

Grauman Papers
Museum of Performance + Design

Introduction

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1 box
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BIOGRAPHY

Sid Grauman was born March 17, 1879, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Early in life, he began travelling to New Orleans, Chicago, St. Louis and other "romantic" cities in search of adventure. Before the turn of the century, he travelled to Alaska with his father, not for gold, but to ease the hardships of the miners. At Dawson City, he and his father, David G. Grauman, staged a benefit performance for the miner's entertainment. After further adventures, they returned to San Francisco where they opened the Unique Theater on Market Street, next to the present-day Warfield Theater. Among those who early on appeared on the Unique stage were Frank Bacon, Jesse Lasky and his sister, and the Coast Defenders.

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, father and son set up a tent theater which flourished for two years. In the next few years, they built and operated six local theaters, expanding to operating theaters in San Jose, Sacramento, and Stockton. The Graumans booked the leading vaudevillian performers of the period, including Sophie Tucker, Al Jolson, Lou Holtz and Buddy DeSylva.

In 1916 Sid was on the road with a stage play he produced when he came to Los Angeles. He fell in love with the city and the infant movie industry. In the next few years, he gave up his San Francisco theater interests and began building and operating theaters in Los Angeles. The first was the Million Dollar followed by the Metropolitan (now the downtown Paramount) and the Rialto. The theaters were all large, grand and more spectacular than any earlier theaters in Los Angeles. They became his trademark. In 1922 he constructed the Egyptian Theater on Hollywood Boulevard. It was in this theater that he introduced the Prologue, a stage tableau setting the mood for the featured film that followed. It was in such a prologue that Lawrence Tibbett got his start. Sid also was the creator of the gala premiere with its lights, stars and publicity. (See Grauman photos of theaters and premieres in this collection for illustrations of the prologues and galas.)

In 1927 he opened the Chinese Theatre, his greatest triumph. It has a tradition of the two-a-day performances of the leading films of the era. The theater opened with Cecil B. de Mille's "King of Kings" and is famous for the autographs and footprints of the stars in cement at the entrance of the theater.

At the time of the 1929 crash, Grauman lost all his wealth estimated at six million dollars. However, through his genius in financial matters, he quickly earned a new fortune. Sid Grauman enjoyed the good life, first living at the newly opened Biltmore Hotel and later the Ambassador where he could be near his mother who resided there. He remained there for the rest of his life.

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His father died in 1926 and his mother in 1935.

By the late Thirties he had sold his interests in all these theaters and had turned to other things which included the Hollywood Rollerbowl and several parking lots in Hollywood.

Sid Grauman never married. When he died of a heart attack on March 5, 1950, at the age of 70, he had been celebrated by the movie industry and called one of their "greats", even receiving a special Oscar in 1948. He is buried alongside his parents in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles.

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FOLDER / CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I. HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 1 Folder 1	Clippings Ticket to Marcus Loew's Empress Theater Letter from Louis Lurie	1949

SERIES II. SAN FRANCISCO THEATER PROGRAMS (9)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 1 Folder 2	Imperial, Globe, Empress, Unique Theater (drawing) Program from Unique Theater, San Jose Program: Alcazar Theater, SF, Grauman's "Highlights of 1943" Clippings	

SERIES III. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER (10 programs)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 1 Folder 3	10 programs "A Shrine to Art", souvenir program Autograph book Chinese Theater and Egyptian Theater postcards (9) Clippings	

SERIES IV. LA THEATER PROGRAMS

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 1 Folder 4	Million Dollar Rialto Metropolitan	

SERIES V. PHOTOGRAPHS

Subseries A. Personal Photographs (11x14)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 5	Sid Grauman (with two others) viewing souvenirs from the Chinese Theater May 18, 1927	

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SERIES V. PHOTOGRAPHS

Subseries A. Personal Photographs (11x14) cont.

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 5	S.G. with Mae Murray, David Grauman, his father, and several others at the Million Dollar Theater	@1918
	Mrs. David J. Grauman talking with orphans at a party S.G. and the Hansen Device (phone switchboard) at the Million Dollar Theater,	@1918
	Sid Grauman Testimonial Banquet, sponsored by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, Roosevelt Hotel	Oct. 27, 1949
	Portrait of Sid Grauman	1928
	Photo of S.G. with unidentified man	1945
	S.G. with Mr. and Mrs. Herb Harris at Popagago Room, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, with restaurateur Al Williams	@1945

Subseries B. Gala Premiere photographs (11x14)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 6	Opening of Mary Pickford's "Rosita", Million Dollar Theater	1923.
	Dorothy Davenport, Bessie Love, A.C. Blumenthal, Rupert Hughes, Robert Wagner, Colleen Moore, Richard Barthelmess, Corinne Griffith	
	Six unidentified	

Subseries C. Theaters (11x14)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 7	Interior of Egyptian Theater	@1924
	Interior of Rialto Theater	@1924
	"Tribute to Scheherazade", at	

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Subseries C. Theaters (11x14) cont.

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 7	Million Dollar Theater	@1924
	Interior view of Seven Seas Cocktail Lounge, Hollywood Blvd., across street from the Chinese Theater	@1946
	Interior entrance to Earl Carroll's Theater, Hollywood	@1945
	9 photos, unidentified theater interiors, lobbies, lounges, auditoriums, etc.	

Subseries D. Photos from silent films (11x14)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 8	"Potash and Perlmutter"	1923
	"Partners Again"	1926
	Annie Brady, Eddie Lambert, Alexander Carr, Harry Von Meter (14)	

Subseries E. Prologues (11x14)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 9	Stage productions given before screening of featured films (3)	

Subseries F. Actors and Actresses (11x14)

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 10	Warner Baxter and Winifred Bryson	
	Priscilla "Peggy" Moran (child actress) one inscribed to Sid Grauman (4)	
	Belita, dancer	
	"The Changelings", Henry Miller, Blanche Bates, Laura Hope Crews and John Miltern	1923
	Dorothy Joanne Barneck, teen-age actress	
	Hazel Newman, teen-age actress	

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Subseries F. Actors and Actresses (11x14) cont.

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 10	Mildred Clare Granite, teen-age actress Marilyn Knowlden, teen-age actress, (2) Derry Davenport, teen-age actress, (2) Virginia Thornton, Pasadena photographer Percy Pollock John Barrymore Nance O'Neill Eva Tanguay, actress and singer Tom Brown and Frances Drake, actors, 2 photos Thomas Meighan, actor Ian Hunter, actor Marian Nixon, actress Billy and Bobby Mauch (twins), "Prince and Pauper", film, 1937 Larry Semon with his company in "Charley's Aunt" (8) Dorothy Dawn and Larry Semon's wife and leading lady, Jobyna Ralston with Harold Lloyd films Adolph Menjou, actor Edith Roberts, actress Gus Edwards, song-writer, singer, vaudeville performer, music publisher Dolly Haas, actress and wife of cartoonist Al Hirschfeld Herbert Brenon, Paramount producer and Director	

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Subseries F. Actors and Actresses (11x14) cont.

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2 Folder 10	Allan Jones, singer and actor Dorothy Davenport with her son, William Reid, whose father was actor Wallace Reid Marian Marsh, actress Neil Hamilton, actor	

Subseries G. Unidentified

Subseries H. Portraits of performers

(Note): also see book, *Hollywood's Master Showman, The Legendary Sid Grauman*, by Charles Beardsley. NY: Cornwall Books, 1983. Palm has this book in its archives.