



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Tony Pastor collection

1863-1959

*T-Mss 1995-028

Processed by Mary Henderson and Elisabeth Elkind.

Summary

Creator: Pastor, Tony, 1837-1908

Title: Tony Pastor collection

Date: 1863-1959

Size: 3.5 linear feet (7 boxes)

Source: Gift of Mrs. Charles Hechler, Jr.

Abstract: Tony Pastor is considered the "Father of American Vaudeville". The collection consists of photographs (mostly of Tony Pastor), manuscript scripts and actor's sides for vaudeville skits, handbills, a limited amount of correspondence and personal papers, personal memorabilia of Mrs. Tony Pastor, some clippings, and correspondence between the original purchaser of the collection, Charles Hechler, Jr., and the musicologist Sigmund Spaeth.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

Conditions Governing Access:

Photocopying prohibited.

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

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Creator History

Tony Pastor (1837-1908), singer, songwriter and theater manager considered by many to be the Father of American Vaudeville, was born into the theatre. His father was a violinist in the theatre orchestra at Billy Mitchell's theatre in New York. At the age of six, young Antonio sang at temperance meetings, which may have influenced his later determination to remove the influence of alcohol in his own theatres. As Tony Pastor, he followed his brothers into circuses and variety shows, expanding his range of talents to include acrobatics, clowning, ring mastering, and minstrelsy. With the onset of the Civil War, he seemed to have found his true calling as a singer of topical songs, most with a sentimental or comic edge. Such was his popularity that he was able to leap into "legitimate variety," appearing as a comic singer at various theatres in New York and on the road before assembling his own company and establishing himself as a manager in his own theatre. He opened in 1865 at 201 Bowery, remaining there for ten years, after which he made the jump to 585 Broadway, which became renowned as Tony Pastor's. From there, in 1881, he joined the northward flow of theatres to the Tammany building on East 14th Street, within earshot of the theatre district at Union Square. He remained there for the rest of his professional life. When he began as a singer in the variety theatres, they catered mostly to an all male population with the exception of the gallery prostitutes, who frequented the music halls in search of customers. Pastor was determined to clean up the theatres, present a wholesome and attractive bill of acts, and entice women into his theatres. Although his first efforts were not successful, he resorted to giving away all sorts of prizes to lure the female population and his actions gradually paid off. As one wag observed, Pastor's shows became so clean that "a child could take his parents into his theatre." Under Pastor's tutelage, many of the stage luminaries of a later era began their careers at his theatres, notably Weber and Fields, Harrigan and Hart, Lillian Russell, May Irwin, Nat Goodwin, Denman Thompson, the four Cohans, and many others. Not only was he successful in finding and showcasing performers, he gave work to many writers, composers and lyricists, whom he commissioned to provide the songs and skits for his shows. He made a yearly trip to England to survey the English music hall scene and to buy up songs he thought he might be able to use. His lasting contribution was in transforming the variety show into American vaudeville, similar yet different from its European counterparts, by presenting a broad array of American performers singing and dancing to American songs.

Custodial History

The Tony Pastor Collection was presented to the Billy Rose Theatre Division by Mrs. Charles Hechler, Jr., whose husband had purchased the collection with the intention of selling it at a later date. When Hechler could not find the right buyer, it languished in storage and eventually sifted down to seven boxes and a large folder from a much larger and varied collection. What is described here is what was left after Hechler's death. Perhaps, the most valuable part of the collection is the original unpublished music, which was transferred to the Music Division.

Scope and Content Note

The Tony Pastor Collection represents part of a lost era in American theatre: the vaudeville age. Considered the "Father of American Vaudeville," Pastor almost singlehandedly revolutionized variety entertainment by making it family-oriented and tailoring the acts and skits to fit the talents of the performers, many of whom he discovered at the beginning of their careers. The collection that was presented to the Billy Rose Theatre Division contains few interesting documents about his career but does include handwritten scripts and actor's sides for some of the one-act plays and skits that appeared in Pastor's theatres, which will provide insights into the kind of entertainment that was offered in the best vaudeville bills. It also contains photographs of Tony Pastor, programs and broadsides, clippings, a small amount of correspondence, a few songs, and miscellaneous ephemera.

Arrangement: Series I. Correspondence about the collection Series II. Personal papers of Tony

Pastor Series III. Scripts Sub-series 1. Scripts and skits Sub-series 2. Actor's sides Series IV. Songs Series V. Programs and miscellaneous printed material Series VI. Articles and clippings Series VII. Portraits of Tony Pastor Series VIII. Personal papers of Tony Pastor's wife, Josephine Pastor Series IX. Oversized items

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs
Programs
Scripts

Subjects

Theater -- History -- 19th century
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Vaudeville

Names

Pastor, Tony, 1837-1908

Container List

Series I. Correspondence about the Collection 1954-1959 (4 folders)

Correspondence of Charles Hechler, Jr. (purchaser), with Sigmund Spaeth (musicologist) and others including Frank I. Davis and Miriam Howell documents Hechler's attempts to find an interested buyer with deep pockets for the Tony Pastor Collection.

Chronological

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence 1954 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 2 Correspondence 1955 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence 1956 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 4 Correspondence 1958-1959 (1 folder)

Series II. Personal papers of Tony Pastor 1876-1899 (3 folders)

Consists of a small amount of incoming correspondence to Tony Pastor, a certified copy of his will and some miscellaneous ephemera.

- b. 1 f. 5 Six letters to Tony Pastor on various matters from song rights to the quality of rubies he purchased 1876-1899 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 6 Certified copy, 1954, of Tony Pastor's will 1899 Jan. 21 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 7 Personal ephemera of Tony Pastor 1877-1886 (1 folder)
Includes a typed record of where Pastor spent various fourths of July between 1847 and 1886, a handwritten travelling company list (1877), invitations (in wood) to the wooden wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Tony Pastor (1879), and a typed menu (1875).

Series III. Scripts 1872-1885, n.d ()

The bulk of the collection, this series contains vaudeville scripts in manuscript, mostly for short plays, skits or sketches and individual parts for actors. The actor's sides are in a separate sub-series from the scripts except in cases where they are for the same title in which case they are included in the scripts folder.

Sub-series 1. Scripts and skits 1872-1885, n.d (26 folders)

The scripts and skits are all handwritten.

Alphabetical by author, followed by alphabetical by title where no author is stated.

- b. 1 f. 8 Typescript "List of original scripts from the Tony Pastor Opera House," 1885? (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 9 *Out of the Gloom by Frank Dumont* 1874 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 10 *Burlesque in one scene, No Pinafore by A. J. Leavitt* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 11 *The Old Cabin Home by Charles F. Seabert* 1873 Dec. 2 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 12 *The Elopement by J. C. Stewart* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 13 *Hydraulics by J. C. Stewart* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 14 *Kentucky Lottery by J. C. Stewart* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 15 *Smoked Out by J. C. Stewart* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 16 *Squire Jones by J. C. Stewart* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 17 *That Dorg by J. C. Stewart* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 18 *Actors by Daylight* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 19 *The Bitter and Sweet of a Travelling Company* n.d. (1 folder)
Play in two acts, stamped "Charles Foster, Actor Author, ? Street, New York"

Series III. Scripts (cont.)

Sub-series 1. Scripts and skits (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 20 *Broadway and the Bowery* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 21 *Canal Boat Pinafore* n.d. (1 folder)
Includes actor's sides.
- b. 2 f. 1 *Dutchman in London* 1872 Oct. 7 (1 folder)
Played by Edward Harrigan and Tony Hart.
- b. 2 f. 2 *The Fastest Boy in New York* n.d. (1 folder)
In three acts. Includes scenes and properties.
- b. 2 f. 3 *The Fourth of July* n.d. (1 bound booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 4 *Freddy* n.d. (1 booklet in 1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 5 *Fun on the Stage* 1882 Mar. 29 (1 folder)
Also called *The Manager's Benefit*. Last page says, "Revised and rewritten by Jacques Kruger for 18th annual tour of country."
- b. 2 f. 6 *Hamlet and His Mother* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 7 *Married in the Dark* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 8 *Mixed Up* n.d. (1 folder)
Typescript with handwritten additions and revisions.
- b. 2 f. 9 *Paddy Burke* n.d. (1 folder)
Includes actor's side.
- b. 2 f. 10 *Planchette or The Mystery Explained* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 11 *Postal Cards* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 12 Script, untitled n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 13 Script, loose pages, untitled n.d. (1 folder)

Sub-series 2. Actor's sides n.d. (30 folders)

Consists of actor's parts for vaudeville skits.

Alphabetical by title of play.

- b. 2 f. 14 *Parts, Adolph* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 15 *Parts, Ba, Ba, Black Sheep* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 16 *Parts, The Ballet Girls* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 17 *Parts, Chinese Labor* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 18 *Parts, Cinderella* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 19 *Parts, Cupid in the Kitchen* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 20 *Parts, The French Spy* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 21 *Parts, Ham Let* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 22 *Parts, Idiot of the Hudson* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 23 *Parts, The Invalids* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 24 *Parts, Just in Time* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 25 *Parts, A Little Mystery* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 26 *Parts, Love and Pride* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 27 *Parts, Lucy Ashton* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 28 *Parts, New York by Gaslight* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 29 *Parts, The News Girl* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 30 *Parts, The Orphan Girl* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 31 *Parts, Our Girls School* n.d. (1 folder)
Includes actor's side and song lyrics.

Series III. Scripts (cont.)

Sub-series 2. Actor's sides (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 32 *Parts, Pinafore* n.d. (1 folder)
One actor's side is typed.
- b. 3 f. 1 *Parts, Plantation Life As It Was* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 2 *Parts, Rip Van Winkle* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 3 *Parts, Robinson Crusoe* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 4 *Parts, Sailors' Return* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 5 *Parts, A Squire for a Day* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 6 *Parts, White Slaves* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 7 *Parts, William the Tailor* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 8 *Parts, The Working Girl's Holiday* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 9-11 *Parts for unidentified plays* n.d. (3 folders)

Series IV. Songs 1892, n.d (4 folders)

Contains a few handwritten song lyrics and two booklets of printed sheet music.

- b. 3 f. 12 *The Baseball Club, by John Cooper Vail, sung by Harry Richmond* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 13 *William Tell chorus* n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 14 Miscellaneous lyrics to unidentified songs, mostly handwritten n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 15 Printed sheet music 1892, n.d (2 booklets in 1 folder)
One is titled "Tony Pastor's Music Box."

Series V. Programs and miscellaneous printed material 1865-1906, n.d (5 folders)

Contains programs for shows in which Tony Pastor performed, programs for his various theater companies, and programs and miscellaneous printed theatrical material to which his connection is unknown.

- b. 3 f. 16 Programs that include performances by Tony Pastor 1876-1894 (1 folder)
Some are mounted.
- b. 3 f. 17 Programs for Tony Pastor's Theatre, Opera House, Company, etc. 1865-1892 (1 folder)
Some are mounted.
- b. 3 f. 18 Programs for Tony Pastor's Theatre, Opera House, Company, etc. 1906, n.d (1 folder)
Some are mounted.
- b. 3 f. 19 Miscellaneous programs, not for Tony Pastor productions 1876-1889, n.d (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 20 Miscellaneous printed theatrical material 1894-1895 (1 folder)
Connection to Tony Pastor unknown.

Series VI. Articles and clippings 1863-1956 (5 folders)

Contains clippings and posthumous articles about Tony Pastor.

- b. 3 f. 21 Clippings on Tony Pastor 1863-1908 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 22 Copies of clippings from Charles Hechler's files 1865-1945 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 23 *Article on vaudeville, The Days of Tony Pastor* 1914 Dec. 19 (1 folder)
In *The New York Clipper*.
- b. 3 f. 24 Magazine articles on Tony Pastor and the American theater 1931-1945 (1 folder)
Two articles, one from *Theatre Guild Magazine*, the other from *Theatre Arts*.
- b. 3 f. 25 Article on the Tony Pastor Collection by Charles Hechler 1956 (1 folder)
In *Music Journal*.

Series VII. Portraits of Tony Pastor 1864-1865, n.d (4 folders)

Photographs and lithographs of Tony Pastor.

- b. 3 f. 26 Early photographs (carte de visites) of Tony Pastor 1864-1865, n.d (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 27 Formal photographic portraits of Tony Pastor n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 28 Head shots of Tony Pastor n.d. (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 29 Lithographic portraits of Tony Pastor n.d. (1 folder (2 drawings)

Series VIII. Personal papers of Tony Pastor's wife, Josephine Pastor 1888-1922

(4 folders in 1 half-size hollinger box)

Consists primarily of printed Christmas cards, also a few miscellaneous personal papers of Josephine Pastor.

- b. 4 f. 1 Letters to Josephine Pastor 1916-1922 (1 folder)
- b. 4 f. 2 Greeting cards sent to Josephine Pastor 1919-1921 (1 folder)
Mostly Christmas cards.
- b. 4 f. 3 Financial and insurance papers of Josephine Pastor 1914-1918 (1 folder)
- b. 4 f. 4 Ephemera of Josephine Pastor 1888-1922 (1 folder)
Mostly printed religious pamphlets.

Series IX. Oversized items 1871-1914, n.d (3 boxes)

Contains oversized programs and broadsides, miscellaneous photographs, printed periodicals related to the stage and certificates awarded to Tony Pastor.

- b. 5 Program book 1871-1880 (1 volume)
Scrapbook of programs for Tony Pastor's Theatre was compiled by Pastor's business manager, Claude De Haven upon his retirement and given to his stage manager, Frank Girard.
- b. 6 f. 1 Photograph, probably of Kerry Cottage n.d. (1 photo in 1 folder)
Mounted on cardboard. Kerry Cottage in Elmhurst, Long Island, New York was the Pastor home.
- b. 6 f. 2 Photograph, possibly of Clifford Roberts' school class n.d. (1 photo in 1 folder)
Mounted on cardboard. Clifford Roberts was the nephew and heir of Mrs. Pastor.
- b. 6 f. 3 Photograph, Carle Blenner's studio n.d. (1 photo in 1 folder)
Mounted on cardboard. Connection to Tony Pastor unknown.
- b. 6 f. 4 Photograph of Tony Pastor's 14th Street Theatre n.d. (1 folder)
A positive and a negative print.
- b. 6 f. 5 Negative prints of sheet music covers 1877, n.d (1 folder)
In French and English. Includes songs performed by Harrigan and Hart.
- b. 6 f. 6 Programs, oversized 1879-1901 (1 folder)
One is mounted on cardboard.
- b. 6 f. 7 Broadside for a benefit for Mrs. Sam Sharpley, widow of a comedian and partner of Tony Pastor 1875 Jan. 28 (1 item in 1 folder)
- b. 6 f. 8 Broadsides for Tony Pastor's Theatre n.d. (1 folder)
In pieces.
- b. 6 f. 9 Handbill fragments 1881 and earlier (1 folder)
Probably arranged by Charles Hechler.
- b. 7 f. 1 *Printed periodical, The Stage and Its Stars* 1887 (1 folder)
Part 5.
- b. 7 f. 2 *Printed periodical, The New York Dramatic Mirror* 1898 Apr. 9 (1 folder)
- b. 7 f. 3 *Printed periodical, The Music Hall* 1899 Dec. (1 folder)

Series IX. Oversized items (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 4 *Printed periodical, The New York Clipper* 1903 Dec. (1 folder)
- b. 7 f. 5 *Printed periodical, The New York Clipper* 1914 Dec. 19 (1 folder)
- b. 7 f. 6 Certificates awarded to Tony Pastor 1881-1894 (3 certificates in 1 folder)