

**Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum**

INTRODUCTION

Provenance

Acquired by Russell Hartley.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Publications rights

Vary with material.

Size

No. of containers: 3 boxes (122 letters, over 600 photographs, and printed matter)

Processed by

Paul Padgette, October, 1994.

Separated Materials

7 photos, 8x10, of interior and exterior views of identified West Coast theaters.

Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers is a family collection of letters, photographs of family members, and information from their various professions and social activities. The papers offer a glimpse into the workings of early century theater operation and management. Charles, Senior, was one of the original founders of the Orpheum circuit and operated and built many West Coast theaters. His son, Irving, did much the same but also had a wide list of other financial, social, and professional activities. Both men were attorneys and worked in that capacity with the management of their theaters. Charles, Junior, Irving's son, began his early professional life in the theater business in Hollywood studios and in mid-life turned to the operation of interior design studios. The collection includes a sizable number of letters and photographs of their children and, in the case of the Charles Meyer family, extensive numbers of letters, photographs and printed matter of these in-laws. The collection is fragmented in that there are decades in which little or no material is available. The early century and the decade of the 1960s are the most complete.

This collection also contains a large file with many photographs and printed material on Irving's work with the American Kennel Club and the Wire-haired Fox Terrier.

Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum

BIOGRAPHY

Charles Louis Ackerman was born in 1850 in New Orleans. He graduated from Yale University with a law degree and came to the West Coast as a young man. Here he met and married Carrie Meyer, born November 29, 1857 (see Meyer file). They had two children: Irving and Clay, who died when he was a child. Charles was an attorney with the San Francisco firm of Naphtaly, Freidenrich and Ackerman. He had a good career in law and was associated with many celebrated cases, winning the largest fee at the time (\$30,000.) for services in the case of the Thomas H. Blythe estate. He was president of the Equitable Gas Company before it was absorbed into the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and was active in the Odd Fellows and B'nai B'rith. Charles Ackerman was one of the founders of the Orpheum circuit theater chain in America and a vice president of the organization until his death in 1909. He was also president of the Grand Opera House, the Tivoli Opera House, and the Chutes Amusement Park in San Francisco, which opened in 1895 and was located in the double blocks bordered by Haight, Clayton, Waller, and Cole Streets.

Irving Ackerman was born in San Francisco in 1885. He graduated from Stanford in 1907 then spent two years at Harvard Law School. After returning to the West Coast, he married Gertrude (last name undetermined). They had two children: Charles, Jr. and Carol. As an attorney, he headed the firm of Ackerman and Harris, 344 Phelan Building in San Francisco. He formed the Western States Vaudeville in 1910, which booked acts in 25 large California theaters, including the Garrick, Republic, American, Majestic, and Lyceum in San Francisco, Barton in Fresno, and Victory in San Jose. In 1938, he directed a chain of 44 western motion picture theaters. He built the San Francisco Warfield Theater at 988 Market Street where he moved his offices. He was a partner with Marcus Loew of Loew's, Inc. and a founder and vice president of Columbia Pictures in Hollywood (where his son later was employed). With Sid Grauman, Irving built the Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles.

Irving was also a great dog fancier and breeder. He operated the Humberstone Kennels at 530 Fulton Street in San Francisco and in 1898 introduced the Wire-haired Fox Terrier to California. Over the years, his kennel developed 50 champions and won over 3,000 prizes. Irving became director of the American Kennel Club (1907-10) when he was 22 years old and was president of the Golden Gate Kennel Club, founded in 1910, from 1910 to 1940. Acting as an attorney, he represented the American Kennel Club in litigation vs. the National Breeders Association and acquired a library of 2,000 books on dogs. He authored two classic titles on the subject: "The Wire-Haired Fox Terrier," (1927) and "The Complete Fox Terrier."(1938)

Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum

BIOGRAPHY cont.

Charles Ackerman, Junior, was born October 2, 1912, in San Francisco. His first job after studying at the California Polytechnic College was in 1934 in Los Angeles at Columbia Pictures studio. He worked in the property, scenic, and synchronization departments, and as apprentice to the assistant editor, and editor of short subjects. From 1942-1945, he was in the Marine Corp serving in the Photographic Section as editor on documentation, training and campaign footage and later served at Pearl Harbor in the Photo-Service Pool. After his war service, Charles was employed as an editor of short subjects with the Walt Disney Studios. In San Francisco in the 1960s, he was owner of Charles Ackerman (AID) and Associates, Interior Designers, located at 3399 Sacramento Street.

Irving's daughter, Carol, married Frank Singer. (See file)

Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum

CONTAINER/FOLDER LISTING

SERIES I. CHARLES ACKERMAN Family history, photographs, and letters

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 1	1	Printed biographical material
	2	Family Mementos. Two historic photos from the 1906 Earthquake and Fire; family photos; address book pages.
	3	Charles Ackerman letters: 17 letters, 4 photos (1895-1907)
	4	Carrie (Meyer) Ackerman letters: 11 letters, 10 photos (1905-1907)
	5	Photos of Charles, Carrie, Clay and Irving (as children) 40 photos, various sizes
	6	Photos. Group family pictures, snapshots, from the early part of the century. 97 photos, various sizes

SERIES II. IRVING ACKERMAN Family history, photographs, and letters

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 1	1	Irving Ackerman letters: 8 letters/wire (1905-1960)
	2	Irving Ackerman photos: 14 portraits, 20 snapshots. 34 photos, various sizes
	3	Gertrude Ackerman (Irving's wife) 16 photos, various sizes
	4	Charles, Junior, and Carol, (Irving's children) 42 photos, as children, various sizes

**Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum**

SERIES III. CHARLES ACKERMAN, JUNIOR Family history, photographs and letters

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 2	1	Charles Ackerman, Junior, letters (1948-1971) 17 letters, 3 photos
	2	Charles Ackerman, Junior, Letters concerning his Marine Corp experience (1954-1958) 57 letters; 6 photos, various sizes plus 3 Marine documents
	3	Photos of Charles Ackerman, Junior. Portraits and snapshots. 28 photos, various sizes
	4	89 photos from the Charles Ackerman, Junior, papers, mostly unidentified persons, including bullfight snapshots, sailing and boat photos
	5	Mrs. Charles Ackerman, Junior, photos. Some with her daughter "Kit." 29 photos, various sizes
	6	Carol Singer photos (daughter of Frank and Carol Ackerman Singer) 20 photos, various sizes, folder of school essays

SERIES IV. OTHER FAMILY HISTORY, PHOTOS AND LETTERS

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 3	1	Several documents and related clippings concerning the Carrie Meyer Estate and disposition of monies
	2	Charles and Leah Meyer family photos 27 photos, mostly portraits of various members of the Meyer family. Various sizes

**Charles and Irving Ackerman Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum**

SERIES IV. OTHER FAMILY HISTORY, PHOTOS AND LETTERS cont.

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 3	3	Henrietta (Meyer) Davis (Carrie's sister) Twelve letters (mostly to Carrie), 1904-1945. 40 photos of Henrietta, her husband, Mortimer, their son, Mortimer, Junior; photos of their homes in Canada and France.
	4	Nine photos. Identified by name, but relationship to families not established.

SERIES V. HOMES, THEATERS, AND DOGS

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 3	1	Photos of homes occupied by the family in San Francisco (6 photos) and Burlingame (20 photos)
	2	Theater photos. "The Padre," a play written by Charles Ackerman, 1916 production. 4 photos and a clipping. "Barretts of Wimpole Street," 1934, MGM movie, photos featuring "Flush," a cocker spaniel featured in film. People and theaters, not identified. 19 photos, various sizes
	3	Various clippings, pamphlets, journals concerning movie and theater matters, all from the Ackerman papers
	4	Five journals, loose pages from books, illustrations from books, concerning the arts
	5	Dogs. 76 photos, various sizes; plus articles from journals and newspapers on the Ackerman kennels, prizes.