

Guide to the Sergei Denham Papers, 1918-1936

(S) *MGZMD 179

Jerome Robbins Dance Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Sergei Denham Papers
Collection ID:	(S) *MGZMD 179
Creator:	Denham, Sergei
Extent:	7.5 linear feet (13 boxes)
Repository:	Jerome Robbins Dance Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract: Sergei Denham is most prominently known as the director of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. The Sergei Denham Papers consist of correspondence, legal, financial, and personal papers that document his life outside of his work with the Ballet Russe, predominantly his career in the banking world.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Custodial History

The Sergei Denham Papers were donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1992 by Irina Pabst, The Ballet Foundation, and Michel Subotin.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2006.

Biographical Note

Sergei Ivanovich Denham was born Sergei Ivanovich Dokouchaiev (Docootshieff) on October 22, 1896. When his banker father died, a French governess was hired to help care for the children -- eight in all: three girls and five boys (another older brother had died before Denham was born). It was to this governess that Denham gave credit for nurturing his early love of ballet. He recalled that she once made him a play theater out of an orange carton and cut out paper ballerina dolls for him to play with.

The family moved from Samara on the Volga to Moscow, and Sergei was sent to boarding school near St. Petersburg. Eventually he finished his schooling at The Moscow Commercial Institute. His education was eclectic, covering both business and the arts. Sergei had a particular talent for the piano. Among the many respected and well-known people to frequent his cultivated mother's home was Alexandre Scriabin, who was said to have given Sergei some piano instruction.

In May of 1915, Denham married Valentine Nikolaevna Yershova, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. The couple had two daughters of their own, "one in the capitalistic system" -- Irina, now Mrs. Robert Pabst -- and "one in the communistic" -- Valentine, now Mrs. Robert Wilson -- as Denham himself put it.

Denham's professional career was extremely diversified. When World War I began he worked for the Red Cross. After the 1917 Revolution he took his family east, first to the home of relatives in Uralsk, then to Vladivostok, where he became director of dormitories at the university. Next he served as representative of Admiral A. V. Kolchak's anti-Bolshevik government. His job entailed procuring funds to support Kolchak's troops -- work that would later prove quite useful in raising money for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. While in Shanghai on business for the Admiral, Denham heard that Kolchak's regime had fallen and decided to make the move that would shape his destiny -- he and his family emigrated to the United States.

In 1921 they arrived in San Francisco. With his family situated Denham set off alone, first to Chicago, then finally to New York, in search of work. The first job he found was in an antique store on West 59th Street. He sent for his wife and daughters.

A newly acquired friend introduced Denham to the banking world, and he soon found himself vice-president at Bankers Trust. He was put in charge of establishing and overseeing branches in Eastern Europe and eventually London, Paris, and Vienna.

Denham was an outgoing, social man and through his travels was able to meet many people who would help precipitate his ultimate career choice. One was Serge Diaghilev whom Denham said first planted the seed of the idea that America could and should be the next great center of ballet; another was a group of Colonel de Basil's dancers on tour whom he found enchanting; and yet another was Watson Washburn, an attorney and balletomane whom Denham first met on the boat from Shanghai. Washburn, in turn,

introduced Denham to several wealthy ballet lovers, setting the final stage for what was to come.

By the mid-thirties it was becoming apparent that the Blum/de Basil company was having problems. Seizing the moment, Denham called together his new friends and formed World Art Inc., a stock corporation which then purchased Blum's company. Denham was appointed president of this new ballet organization -- a post he was to hold throughout the entire length of the company's existence.

Along with the classics, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, under Denham's direction, produced several quite novel works, including *Bacchanale*, *Labyrinth*, *Rodeo*, *Frankie and Johnny*, and *Billy Sunday*, as well as a number of works by women ballet choreographers. The list includes Agnes de Mille, Bronislava Nijinska, Pilar Lopez, Ruth Page (whose works, such as those mentioned above, were often controversial), Valerie Bettis, Antonia Cobos, Ruthanna Boris, Tatiana Chamie, Nini Theilade, and Nina Novak. With such a record, Denham could rightly feel that his company was both "vital in new ideas" as well as "successful in maintaining the finest traditions of the ballet."

He died in New York City on January 30, 1970, after being struck by a bus as he was leaving the Ballet Russe offices. His wife died several months later. He is survived by his two daughters.

Scope and Content Note

The Sergei Denham Papers relate to his career outside the world of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, primarily his work in the field of banking. The material in this collection is rich in correspondence (both in English and Russian) and financial information from the early 1920s into the mid-1930s of a man who became prominently associated in the twentieth century with a particular dance company, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, but had a very successful life in an entirely different field before that. He rose rapidly in the international banking world and these papers demonstrate his wealth of contacts, particularly as he worked to develop branches of Bankers Trust in Eastern Europe. Very little of a personal nature is to be found within the collection.

Related Materials Note

For material related to Sergei Denham and the ballet world, see The Sergei Denham Records of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, *ZBD-492.

Organization

The collection is organized into 4 series and 2 sub-series. They are:

Series I: Correspondence, 1918-1936

 Sub-series 1 – General Correspondence, 1918-1936

 Sub-series 2 – Russian Language Correspondence, 1920-1936

Series II: Financial and Legal, 1921-1936

Series III: Personal Papers, 1920-1935

Series IV: Oversized Materials, 1919-1934

Series Descriptions

Series I: Correspondence, 1918-1936

8 Boxes

Sub-series 1 – General Correspondence, 1918-1936

Sub-series 2 – Russian Language Correspondence, 1920-1936

This series consists of Sergei Denham's business correspondence, primarily from the early 1920s until the mid-thirties, before his association with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Much, but not exclusively, of this work was done for Banker's Trust. The correspondence has been divided between the English and the Russian letters.

Sub-series 1 – General correspondence, 1918-1936

5 Boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This sub-series consists of business correspondence primarily related to Sergei Denham's work with Banker's Trust but also contains information concerning other business ventures of his over this period.

Sub-series 2 – Russian Language Correspondence, 1920-1936

3 Boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This sub-series consists of all of Sergei Denham's business correspondence in the Russian language. The first box is the identified letters arranged alphabetically while the last two boxes are the unidentified correspondence arranged by date. Some of the letters predate his work with Banker's Trust but all are related to his business ventures.

Series II: Financial and Legal, 1921-1936

3 Boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains material specifically related to Sergei Denham's work on behalf of Banker's Trust, as well as information on his association with Gaston and Company. Also included are material relating to his work to form a company to manufacture and distribute beer mats from 1934 to 1936, showing the range of venture with which he was involved.

Series III: Personal Papers, 1920-1935

1 Box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains information mainly on the travels of Sergei Denham during this period, such as his passport and baggage declaration forms.

Series IV: Oversized Materials, 1919-1934

1 Box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains Russian and German correspondence as well as some income tax returns.

Box/Folder	Description
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Series I: Correspondence, 1918-1936

Subseries I: General Correspondence, 1918-1936

Box 1

F. 1	A. Johnson & Co., Inc., 1926
F. 2	A. R. Burkill & Sons, 1922-1925
F. 3	Adirondack Log Cabin Co., Inc., 1932-1934
F. 4	Allen, Ronald H., 1924-1935, undated
F. 5	American Consular Service, 1923-1936
F. 6	American Express Company, 1921-1927
F. 7	American Relief Administration, 1921-1923
F. 8	Anderson Brothers, 1927-1930
F. 9	Atterbury, Boud, 1928-1936
F. 10	Baker and Obermeier, 1923
F. 11	Bakhmeteff, Boris A., 1925-1926
F. 12	Baldin, S.F., 1925-1930
F. 13	Bankers Life Company, 1924-1935
F. 14	Barnes, Henry B., 1926-1930
F. 15	Bashkiroff, Elizabeth, 1921-1933
F. 16	Bashkiroff Products Corporation, 1924
F. 17	Bernheimer, Charles L., 1928-1934
F. 18	Beyer, Dr. Robert, 1921-1928, undated
F. 19	Black, Starr, and Frost, 1922-1927
F. 20	Board of Assessors, 1933-1935
F. 21	Bourakovsky-Sabouroff, E. A., 1926-1930
F. 22	Bours & Company, 1932-1935
F. 23	British and Hungarian Bank, Limited, 1935
F. 24	British Passport Control Office, 1922
F. 25	Brodie, Donald M., 1922-1923
F. 26	Bureau of Motor Vehicles, 1929-1935
F. 27	A-B
F. 28	Cadwalader, Wickersham, & Taft, 1925-1935, undated
F. 29	Canadian National Railways, 1925-1929
F. 30	Callahan, Cornelius J., 1930
F. 31	Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Corporation, 1932-1935
F. 32	Central Bureau for Registered Addresses, 1935
F. 33	Chase National Bank, 1932-1935
F. 34	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1934-1936
F. 35	Connecticut Light and Power Company, 1932-1935
F. 36	Consignment Arts, Inc., 1922
F. 37	Cooper, James F., 1922
F. 38	Cutler, Dr. Colman W., 1930-1932
F. 39	Columbia University, 1923-1935
F. 40	Credit Suisse, 1933-1934

Box 2

F. 1	Curtis & Sanger, 1928-1935, undated
F. 2	Czechoslovak Army in Russia, 1926
F. 3	D. C. Andrews & Company, 1936
F. 4	Davies & Son, 1929-1930
F. 5	Denby, Charles, 1921-1928, undated
F. 6	Denham, Irene, 1932-1933, undated
F. 7	Denham, Valentine, 1921-1935, undated
F. 8	Denham niece, 1992

Box/Folder	Description
F. 9	Department of Agriculture, 1921
F. 10	Department of Commerce, 1925-1935
F. 11	Department of Labor, 1925-1929
F. 12	Department of State, 1921-1934
F. 13	Department of Taxation and Finance, 1925-1935
F. 14	Department of the Interior, 1923-1924
F. 15	Dokootshieff, Catherine, 1922-1928
F. 16	Dokootshieff, Validimar, 1925
F. 17	Dommerich, Otto, 1926-1934
F. 18	Dwight, Frederick, 1926-1935
F. 19	Dwight, Voorhis, & Perry, 1927-1934
F. 20	C-D
F. 21	Eastman, Charles A., 1922
F. 22	Eimer & Amend, 1922
F. 23	Electra Protection Company, Inc., 1935
F. 24	Electrical & Mechanical Service Co., 1922-1924
F. 25	Embassy of the United States of America, 1927
F. 26	Evgenievitch, Prince George, 1921
F. 27	Federal Tool & Alloy Steel Corporation, 1924
F. 28	Fierlinger, Zdenek, 1927
F. 29	Fleischmann, Julius, 1933-1935, undated
F. 30	Flemming, Davis & Bryan, 1921-1924, undated
F. 31	Ford Motor Company Limited, 1930-1932
F. 32	Fowler, Dr. Robert H., 1928-1933
F. 33	Fraser-Campbell, Pauline, 1930-1933, undated
F. 34	French language, 1922-1935, undated
F. 35	French Line, 1926-1934
Box 3	
	Freshfields, Leese & Munns
F. 1	1927-1929
F. 2	1930-1934, undated
F. 3	Gallagher, Frank, 1923-1924
F. 4	Ganz & Co., 1935-1936
F. 5	General Electric Company, 1935
F. 6	German, 1922-1935, undated
F. 7	Girsa, Dr. Vaclav, 1923-1926
F. 8	Grace National Bank, 1932-1935, undated
F. 9	Grand Hotel Kitzbuhel, 1933, undated
F. 10	Guaranty Trust Company of New York, 1921-1935
	Guggenbacher Papierfabrik
F. 11	1935
F. 12	1936
F. 13	E-G
F. 14	Hamilton, R. B., 1921-1923
F. 15	Haskill, Clara, 1926
F. 16	Henshaw and Fales, 1927-1935, undated
F. 17	Hesser, A. G., 1933-1934
F. 18	Hintelman, William, 1927-1930
F. 19	Holt, Elizabeth, 1929-1933, undated
F. 20	Hornblower, Miller, Miller, & Boston, 1925-1932, undated
F. 21	Hotel Cecil, 1928-1929
F. 22	Hotel Hungaria, 1934

Box/Folder	Description
F. 23	Hydro Thermal Power, Limited, 1930, undated
F. 24	Idelson, Vladimir R., 1928-1930, undated
F. 25	Irving Bank-Columbia Trust Company, 1923-1934
F. 26	Irving National Bank, 1922
F. 27	Irving Trust Company, 1933-1934
F. 28	J. J. Kimberlin Piano Co., Inc., 1934-1935
F. 29	Jacobson, Natacha, 1925-1929, undated
F. 30	Jacobson, Walter, 1925-1930, undated
F. 31	Jennings, Coleman, 1927-1933
F. 32	John MacGregor Grant, Inc., 1921-1922
F. 33	Joseph, Louis, 1926-1927
Box 4	
F. 1	Kitizin, M. A., 1923-1929
F. 2	Konovaloff, Alexander, 1926-1933, undated
F. 3	H-K
F. 4	Lawry, L. S., 1930-1931
F. 5	Legation of the United States of America, 1926-1935
F. 6	Leyton, Reginald, 1927-1930
F. 7	Levy, Louis, 1922
F. 8	Lion Brewery, 1936
F. 9	Lion Match Company, 1935-1936
F. 10	Ludlum, Allan, 1933-1934
F. 11	Luria, A., 1933
F. 12	Maieroff, John, 1923-1925, undated
F. 13	Makeev, Nicholas, 1925-1926, undated
F. 14	Malone, Halsey, 1926-1933
F. 15	Marsh, Walter G., 1932-1935
F. 16	McKesson & Robbins, 1923
F. 17	Meekman, A., 1934-1936
F. 18	Mielberg, Ivan, 1923-1935, undated
F. 19	Monmouth County Office Clerk, 1927-1929
F. 20	Morgan & Cie, 1934-1935, undated
F. 21	Morris Plan Company, 1925-1935
F. 22	L-M
F. 23	N. E. Ryon Company, Inc., 1921-
F. 24	Near East Relief, 1922-1923
F. 25	New York Chamber of Commerce, 1929
F. 26	New York Telephone Company, 1933
F. 27	New York Title Insurance Co., 1933
F. 28	Nolde, Baron Boris, 1927-1930, undated
F. 29	Oltargevsky, W. K., 1925-1929
F. 30	Ostromislensky, Ivan, 1925-1932
F. 31	Ouvaroff, Count Igor, 1926
F. 32	Overhoff, Julius, 1933-1934
F. 33	Pannaci, Edward, 1923
F. 34	Parsons, Theodore, 1927
F. 35	Pataki, Emmy, 1933-1936
F. 36	Peaslee, Brigham, and Gennert, 1925
F. 37	Pedersen & Flanagan, Inc., 1927-1933
F. 38	Philadelphia Orchestra, 1926-1928
F. 39	Potomac Electric Power Company, 1921
	Perkins, Malone, & Washburn

Box/Folder	Description
F. 40	1922-1929
F. 41	1930-1935, undated
F. 42	Postmaster, 1921-1927
Box 5	
F. 1	RCA-Victor Company, Inc., 1930
F. 2	R. H. Macy & Co., 1933-1935
F. 3	Randall, Frederick H., 1921
F. 4	Ravitch, Joseph, 1932-1934
F. 5	Reese, Daniel, 1927-1933, undated
F. 6	Reinsch, Paul S., 1921-1922, undated
F. 7	Richter, Olga, 1925-1935
F. 8	Riggs National Bank of Washington D. C., 1921
F. 9	Robertson Realty Company, 1931-1933
F. 10	Royal Hungarian Legation, 1932
F. 11	Russian Financial, Industrial, and Commercial Association, 1921-1922
F. 12	Russo-Asiatic Bank, 1920-1925
F. 13	N-R
F. 14	S. Heimann & Co., 1923-1924
F. 15	S. J. & Company, 1924-1925
F. 16	Sandt Trading Company, 1925
F. 17	Santini Bros., Inc., 1934-1935
F. 18	Seabright Beach Club, 1923-1928
F. 19	Seabright Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club, 1927-1932
F. 20	Shearman, Dr. Robert W., 1928, undated
F. 21	Siberian Agricultural Union, 1921
F. 22	Soubotine, Andre, 1933
F. 23	Soubotine, Michel, 1928-1933, undated
F. 24	Spiero, Joseph, 1923
F. 25	Staheyeff, Vera I., 1922-1934, undated
F. 26	Szechenyi, Count Laszlo, 1932
F. 27	Talcott, Frederick J., 1934-1936
F. 28	Taranik, James, 1922-1924, undated
F. 29	Taylor & Layton, 1930
F. 30	Tchernishoff, S. J., 1925, undated
F. 31	Terestchenko, Nicholas, 1926
F. 32	Theodore Luce, Inc., 1935
F. 33	Treasury Department, 1922-1935
F. 34	Tsaregradsky, Alexis, 1922-1926
F. 35	Tucker, Anthony, & Co., 1934-1935
F. 36	Twelve Hundred Fifth Avenue Corporation, 1930-1935
F. 37	Ughet, S. A., 1918-1928
F. 38	Uhlman, Baron George, 1935
F. 39	Umoft, Paul, 1921-1925
F. 40	Union de Banques Suisses, 1930-1933
F. 41	United States Rubber Company, 1925
F. 42	S-U
F. 43	Van Kleef, Marinus, 1932-1935
F. 44	Villard, Henri, 1929
F. 45	White & Case, 1929-1935, undated
F. 46	Wilbur, E. H., 1925
F. 47	Wilcox & Gibbs Sewing Machine Co., 1921-1922

Box/Folder	Description
F. 48	Williamson, David, 1934, undated
F. 49	Zamiatin, Vladimir, 1923-1924
F. 50	V-Z
F. 51	Unidentified
	Subseries 2: Russian Language Correspondence, 1920-1936
	Individuals
Box 6	
F. 1	Andersen, Meyer, & Co., Ltd., 1920
F. 2	Bashkiroff, Vladimir N., 1921-1922
F. 3	Boleslavsky, Natasha, undated
F. 4	Bolin, W. A., 1921
F. 5	Bourakovsky, 1930
F. 6	British Legation, 1922
F. 7	Bureau for Russian Affairs, 1921-1922
F. 8	Caret, Paul, 1925, undated
F. 9	Columbia University, undated
F. 10	Dokootshieff, Catherine, 1920
F. 11	Fort Dearborn National Bank, 1921
F. 12	Gaston & Company, 1923-1925, undated
F. 13	Hartmann, A. J., 1921
F. 14	Institut Commercial, 1926
F. 15	Krassilnikoff, N., 1921
F. 16	Leibovitch, Dr. A. A., 1934
F. 17	London and Northern Trading Co., Limited, 1925
F. 18	Maioff, J. W., 1923
F. 19	National Bank of Hungary, 1934
F. 20	Nicholas Art Fabrics Co., 1926
F. 21	Nolde, Baron Boris, 1929-1930
F. 22	Okulitch, Joseph K., 1921
F. 23	Ouvaroff, Comte Igor, 1926-1927
F. 24	Principe N. D. Gewakhov, undated
F. 25	Russian Consulate General, 1925
F. 26	Russian Cooperative Company, Ltd., 1922
F. 27	Russian Embassy, 1921-1922
F. 28	Russian Financial, Industrial and Commercial Association, 1922
F. 29	Russian Symphonic Choir, undated
F. 30	Russo-Asiatic Bank, 1921-1923
F. 31	S. Heimann & Co., 1923
F. 32	Shantung Import & Export Company, undated
F. 33	Siberian Agricultural Union, 1920-1922
F. 34	Siberian Fur Import Co., 1924
F. 35	Sikorsky Aero Engineering Corporation, 1924
F. 36	Societe Musicale Russe, 1931
F. 37	Somoff, Eugene J., 1932
F. 38	Stshepichin, S. A. 1922
F. 39	Taranik, James, 1920-1924
F. 40	Tchernishoff, S., 1925
F. 41	Tsaregradsky, Alexis, 1921-1924
F. 42	United States Rubber Company, undated
F. 43	Ughet, S. A., 1921-1932
F. 44	Umoff, Paul A., 1921-1922
F. 45	Universal Match Corporation, 1928

Box/Folder	Description
F. 46	Von Strensch, F. A. R., 1922
	Unidentified
F. 47	1920
F. 48	1921
Box 7	
F. 1	1922
F. 2	1923
F. 3	1924
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F. 5	1926
F. 6	1927
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F. 1	1928
F. 2	1929
F. 3	1930-1932
F. 4	1933-1936
F. 5-6	Undated
<u>Series II: Financial and Legal Papers, 1921-1936</u>	
Box 9	
	Bankers Trust Company
F. 1	Austrian financial situation, 1932-1934
F. 2	Blank forms, undated
	Correspondence
F. 3	Andel, Edward M., 1933-1934
F. 4	Archdeacon, Eric L. F., 1933-1934
F. 5	Bray, E. S., 1933-1934
F. 6	Chappelear, E. S., 1930-1934
F. 7	Colt, S. Sloan, 1931-1936
F. 8	Foote, R. P., 1934
F. 9	General, 1930-1935
F. 10	Kenny, W. J., 1930-1934, undated
F. 11	Klingsmith, Frank A., 1933-1934
F. 12	Machado, Jose, 1933-1935
F. 13	Mellows, A. W., 1934
F. 14	Pagnamenta, G., 1934
F. 15	Rutherford, William, 1933-1934
F. 16	Wight, Charles, 1932-1935, undated
	Hungary
F. 17	1927-1931
F. 18	1932
Box 10	
F. 1	1933, January-June
F. 2	1933, July-December
F. 3	1934
F. 4	1935
F. 5	Undated
F. 6	Industriecredit A. G., 1933
F. 7	Notes, 1935-1936
F. 8	Oesterreichische Credit Anstalt, 1931-1935, undated
F. 9	Receipts, 1930-1935
F. 10	Telegrams, 1929-1935, undated
F. 11	Verwaltungs A. G., 1933-1934, undated

Box/Folder	Description
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F. 1	Cables, 1923-1930, undated Correspondence
F. 2	General, 1923-1933, undated
F. 3	Fauver, Clayton K., 1923-1936, undated
F. 4	Manual by Gaston and Company's foreign department, 1925
F. 5	Memos, 1923-1931, undated
F. 6	Notes, undated
F. 7	Receipts, 1925-1930, undated
F. 8	Telegrams, 1926-1931, undated General
F. 9	Beer mats documents, 1934-1936, undated
F. 10	China, 1921-1923, undated
F. 11	National City Bank, 1925
	<u>Series III: Personal Papers, 1920-1935</u>
Box 12	
F. 1	Baggage declaration forms, 1929, undated
F. 2	Contracts, 1920-1935
F. 3	General, 1927-1928, undated
F. 4	Housing, 1923-1935, undated Newspaper clippings
F. 5	English, 1921-1932, undated
F. 6	Non-English, 1934-1935, undated
F. 7	Notebook, undated
F. 8	Official documents, 1920-1925
F. 9	Passports, 1932 and 1937
F. 10	Photographs, 1933, undated
F. 11	Scrapbook, undated
	<u>Series IV: Oversized Materials, 1919-1934</u>
Box 13	
F. 1	German correspondence, 1934
F. 2	Income tax returns, 1923-1932
F. 3	Russian correspondence, 1919-1920