

\*T-Vim 1998-047

**Guide to the Arthur Weyhe Toy Theatre Collection, 1812-1895**

Billy Rose Theatre Division

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

New York, New York

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## Descriptive Summary

Title: Arthur Weyhe Toy Theatre Collection, 1812-1895

Creator: Arthur Weyhe

Call Number: \*T-Vim 1998-047

Size: 5.25 linear feet; 11 boxes and 1 portfolio

Repository: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.  
Billy Rose Theatre Division. New York, New York

Abstract: Sheets of scenery, characters and wings, both colored and uncolored, used in toy theatres. Also published booklets of play scripts for the theatres.

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## Administration Information

Source: Received from Arthur Weyhe in December 1998.

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

Preferred Citation: Arthur Weyhe Toy Theatre Collection, \*T-Vim 1998-047. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

## Historical Note

Toy theatres were a popular English children's toy in the first half of the 19th century. Many publishing houses were involved in printing engraved sheets depicting the principal characters and scenery of current plays. The characters could be cut out and mounted on pasteboard and attached to sticks for performances in front of the scenery. The sheets came as penny plains that could be colored at home or as twopence coloured, already colored. The theatres themselves were made of card and fit on a table top. Scripts, condensed and adapted for children, were produced to be used with the theatres. Popular titles included *Aladdin*, *Black-Eyed Susan*, *Blue Beard*, *Cinderella*, *Forty Thieves*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Maid and the Magpie*, *The Miller and His Men*, *Richard the Third*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Timour the Tartar*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and various harlequin tales. With the late 19th century rise of a more realistic theatre deemed less suitable as entertainment for children as well as the increase in illustrated journals, the publishing of toy theatres declined.

## Scope and Content Note

Collection is primarily sheets for toy theatres consisting of scenery, characters and wings, both colored and uncolored. Some sheets are still threaded together into booklets showing they were sold as sets. A few characters and wings have already been cut out. The sheets are mainly 1814-1832 or undated, with the exception of Green who published his prints from 1833-1857 and Mathews who published from 1886 to 1895. The collection is particularly strong in the work of the publishing firms of Green, Hodgson, Pollock, Redington, Skelt, Webb and West. The collection also includes published booklets of the juvenile drama used with toy theatres.

## Organization

- Series I. Toy Theatre Sheets
- Series II. Toy Theatre Oversize Sheets
- Series III. Printed Scripts

## Series Descriptions/Container List

### Series I. Toy Theatre Sheets, 1814-1895

7 boxes

Arranged in sub-series by publisher, then alphabetical by play title, then unknown.

Scenery, characters and wings used in toy theatres.

#### Sub-series 1. Allen, J., 1822

1 folder

b. 1 f. 1                      One wing, uncolored, 1822  
1 folder

#### Sub-series 2. Bailey, J., n.d.

1 folder

b. 1 f. 2                      Scenery for various plays, n.d.  
1 folder  
Penny plain scenes from various plays, mainly *Der Freischutz*, also *Black-Eyed Susan* and *Blue Beard*. Also a twopence colored scene from *Aladdin*.

#### Sub-series 3. Brown, T. J., n.d.

1 folder

b. 1 f. 3                    *The Floating Beacon*, n.d.  
1 folder  
Characters for *The Floating Beacon* and two miscellaneous scenes, uncolored.

**Sub-series 4. Clarke, W., 1821-1826**

1 folder

b. 1 f. 4                    Scenery for various plays, 1821-1826  
1 folder  
Mostly twopence colored scenes, also a few penny plain. Plays include *Blue Beard*, *Henry the Fourth*, *Korastikan*, *Richard the Third* and *Rob Roy*, among others.

**Sub-series 5. Cole, W., 1825**

1 folder

b. 1 f. 5                    Two foot pieces, uncolored, 1825  
1 folder

**Sub-series 6. DeBurson, B. M., 1827**

1 folder

b. 1 f. 6                    One penny plain scene for *Forty Thieves*, 1827  
1 folder

**Sub-series 7. Dyer, 1827-1829 and n.d.**

7 folders

b. 1 f. 7-13                Toy theatre sheets published by Dyer, 1827-1829 and n.d.  
7 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Scenes, characters and wings, both colored and uncolored, for over ten plays including *Black-Eyed Susan*, *The Bottle Imp*, *Flying Dutchman*, *The Pilot*, *Red Rover* and *Woodman's Hut*.

**Sub-series 8. Edwards, F., 1826-1827**

1 folder

b. 1 f. 14                    *Woodman's Hut*, 1826-1827  
1 folder  
Scenes for *Woodman's Hut* and characters and wings for

*Travellers Benighted*, all uncolored.

**Sub-series 9. Green, J. K., 1833-1857**

1 box

b. 2 f. 1-37

Toy theatre sheets published by J. Green, 1833-1857

37 folders

Alphabetical by play title

Scenes, characters and wings, mostly uncolored, for over thirty plays including *Aladdin*, *Black-Eyed Susan*, *Blue Bird*, *Cinderella*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Harlequin and Oliver Cromwell*, *The Maid and the Magpie*, *Richard the Third*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

**Sub-series 10. Hodgson, O., 1822-1833 and n.d.**

1 box

b. 3 f. 1-39

Toy theatre sheets published by O. Hodgson, 1822-1833 and n.d.

39 folders

Alphabetical by play title

Scenes, characters and wings, both colored and uncolored, for over thirty plays including *The Blood Red Knight*, *Cherry and Fair Star*, *The Forty Thieves*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Maid and the Magpie*, *The Miller and His Men*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Troy or The Giant Horse*, and *The Vision of the Sun*.

**Sub-series 11. Jameson, 1814-1827**

4 folders

b. 3 f. 40-43

Toy theatre sheets published by Jameson, 1814-1827

4 folders

Alphabetical by play title

Scenes, characters and wings, both colored and uncolored, for ten plays including *The Falls of Clyde*, *Ivanhoe*, and *Undine*.

**Sub-series 12. Marks, J. L., n.d.**

1 folder

b. 4 f. 1

Toy theatre sheets published by J. L. Marks, n.d.

1 folder

Black and white characters from various plays and a colored horse.

**Sub-series 13. Matthews, H., 1886-1895**

1 folder

b. 4 f. 2

Toy theatre sheets published by H. Mathews, 1886-1895

1 folder

Characters, scenes and wings, both uncolored and colored for various plays including *Little King Pippin* and *Prisoner of Rochelle*.

**Sub-series 14. Park, A., n.d.**

6 folders

b. 4 f. 3-8

Toy theatre sheets published by A. Park, n.d.

6 folders

Alphabetical by play title

Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *The Maid and the Magpie*, *The Miller and His Men*, *The Old Oak Chest*, *Red Rover*, and *The Wood Daemon*.

**Sub-series 15. Pollock, B., n.d.**

17 folders

b. 4 f. 9-25

Toy theatre sheets published by B. Pollock, n.d.

17 folders

Alphabetical by play title

Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *Cinderella*, *Dick Wittington and His Cat*, *Jack and the Giant Killer*, *The Miller and His Men*, *The Silver Palace* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

**Sub-series 16. Redington, J., n.d.**

10 folders

b. 4 f. 26-35

Toy theatre sheets published by J. Redington, n.d.

10 folders

Alphabetical by play title

Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *Baron Munchausen*, *Forty Thieves*, *Lord Darnley*, *Oliver Twist* and *Timour the Tartar*.

**Sub-series 17. Skelt, n.d.**

2 boxes

- b. 5-6 Toy theatre sheets published by Skelt, n.d.  
54 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for over fifty plays including *The Battle of Waterloo*, *Forty Thieves*, *Harlequin and Little Tom Tucker*, *Little King Pippin*, *Mary, the Maid of the Inn*, *Mazeppa*, *The Miller and His Men*, *Richard Turpin*, *The Rover's Bride* and *The Woodman's Hut*.

**Sub-series 18. Smart, J., 1822**

1 folder

- b. 6 f. 24 Toy theatre sheets published by J. Smart, 1822  
1 folder  
Colored scenes from *The Exile* and characters from plays by Shakespeare.

**Sub-series 19. Webb, W., n.d.**

21 folders

- b. 6-7 f. 25-30 & 1-15 Toy theatre sheets published by W. Webb, n.d.  
21 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *The Battle of Alma*, *Blue Beard*, *Harlequin Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Harlequin Red Riding Hood*, *The Miller and His Men*, *Robin Hood*, *Three Fingered Jack* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

**Sub-series 20. West, W., 1814-1831**

5 folders

- b. 7 f. 16-20 Toy theatre sheets published by W. West, 1814-1831  
5 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *The Invasion of Russia* and *Ivanhoe*.

**Sub-series 21. Wood, J., n.d.**

1 folder

b. 7 f. 21 Toy theatre sheets published by J. Wood, n.d.  
1 folder  
Rural and naval scenes, uncolored.

**Sub-series 22. Publisher Unknown, n.d.**

8 folders

b. 7 f. 22-29 Toy theatre sheets published by unknown publishers, n.d.  
8 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *The Forty Thieves*, *The Giant of the Black Mountains*, *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*, *The Miller and His Men*, *The Roadside Inn*, *Tom Daring* and unidentified plays.

**Series II. Toy Theatre Oversize Sheets, 1812-1832**

2 boxes

Alphabetical by publisher, then play title, then unknown.  
Scenery, characters and wings used in toy theatres. Box 9 is almost entirely from the publishing house of W. West.

**Sub-series 1. Dyer, n.d.**

1 folder

b. 8 f. 1 Toy theatre sheets published by Dyer, n.d.  
1 folder  
Wings for *The Maid and the Magpie*.

**Sub-series 2. Hawley, W., n.d.**

1 folder

b. 8 f. 2 Toy theatre sheets published by W. Hawley, n.d.  
1 folder  
Includes scenes for *The Miller and His Men*.

**Sub-series 3. Hodgson, 1822-1832**

10 folders

b. 8 f. 3-12 Toy theatre sheets published by Hodgson, 1822-1832  
10 folders  
Alphabetical by play title



Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *Aladdin*, *Cherry and Fair Star*, *Edward the Black Prince*, *The Exile*, *Gilderoy*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Montrose*.

**Sub-series 4. Jameson, 1814-1819**

1 folder

- b. 8 f. 13 Toy theatre sheets published by Jameson, 1814-1819  
1 folder  
Characters, scenes and wings, both colored and uncolored, for various plays including *Blue Beard* and *Robinson Crusoe*.

**Sub-series 5. Love, 1823**

1 folder

- b. 8 f. 14 Toy theatre sheets published by Love, 1823  
1 folder  
Characters from various plays.

**Sub-series 6. Park, n.d.**

1 folder

- b. 8 f. 15 Toy theatre sheets published by Park, n.d.  
1 folder  
Scenes, wings and accessories for plays including *The Maid and the Magpie* and *The Miller and His Men*.

**Sub-series 7. Redington, J., n.d.**

1 folder

- b. 8 f. 16 Toy theatre sheets published by J. Redington, n.d.  
1 folder  
Redington's new orchestra.

**Sub-series 8. Skelt, n.d.**

3 folders

- b. 8 f. 17-19 Toy theatre sheets published by Skelt, n.d.  
3 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Scenes, characters and wings for plays including *The Maid and*

*the Magpie, The Miller and His Men and The Mountaineers.*

**Sub-series 9. Stokes, S., 1832**

1 folder

b. 8 f. 20 Toy theatre sheets published by S. Stokes, 1832  
1 folder  
Fairy cars and wings for *Olympic Revels*.

**Sub-series 10. Webb, W., n.d.**

4 folders

b. 8 f. 21-24 Toy theatre sheets published by W. Webb, n.d.  
4 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Scenes, characters and wings for plays including *Aladdin, Harlequin Jack and the Beanstalk, Hunter of the Alps, The Maid and the Magpie, Robin Hood and The Smuggler*.

**Sub-series 11. West, W., 1812-1829**

1 box

b. 9 f. 1-13 Toy theatre sheets published by W. West, 1812-1829  
13 folders  
Alphabetical by play title  
Scenes, characters and wings for plays including *The Battle of Waterloo, Black-Eyed Susan, Blue Beard, Edward the Black Prince, The Elephant of Siam, Harlequin and Humpo, Ivanhoe, The Miller and His Men, Richard the Third, The Secret Mine, Timour the Tartar and The Wild Boy*.

**Sub-series 12. Publisher Unknown, n.d**

3 folders

b. 9 f. 14-16 Toy theatre sheets published by unknown publishers, n.d.  
3 folders  
Scenes, characters and wings for the play *Malvina* and scenes and characters from unidentified plays.

**Series III. Printed scripts**

2 boxes and 1 portfolio

Alphabetical by publisher, then play title

Plays in published booklets consist of juvenile drama to accompany toy theatre sets. Includes scripts as well as, in some cases, directions on how to cut out and place the scenery and characters. Most booklets are undated; some are illustrated.

- b. 10                      Published booklets, 1830-1856 and n.d.  
                                 1 box  
                                 Publishers are The Boys of England, Clarke, Dicks, Green and  
                                 Lloyd.
- b. 11                      Published booklets, 1828-1829 and n.d.  
                                 1 box  
                                 Publishers are Mathews, Murray, Penny Theatre Royale, Pollock,  
                                 Redington, Skelt, Straker and Webb.
- pf. 12                     Published booklets, n.d.  
                                 1 portfolio  
                                 Small booklets, but too big to fit in the box. Publisher is The Boys  
                                 of England.
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