

# John Mayes:

## A Preliminary Inventory of His Family Papers in the Performing Arts Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Mayes, John, 1921-2012
<b>Title:</b>	John Mayes Family Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1879-2004
<b>Extent:</b>	12 document boxes, 2 oversize folders (5 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The John Mayes Family Papers, circa 1879-1970s, document the lives and lengthy careers of three generations of British actors, writers, and artists. Among the primary family members were brothers Herbert Pearson (1866-1955, born McPherson) and Quinton McPherson (1871-1940); Quinton's daughter Esther McPherson (1897-1965) and her husband Frank Milray (1888-1936, born Mayes); and the son of Esther and Frank, John Mayes (1921-2012). John Mayes, who acted with the well-known Shakespearean actor-manager Donald Wolfit, brought together his family's papers with his own, including his research and notes about the family.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Performing Arts Collection PA-00181
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gift, 2004 (Gift no. 12394)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Antonio Alfau, 2005
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Scope and Contents

The John Mayes Family Papers, circa 1879-1970s, document the lives and lengthy careers of three generations of British actors, writers, and artists. Among the primary family members were brothers Herbert Pearson (1866-1955, born McPherson) and Quinton McPherson (1871-1940); Quinton's daughter Esther McPherson (1897-1965) and her husband Frank Milray (1888-1936, born Mayes); and the son of Esther and Frank, John Mayes (1921-2012). John Mayes, who acted with the well-known Shakespearean actor-manager Donald Wolfitt, brought together his family's papers with his own, including his research and notes about the family. The papers are organized into six series: I. John Mayes; II. Esther McPherson; III. Quinton McPherson; IV. Frank Milray; V. Herbert Pearson, and VI. *The Spotlight Casting Directory*.

John Mayes's papers in Series I. contain correspondence and programs concerning his own career, as well as correspondence from Donald Wolfitt, programs and clippings about Mayes and Wolfitt, writings about Wolfitt, and even souvenirs such as moustache and beard pieces used by Wolfitt.

The papers of Mayes' mother, Esther McPherson, in Series II. contain some correspondence and management papers, her review cuttings, photographs, and editions of Shakespeare plays with her parts marked.

Quinton McPherson, the grandfather of John Mayes, is represented by materials in Series III. These comprise mainly correspondence, programs, and his press cuttings book, but also photographs, an address book, and other personal objects.

Series IV. contains the papers of Frank Milray, husband of Esther McPherson and father of John Mayes. Included are manuscripts of his works, original art, clippings of articles, photographs, programs, and a theatrical address book. Also present are Temple editions of fifteen Shakespeare plays, with Milray's parts underlined.

The papers of John Mayes' great-uncle, Herbert Pearson, contain correspondence, several of Pearson's works, and photographs, as well as papers relating to his relationship with actress and author Florence Marryat, and with actress and wife Katherine Clark.

The final series contains *The Spotlight* casting directories for 1939, 1950 and 1956. Photographic portraits of Quinton McPherson and Esther McPherson are found in the Summer 1939 issue. The second volume of Autumn 1956 also contains images of Esther McPherson.

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**Series I. John Mayes, 1908-2004**

Booklets listing theatrical contacts and lodgings, 1949-1952	<b>Box 1 Folder 1</b>
Correspondence	
Platt, Lorna, 1948, 2004, undated	<b>Box 1 Folder 2</b>
Wolfit, Donald, 1947-1955	<b>Folder 3</b>
Various managements employing Mayes, 1947-1953	<b>Folder 4</b>
Postcard collection, English stage beauties, circa 1908-1910	<b>Folder 5</b>
Programs, English theatre, 1947 to 1970s	<b>Folder 6</b>
Programs and clippings, Mayes and Wolfit	
1947	<b>Box 1 Folder 7</b>
1947-1949	<b>Box 2 Folder 1</b>
1950	<b>Folder 2</b>
1950-1952	<b>Folder 3</b>
1952-1953	<b>Box 3 Folder 1</b>
Wolfit, Donald	
Moustache and beard pieces used by Wolfit	<b>Box 3 Folder 2</b>
Programs, circa 1947	<b>Folder 3</b>
Tour of Jonson and Shakespeare plays, 1950	<b>Folder 4</b>
Writings about Wolfit	
Brahms, Caryl. "Donald Wolfit: A Profile," published essay, undated	<b>Box 3 Folder 5</b>

Mayes, John. "Donald Wolfit," typescript, 1969

**Folder 6**

Parker, R. B. "Wolfit's Fox," typescript setting copy and proofs of article, *UTQ*, 1976

**Folder  
7**

**Series II. Esther McPherson, 1897-1965**

Correspondence and management papers, 1940-1965 (*undated "Certificate of Honour" removed to Oversize Folder)	<b>Box 4 Folder 1*</b>
Cuttings book, 1916-1957	<b>Folder 2</b>
Photographs	
Circa 1897-1898	<b>Box 4 Folder 3</b>
1900-1936, undated	<b>Folder 4-5</b>
Shakespearean plays, marked copies	
Comedies, 1921	<b>Box 5 Folder 1</b>
Tragedies, 1913	<b>Folder 2</b>

**Series III. Quinton McPherson, 1879-1955**

Address book and other personal objects, 1917-1939, undated	<b>Box 5 Folder 3</b>
Clippings, 1955	<b>Folder 4</b>
Correspondence	
1896-1903	<b>Box 5 Folder 5</b>
1915-1925	<b>Folder 6</b>
1938-1939	<b>Box 6 Folder 1</b>
1940	<b>Folder 2</b>
Photographs, 1879-1939	<b>Folder 3</b>
Programs, 1888-1901	<b>Folder 4</b>
Programs and cuttings book, 1902-1939	<b>Folder 5</b>
Miscellaneous, 1897-1903	<b>Folder 6</b>

**Series IV. Frank Milray, 1908-1992**

Address book, theatrical landladies	<b>Box 7 Folder 1</b>
Articles about Frank Milray, 1986-1992	<b>Folder 2</b>
Correspondence, 1920-1935	<b>Folder 3</b>
Milray writings and linocuts	
"Kate Parr's Tyme," 1927	<b>Box 7 Folder 4</b>
"Ruin of Katherine Parr, The," 1927	<b>Folder 5</b>
Photographs, 1908-1929 (*photograph of Milray as "Soapy Marks" in Edgar Wallace's "The Terror," removed to Oversize Folder)	<b>Folder 6*</b>
Photographs by Frank Milray, 1910-1925	<b>Folder 7</b>
Programs and clippings, 1919-1964	<b>Folder 8</b>
"Temple Shakespeare" marked copies of various plays	<b>Box 8 Folder 1-15</b>

**Series V. Herbert Pearson, 1885-1955**

Correspondence and other papers, 1896-1909

**Box 9  
Folder 1**

Personal papers

Clark, Katherine, 1894-1955

**Box 9 Folder 2-5**

Marryat, Florence, 1885-1899

**Folder 6**

Photographs

Portraits, 1880s-1900

**Box 9 Folder 7**

Production photographs, 1908-1935, undated

**Folder 8**

Writings

"Bosom Friend, The," post-1900

**Box 10 Folder 1**

"Brought to Bay," 1903

**Folder 2-3**

"Castaway, The," circa 1894

**Folder 4**

"Shadows on the Heart," undated

**Folder 5**

Miscellaneous, 1918-1919, undated

**Folder 6**



**Series VI. *The Spotlight Casting Directory*, 1939-1956**

1939 and 1950

**Box 11 Folder 1-3**

1956

**Box 12 Folder 1-2**