PROVENANCE

Renowned nationally and internationally for their contribution to puppetry, Romain and Ellen Proctor dedicated their lives to this art. The Proctors first became interested in puppetry when, in 1924 they made their first puppet for their son John. The Proctors traveled extensively throughout the United States, Europe, and Latin America. In addition to performing, they became involved in professional puppetry activities, including, writing articles and book reviews for professional journals and participating in conferences. During their career as professional puppeteers, the Proctors collected papers documents which were related not only to their personal lives but also to puppetry in general.

SIUE-Lovejoy Library purchased this unique collection from Ellen Proctor in 1969. As a result, this manuscript collection combined with the more than 700 volumes of books and personal interviews, leaves the Lovejoy Library one of the finest university library collections on puppetry.

BIOGRAPHICAL CHRONOLOGY

Often referred to as "master puppeteers", Romain and Ellen Proctor were among the leading authorities on puppetry in America. A hobby which started as a entertainment, puppetry became their profession and a lifelong passion.

Romain Proctor was born in Birmingham, Alabama on July 12, 1899. He was the fourth child of Henrietta Duscheete Schimidt and Morris Hale Proctor. He went to school in Birmingham and later studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago. Then he enrolled in the Art Institute in Chicago and took courses in theater.

In 1921 Romain Proctor moved to Springfield, Illinois and became a designer for the Little Theater
Movement. During this time he also worked as an artist for Capital Engraving Company and did some free-lance painting.

Ellen Proctor was born on December 24, 1900 in Pana, Illinois the daughter of Eugenie Millot and Hubert Sawyer. She graduated from Hillsboro High School in 1918, and enrolled at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) as an English major. In 1920 she attended Browns Business College in Springfield, Illinois.

Romain Proctor and Ellen Sawyer met in Springfield and married on May 6, 1923. In 1924 the Proctors had their first child, John. To appease the "toy needs" of their first born, the Proctors turned to puppetry. This initial adventure later flowered into a lifelong Passion and a profession. As professional puppeteers, the Proctors traveled extensively through three continents, North America, South America and Europe. They were usually booked to perform repeat-shows annually. The popularity of the Proctor Puppet Show was so immense that parents, who had seen the Proctor Puppets as children, would often bring their own children. The Proctors gave their Puppet show in the Vanderboot theater in St. Louis annually. For approximately 19 years, starting from Thanksgiving day to new years Eve, the Proctor Puppet Show was enjoyed by thousands around the St. Louis area.

Romain Proctor became an active member of Puppeteers of America. During the years between late 1940s and 1960, he held various posts in the organizational committee of the Puppeteers of America. First as a technical advisor and later as Vice President and President, Romain Proctor was a key figure in the revival of interest in Puppetry, Romain Proctor was frequently invited to speak at and perform in international conferences.

He represented the United States Puppetry Organization in the International Festival of Puppet Theatres, Bucharest (1958), and the Unione Internationale des Marionettes (UNIMA) Paris Conference

After Romain Proctor's death, for a short time, Ellen Proctor gave shows on her own. But she found staging puppet shows too demanding for a single person. In 1963 she began work as a puppet conservator at the Detroit Institute of Arts. She worked there until her retirement in 1982.

In 1982 Ellen Proctor moved to Edwardsville, Illinois and lived in Eden Village Care Center until her death on November 28, 1988. She is survived by her daughter Mimi Zaqnger and several grand and great-grand children.

SERIES I: ELLEN AND ROMAIN PROCTOR (BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL)

This series contains Romain proctor's writings, correspondence, bibliographies compiled by the Proctors and miscellaneous notes on puppetry and puppet making notes. Among the writings are: "Workshop on Puppeteers of America Festival", "Article written for Puppetry Journal upon our return from Europe", Oct.26, 1953, and " A Report on Paris meeting June 10, 1959", sent to the members of UNIMA. Compilations of bibliographic material related to puppetry is also included in section. Before choosing puppetry as a profession, Romain worked as an artist. In this series are some of his drawings published in "Lincoln's New Salem" by Benjamin P. Thomas. His puppetry notes, contained in the series, are also often elaborated by detailed sketches on puppet techniques. His puppetry notes are also included in this series.

Also included are several photocopies of fliers which the Proctors used for advertising purpose.

Also contained are personal correspondence of Romain and Ellen Proctor. The dated letters are arranged chronologically and the undated letters alphabetically by author. Letters date from 1931 to 1963. Most of the correspondence consists of personal letters from friends and admirers. These letters reflect the depth of the Proctors' involvement in the puppetry world and the influence of puppetry in their personal
lives. The letters show that the majority of the friends which the Proctors had were in some way associated with puppetry.

**SERIES II: PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

This series contains documents relating to various puppetry organizations with which the Proctors were associated; including Puppeteers of America (P. of A.), Unione Internationales des Marionettes (UNIMA), Chicagoland Puppetry Guild, Detroit Puppeteers Guild, The British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild and The Toronto Guild of Puppetry.

Included in the series are constitutions of the different organizations and membership lists, memos and minutes, bulletins, correspondence (arranged alphabetically), and financial and other reports (1955-1965).

**SERIES III: REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Series III contains reference material on puppetry. Included are articles, publications and notes on puppetry in general and also on puppet making. Of special interest is the article "A Brief Survey of American Puppetry", which gives an overview of the development of puppetry in America.

There is also some material on making popular puppet figures (Little Red Riding Hood, Punch and Judy and Puppet Cowboy), and on the use of music in puppet shows.

This series also includes popular plays which the Proctors used in their puppet shows.

**SERIES IV: PHOTOGRAPHS AND POSTERS**

Included in this series are photographs of puppets as well as puppeteers. There are also two photographs of Ellen Proctor holding Shadow puppets. In the first photograph she is shown holding two Javanese puppets and in the second a Javanese and a French puppet.

This series also contains posters of various puppetry organizations, both national and international.
Among the posters included are: Larry Benner's London Puppet Players, Bucknell Marionettes, Unione Inernationales des Marionettes, Lanchester Marionettes, Marionettes du Manifole, and other posters from various countries.

**SERIES V: MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS**

This series contains fliers, pamphlets, and publications of different national and international puppetry organizations.

**SERIES VI: MISCELLANEOUS**

This series contains miscellaneous items such as bills and travel tickets which the Proctors used during their travel. A spool tape of the 1972 Proctor puppet show conducted by Ellen Proctor at SIUE, is also included in this series. An introductory speech by Dr. John Abbott, the then President of Lovejoy Library, is also in the spool.
ARTICLES

A. B. "How to Make a Punch and Judy Show." *Work*, May 6, 1893.


----------. "De Marionetten Van Praag." *Ons Land,* Vo. 147, Jan 16, 1965.


INCOMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Drury, Betty. "These Comedians Still Haunt Our Stage."

Bruicour. "Guignol Centenaire."

Bruicour. "Guignol Centenaire."

"Skeezix - Young Mr. America." Feb 1, 1954.

"Le Monument de Guignol." L'actualite.

"Les marionettes Polonaises."

"Puppetry."

"Religious Origin of Marionettes."


"Sur Guignol."

"Tony Sarg is Dead; Artist, Puppeteer." Monday, March 9, 1942.
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**Series I: Romain and Ellen Proctor**

- 1/2 Romain Proctor's Writings
- 1/3 Correspondence, 1931-1956
- 1/4 Correspondence, 1957-1963
- 1/5 Correspondence, undated (alphabetically)
- 1/6 General notes on Puppet Making

- 2/1 Bibliographic material and Miscellaneous notes
- 2/2 Newspaper clippings on the Proctors
- 2/3 Fliers "Proctor Puppets"

**Series II: Professional Organizations**

- **Puppeteers of America (P. of A.)**
  - 2/4 Constitution and Membership List, 1940-1959
  - 2/5 Correspondence, 1952-1963
  - 2/6 Correspondence, undated
  - 2/7 Memos and minutes
  - 2/8 Conference and Festival notes

- 3/1 Conference and Festival notes
- 3/2 Financial and others reports, 1955-1965
- 3/3 Miscellaneous

- **Union Internationales Des Marionettes**
  - 3/4 Circulars, Bulletins, and Speeches, 1957-1959
  - 3/5 Correspondence, Incoming, 1956-1963
  - 3/6 Correspondence, Outgoing (alphabetically)
  - 3/7 Miscellaneous
  - 3/8 Puppetry Organizations in U.S.A.
  - 3/9 Detroit Puppeteers Guild

- 4/1-2 International Puppet Organizations
- 4/3 Miscellaneous
Series III: Reference Material

4/4 Puppet Literature
4/5 Puppet Plays
4/6 Puppet Making

Series IV: Photographs and Posters

5/1 Photographs
5/2 Spool-Tape
5/3 Posters (A-K)
5/4 Posters (L-S)
5/5 Posters (T-Z)

6/1 Pamphlets and Brochures

Series V: Publications and Newspaper Clippings

6/2 Magazine Articles on Puppets
6/3 Newspaper Clippings

7/1 Newspaper Clippings (incomplete bib.)
7/2 Misc. Puppet Organizations (Pub.)
7/3-4 Misc. International Publications and Pamphlets

Series VI: Miscellaneous Items

7/5 Miscellaneous
7/6 Lincoln Material
7/7 Ellen Proctor Interview Transcripts (1988)
- tapes in audiocassette collection