The Leigh R. Smith Collection
CalArts Library and Information Resources, Department of Special Collections

Smith, Leigh R.
Processed by Caroline Russom

California Institute of the Arts
Division of Library and Information Resources,
Department of Special Collections
20700 McBean Parkway
Valencia, CA 91355-2397

URL: http://calarts.edu/library/whatwehave/collections/sc/hrs.html

Descriptive summary

Title  The Leigh R. Smith Collection

Creator   Leigh R. Smith 1888-1975

Extent    4 boxes
          1 linear foot

Repository  California Institute of the Arts
            Division of Library and Information Resources
            Department of Special Collections

Biography   Leigh Rex Smith was born in Iowa in 1888 and died in Woodland Hills, California in 1975. His motion picture career of over forty years spanned the silent film era through the late nineteen forties. Active in many aspects of filmmaking, Smith’s credits include art, technical, and production design and direction. As an assistant director, Smith worked with Elmer Clifton, D. W. Griffith, and Cecil B. de Mille. Smith was a production assistant for D. W. Griffith’s film *Way Down East* (1920) and an assistant director, researcher, and a cast member for Elmer Clifton’s film *Down to the Sea in Ships* (1922). In the latter part of his career, Smith is credited as a set decorator for over thirty films.

Abstract   The Leigh R. Smith collection contains production stills, location photographs, notes, and research materials for D. W. Griffith’s *Way Down East* (1920) and Elmer Clifton’s *Down to the Sea in Ships* (1922). Professional materials include Smith’s still camera, a signed guestbook, and Smith’s source book of film contacts and resources. There are also materials related to two stock and location photography trips in 1927: one to New England in March and a second Colorado River expedition in November of the same year. The collection also contains a scrapbook and several early photographs of Smith.

Physical location  Stored in the Department of Special Collections.

Language   English

Administrative Information

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Access  Available for use at the Department of Special Collections of the California Institute of the Arts Division of Library and Information Resources.

Access Terms  The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Motion picture producers and directors--United States.
Smith Leigh R. 1888-1975

Restrictions of Use  Copying restriction and policies are available from the CalArts Department of Special Collections / Archives.

Preferred Citation  [Identification of item], The Leigh R. Smith Collection, California Institute of the Arts, Division of Library and Information Resources, Department of Special Collections, Valencia, California.

Scope and Contents  The bulk of the Leigh R. Smith collection contains black and white stills and location photographs from two films released in the early 1920s: Way Down East, directed by D. W. Griffith in 1920, and Down to the Sea in Ships, directed by Elmer Clifton in 1922. There are (45) numbered and unnumbered stills for the film Way Down East and (33) location photographs. For Down to the Sea in Ships, there are (52) numbered and unnumbered stills, (21) photographs, and (5) typed pages of Smith’s research notes. Unique to the collection are two sets of photographs and journal entries that document two photography trips taken in 1927. Smith describes the first, a trip to New England, in March of his 1927 date book. There are also (58) location and stock photographs. The collection includes a map, diary, and newspaper article related to a 1927 Colorado River expedition taken in November, 1927. A (10) page scrapbook compiled by Mrs. Catherine Smith, and two added pages contain photographs and news clippings. A signed guest book spans the years 1927-1937. An alphabetical listing of actors, contacts and resources provides insight to the filmmaking process in early twentieth century Los Angeles.

Genres and Forms of Material

Camera
Date books
Typed letters, notes
Photographs
Scrapbook

Organization  The materials are arranged in six (6) series

Series I  WDE - Way Down East (1920)
Series II  DSS - Down to the Sea in Ships (1922)
Series III  DB - Date books and professional resources (1910-1929)
Series IV  CR - Colorado River Expedition (November 1927)
Series V  M27 - New England location and stock photographs (March 1927)
Series VI  BD - Background documents (1915-1953)
Container List

(219) Items in 3 manuscript boxes
(4) Items in one oversize flat box

Series I WDE: Way Down East (1920)
This series is arranged into seven subseries. Subseries 1 and 2 are numbered and unnumbered film stills. Subseries 3 through Subseries 7 consists of undated photographs arranged by size and border style.

[Box I]

Subseries 1: WDE numbered stills (19) 8 x 10\”, (1) 4 x 6\”, (1) 5x 6.75.”

1. UI - # 2  Billy Bitzer, D. W. Griffith at camera, and unidentified crew.
2. UI. # 4  Burr McIntosh and Edgar Nelson (top half torn).
3. UI. # 24  Griffith (?), two cameramen, Viva Ogden.
4. U-I # 50  Night - sugarhouse.
5. U-I # 65  Night - Lillian Gish, Griffith, Bitzer.
6. UI # 87  Equipment foreground; waterfall, town skyline in background.
7. UI # 88  Waterfall; town, one small figure on ice in background.
8. UI # 98  Unidentified crew on riverbank.
9. UI - # 114  Children playing in snow fort outside village.
10. UI # 128  Icy riverbank.
11. UI # 134  Unidentified bearded man in fur hat.
12. UI # 138  Lillian Gish on ice, hair in water.
13. UI # 147  Crewmember holding camera in fur clothing on ice flow in river.
14. UI # 147  Second print, sharper focus.
15. UI # 151  Crewmember in fur further out in river.
16. UI –193  4 x 6” Crewmembers in threes on ice. See unnumbered WDE still 27.
17. UI –253  Richard Barthelmess carries Lillian Gish from river.
18. UI –278  Richard Barthelmess in bedroom; spool bed, lyre table.
19. UI – 310  Lillian Gish interior.
20. UI-324  5 x 6.75” Griffith (?), crew holding platform.
21. UI- 518  Interior Lillian Gish and Mrs. David Landau.

Subseries 2: WDE unnumbered stills (23) 8 x 10” (1) 5 x 7\”

1. Four crew at waterfall platform.
2. Four crew at waterfall platform (2\textsuperscript{nd} clearer print).
3. Griffith (?) pointing on edge of waterfall.
4. Griffith (?) on edge of waterfall industrial town visible.
5. Group of two cameramen, Griffith (?)
7. River shot; small trees and large ice flow foreground.
8. Lillian Gish, cloaked and hooded in night storm.
10. Bridge, with town in background.
11. Night, the Bartlett home, well, wagon wheel, tree.
12. Marked on back “Burr McIntosh, Kate Bruce.”
13. Viva Ogden as Martha Perkins.
15. Asher Morris General Merchandise store.
16. Side view two story building; fretted balcony, tree arch.
17. Burr McIntosh in snow.
18. Burr McIntosh in one horse sleigh.
19. Crewmember on ice in fur coat; see numbered still #147, #151.
21. Sewing circle in town of Belden.
22. Ten crew members with two cameras in the snow.
23. 5 x 7” Lilian Gish on ice, hair in water; see numbered still #138.
24. Bedroom: spool bed, lyre table, trunk, needlepoint back chair.

Subseries 3: WDE photographs approximately 3 x 4“

1. 2 ½ x 4” Snow scene barn front white house, fences noted on back “Buildings on #44 shown by D. G. Stark Waverly NY. Please return if not interested.”
2. 2 ¾ x 4 ¾ “White border, vertical / horizontal branch tree landscape.
3. Trimmed, 3.25 x 4.25” 1 ½ story 2-chimney house in snow.
4. Trimmed, 3.25 x 4.25” See 8 x 10” UI -# 87; Equipment foreground; waterfall, town skyline. Noted on back “Looking across the Conn. River into New Hampshire from White River Jct.”

Subseries 4: WDE photographs approximately 4 x 6”

1. 4 ½ x 6 ¾” Street in snow signed “LRS” 42 N. E.
2. 4 ½ x 6 ½” with 35 mm (?) film sprockets. Victorian wallpaper, white door, umbrella stand. See 10 (same subseries.)
3. 4 ½ x 6 ½” with film sprockets. Five-column porch with shovel, wheel, milk can.
4. 4 ½ x 6 ¼” with film sprockets. Same shot varied exposure, right edge torn.
5. 4 ½ x 6 ⅔” Strong horizontal snows cape: dark lines of mountains and clouds.
6. 4 ¾ x 6 ¾” Train stop in snow three figures.
7. 4 ¾ x 6 ¼” Town in snow into mountains sign “Hotel Saltse.”
8. 4 x 5.5” Kitchen counter top with clock, lamps signed “Leigh Smith.”
9. 4 x 5.5” Woodstove with kettle signed on back, Leigh Smith.
10. 4 x 5.5” Partial door with umbrellas in stand, continues 2 (same subseries.)
11. 4 x 5.5” Roll top desk, rocker and fireplace, signed on back, Leigh Smith.
12. 4 x 5.25” Wood stove “25” plants in window.
13. 4 x 5.25” Wood stove, detail of pipe.

Subseries 5: WDE Photographs approximately 6 x 8”

1. 5 x 7” Brick building with curved walkway through snow; tree left.
2. 6x8” Farmhouse in winter; back stamped “Arthur H. Woodman, Commercial photographer.”
3. 6.5 x 8.5” Two hole punch, D. W. Griffith (?) Billy Bitzer (?) left, ? right; palm trees mixed with snow; signed “Leigh R. Smith.”
4. 6.5 x 8.5” Street piled with snow, steps left, trees, telephone poles.
5. 5 x 7” Snowy street; figures, trees, steeples.

**Subseries 6: WDE Photographs** with identical borders; inside 3.25 x 4.25”

1. White three story house, six columns, three chimneys, side porch and side wing.
2. Window shutter with icicles.
3. Two story white house behind stone wall, wrap around porch.
4. Stone building with cupola, American flag, four columns.
5. House, 1 1/2 stories, shelves under windows, 2nd story with three pane windows.
6. House, dormer windows, two chimneys, two ladders, wagon frame in front.
7. Snow landscape, figure eight foreground, sky and hills.

**Subseries 7: WDE Photographs** with identical borders; inside 3 3/8 x 5 1/2”

1. Photo postcard. River with covered bridge early summer.
2. Elm lined street, church to right then columned building.
3. Slanted hillside, stamped Leigh R. Smith” and “H. H. GRUNDSTROM.”
4. Farmhouse and buildings initialed “LRS” bottom right corner.
5. Two story house with added fretwork porch.
6. 3 x 5 25” Group of three buildings, snow, signed “Leigh R. Smith.”

**Series II DSS: Down to the Sea in Ships (1922)**

This series is arranged into three subseries. Subseries 1 and 2 are numbered and unnumbered film stills. Subseries 3 is a labeled five-sheet photograph set. Subseries 4 contains copies of letters and undated notes about whaling and the ship Charles W. Morgan.

[Box 2]

**Subseries 1: DSS Numbered stills (40) 8 x 10”**

1. P 7 Raymond McKee - black jacket.
3. CP 117 Raymond McKee (third from left) tavern scene.
4. CP 144 Harbor scene; ship Charles W. Morgan.
5. CP 151 New Bedford Street. Notation on back.
6. CP 155 New Bedford Street.
7. CP 157 Clara Bow, W. Walcott, Marguerite Courtot in dining room.
10. CP – 262 Clara Bow, Jamie Aldine in general store.
11. CP – 265 Two cast, oil vats, pails, and flask.
13. CP – 287 Evening – vertical front half of Charles W. Morgan Notation on back.
15. CP – 288 Charles W. Morgan - full sail with crew vertical shot.
17. CP – 326 Ten unidentified cast (?) crew (?) in harbor in front of ship, trailer.
19. CP – 347 Shot of crew filming waterfront scene.
21. CP – 415 Thomas Allan Dexter on ship’s prow.
22. CP – 439 Interior: Marguerite Courtot exiting bedroom door.
23. CP – 469 Charles W. Morgan Notation on back.
24. CP – 470 Charles W. Morgan Notation on back.
25. CP – 471 Drying sails. Notation on back.
26. CP – 478 Raymond McKee in crow’s mast with spyglass.
27. CP – 479 Raymond McKee in crow’s mast with arm outstretched.
28. CP – 482 Two cast members steering ship.
29. CP – 500 Three cast members pulling on rope. Raymond McKee on right.
30. CP – 501 Cast on deck, broom; center whale tail. Bottom right corner torn.
31. CP – 525 Raymond McKee left of hanging shark.
32. CP – 528 Three ships, tropical foliage, village in background.
33. CP – 529 Over fifty crew members – night shot.
34. CP – 570 W. Wolcott, … ?, Marguerite Courtot, … ?, Raymond McKee.
35. CP – 731 Night shot of ship, whaleboat and crew.
36. CP – 758 Quaker meetinghouse, cemetery in foreground.
37. CP – 761 Quaker meetinghouse closer shot.
38. CP – 881 Camera boat top half missing; see Item 40.
39. CP – 881 2nd copy; shoreline; buildings “Binnacle & Signal Oils – Gasoline…”
40. CP – 901 Raymond McKee and Leigh R. Smith.

**Subseries 2: DSS Unnumbered stills (12) 8 x 10” (1) 6.5 x 9.5”**

1. Jawbone; four crew on deck; three corners torn. Leigh Rex Smith – white jacket.
2. Six crew in straw hats on deck.
3. Submerged whaling boat, five crew in water.
4. Six paneled door, bow window tapestry Victorian wallpaper, loveseat, turned armchair, spittoon, electric lamp with art glass shade; signed “Leigh Smith.”
5. Kitchen cupboard and Providence stove kitchen alcove stamped on front and signed on back, “Leigh Smith?”
6. Front room with three bay windows, table and armchair glassed top door.
7. Parlor with tiled fireplace, clock, and stairwell in background.
8. Parlor outside of pantry (?) fireplace, mirror, clock.
9. Large main room with side chairs drop leaf table fireplace with painting.
10. Door with half wheel glass skylight insert, view into two rooms.
11. Bedroom, four-poster, Victorian wallpaper, wainscot marked “8B11E.”
12. Old cubbyhole two drawer desk, “8B11 I” on back.
13. Publicity photograph 6.5 x 9.5” dated 1922; Leigh R. Smith in advertising van.
**Subseries 3: DSS Photograph set**

[Oversize flat box 1]

(5) 9 X 12” paper sheets (4 photos each) labeled:
“1-4”, “CUTTING IN,” “No 1-2- 3-4 BLACK FISH,” “no 4 A DEAD WHALE ALONG SIDE-,” “CUTTIN’ IN”

**Subseries 4: DSS Documents**

[Box 3]

1. Undated drafts of letters of inquiry titled “Whaling 001 from Leigh (Jr.) and Catherine Smith to Mystic Seaport and four other museums. Includes copy of letter to Leigh R. Smith from Elmer Clifton dated January 13, 1928 and enlarged copies of advertising postcards. (14 pages)

**Series III: DB Date books**

This series contains four date books arranged by year.

[Box 3]

1. The Standard Daily Reminder for 1924 5 x 7.75 x 1”.
   Copy of Registration contract in the “Standard” July 1923 as an assistant casting director. Noted film activity: "Greed" (Daniels), along Came Ruth (Arnold).
2. Date book for 1925 4 X 5.75 x 1”.
3. Date book for 1926 4 X 5.75 x 1”. Noted film activity: “Silence” (Brooke) “Hippodrome” (Crisp), “Yankee Clipper” (De Mille).
4. Date book for 1927 4.25 x 7 x 1”.
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Series IV: M27 March 1927 Location and stock photographs
This series is arranged into three subseries sorted by photograph size and style.

[Box 2]

Subseries 1: M27 photographs 3.5 x 5.75” with black border

1. Trimmed, leading line, rutted, snowy road.
2. Trimmed, vertical shadows, leading line houses on street, signed Leigh R. Smith.
3. Leading road line along river to left.
4. Leading line along snow rutted toad to 3 figures.
5. Cart pulling car.
6. Interior store, boxes, glass front case.
7. Factory runoff into river.
8. River small waterfall with factory to left.
10. Winter riverbank darkest of 4 shots.
14. Winter still water with reflected treed hills; LRS 67 initials on back.
15. Winter riverbank tree on right.
16. Winter riverbank tree on right identical shot?
17. Cameraman, tree stonewall, gravestone.
18. Cameraman, tree stonewall, gravestone, greater depth of field.
19. House connected to barn with 1 wing, 2 barrels, church steeple in background.
20. Another house connected to barn with 1 wing, on paved city street.
21. Two story house porch column at left, 2 chimneys, exterior stairs to 2nd floor.
22. Two story house, front shot of sidewalk, trees, side porches and 3 chimneys.
23. Slightly blurred, two story house behind wood slat fence, fir trees, chimney.
24. Farmhouse, attached “l;” barn, silo.
25. Town street, with iron fence, horses & carts.
26. Farmhouse behind barbed wire and white picket fence, fir trees.
27. Covered bridge.
28. Schoolhouse, bell tower.
29. West Lebanon fire station.
30. Road leading to farm buildings, fence right.
31. Fancy barn with weathervane to left, house to right.
32. Lebanon, NH photography shops, shoe store.
33. Lebanon, NH square, clock tower, columns, car foreground, walking figures.
34. Lebanon, NH, Civil war soldier statue, piled cannonballs; soft, maximum highlight.
35. Lebanon, NH, Civil war soldier statue, piled cannonballs still highlights, crisper shadow right building.
36. Lebanon, NH, Civil war soldier statue, piled cannonballs; left shadow lightest.
37. Lebanon, NH, Civil war soldier statue, piled cannonballs left shadow medium
38. Lebanon, New Hampshire, Civil war soldier statue, piled cannonballs left shadow darkest.
40. New Hampshire license plate 1927.
41. Vermont license plate 1927.
42. Front room with “whatnot” See M27 IV. 2.6.

Subseries 2: M27 photographs with identical white borders: 3 x 5.5”

1. Three identical kitchen sink, icebox, shelves; open door, maximum light.
2. Three identical kitchen sink, icebox, shelves; open door, less light.
3. Three identical kitchen sink, icebox, shelves; open door, darkest light.
5. Parlor interior, dark shades, white woodwork, rocker.
6. Parlor interior, bay window view, whatnot; see Subseries M27 IV. 1.42

Subseries 3: M27 Photographs with Identical white borders: 3.25 x 5.25”

1. Street, melted snow, wooden sidewalk, signed “Leigh R. Smith.”
2. Street wide view, sign “Ashbel House Rooms.”
3. Hanover Inn, Hanover, New Hampshire.
4. New Hampshire town hall (?) four columns, steeple, car in front, marked "6?77."
5. White clapboard two story building, four columns marked “373.”
6. White clapboard two story building from the side.
7. Barn with two wagons and blurred horse (?) marked “491.”
8. Barn annex, camera right, stair ramp; stamped “949” and “H. H. GRUNDSTROM.”
9. Barn annex, camera right, stair ramp.
10. Interior: fireplace with spinning wheel, benches, pewter plates, rifles; marked “591.”

Series V. Colorado River expedition (1927)
This series contains materials from the November, 1927 Colorado River expedition.

[Box 3]

1. Expedition journal.
2. Camera, Kodak model #3A used on Colorado River expedition.

[Oversize Flat File 1]

1. Map of the Colorado River 21 x 22.”
2. Newspaper clipping (undated) “Long Lost Expedition Hunted in Grand Canyon by Fliers From LA missing since Nov. 8” (1927?) 6.5 x 14”.
Series VI. Background Documents
This series contains background biographical photographs and professional documents.

{Box 3}

1. Guest book used in home, 1927-1937 9 x 6.25 x1”.
2. Film resources 5 x 7.75 x1”. Dated materials from 1910-1917; majority of materials undated. Contains contact information for actors and film materials. Several signed drawings, cleaning and plating recipes, poems, ephemera.
3. Photo album 10 x 11.75” compiled by Catherine R. Smith. Pages 11 and 12 added during processing. Photograph 5 x 7 ½” of Metta (2 years of age), Leigh (12 years of age), and Earl Smith (10 years of age) 1898 Long Beach, California, a photograph of Leigh Smith dated 1918, and a working card of the International Alliance Theatrical Stage Employee, Local no. 33 also 1918.
   Page 12 contains two 8 x 10” undated prints of sketch / engravings of Hollywood Presbyterian Church signed “Lee Smith” photographed and printed on linen texture paper. Note remnant of film sprocket on upper left corner of black negative print. (12 pages)

Bibliography


Old Dartmouth Historical Society Library.
Records, 1921-ca. 1950. Corp Author(s): Whaling Film Corporation
Description: 3 linear ft. Language: English Standard No: LCCN: 91-799591
Abstract: Chiefly correspondence (1921-1938) of officers and directors relating to the production, publicity, promotion, and financial aspects of the film; administrative records (1921-1941) consisting of articles of incorporation, stockholders and directors records, contracts, tax returns, and certificates of condition; financial records (1922-1934) including production cost records, balance sheets, and bills and receipts; and sales and distribution records, reflecting foreign and national distribution. Contains scripts, musical score, and cue sheet for the film; research notes; publicity materials; programs; press releases; clippings; lists and historical sketches; and related material. Persons represented include Elmer Clinton, producer and director.