agreement 1989-1991
- b. 1 f. 2 Award of Arbitrator 1991
- b. 1 f. 3 Client File 1996
- b. 1 f. 4 Kurtz, Normand -- Faxes 1990
- b. 1 f. 5 Legal Documents 1990
- b. 1 f. 6 Notes and Memoranda 1990

Alexander Cohen vs. American Theatre Wing, Inc

- b. 1 f. 7 American Arbitration Association 1999-2000
- b. 1 f. 8-10 Case Files 1965-2000
- b. 2 f. 1-7 Case Files 1965-2000
- b. 3 f. 1-7 Case Files 1965-2000
- b. 4 f. 1-2 Case Files 1965-2000
- b. 4 f. 3 Clippings 1998-2000
- b. 4 f. 4-8 Correspondence 1994-2003
- b. 5 f. 1-4 Identification Letters 1965-1999
- b. 5 f. 5 Invoices 2000
- b. 5 f. 6 Kander and Ebb 1997
- b. 5 f. 7-8 Legal Documents 1999
- b. 6 f. 1-6 Legal Documents 1999
- b. 7 f. 1-6 Legal Documents 1999
- b. 8 f. 1-6 Legal Documents 1999-2000
- b. 9 f. 1-7 Legal Documents 2000
- er. 1 Legal Documents 2000
(782.5 Kilobytes (2 computer files))
- b. 9 f. 8 Notes 1998-1999
- b. 9 f. 9-10 Trademark -- Application, Registration, and Cancellation 1999

Production Papers

- b. 10 f. 1 Actor's Fund Centennial -- Agreements 1981-1982
Awards 1962-1982
Awards are located in the *T-Cabinet and are available by appointment only.
- b. 10 f. 2-4 Comedy Tonight 1994-1995
- b. 10 f. 5 Dietrich, Marlene 1968-1975
- b. 10 f. 6-7 The Herbal Garden 1998
- b. 10 f. 8 Marlene 1997
- b. 10 f. 9 The Night of 100 Stars 1996
- b. 10 f. 10 Photographs 1960s-1970s
- b. 10 f. 11 Postcards 1964
- b. 10 f. 12 Production Agreements 1960-1971

Production Papers (cont.)

- b. 10 f. 13-17 **Sacrilege** 1994-1995
- b. 11 f. 1-7 **Sacrilege** 1994-1995
- b. 11 f. 8 **Stamford Center for the Arts -- Agreement** 1993
- b. 11 f. 9 **Star Billing** 1998
- b. 11 f. 10-13 **Taking Sides** 1996
- b. 11 f. 14 **Waiting in the Wings** 1999