



SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Visual Materials from the Octavus Roy Cohen Papers, 1923-1940 SCHS # 0695.00 VM

Description: 0.25 linear ft. (1 box + flat file)

Biographical/Historical Note: Octavus Roy Cohen, born in Charleston in 1891, was the son of Octavus Cohen (1860-1927) and Rebecca Ottolengui Cohen (1856-1938). He graduated from Clemson College in 1911 and later worked as a journalist and lawyer. He married Inez Lopez Bessemer in 1914, and they lived in Birmingham, Alabama, until 1935, until moving to New York and then Los Angeles. Cohen wrote and published many short stories focusing on African American life in Birmingham, and later became well known for his detective stories and novels. One reviewer criticized Cohen's Birmingham stories as "a travesty and a caricature." Cohen was a prolific author of stories, novels, plays, and film scripts. He died in Los Angeles in 1959.

Scope and content: Collection consists of photographs and one original illustration. It includes two lantern slides with images promoting the films *Gallant Lady* (1942) and *The Law and the Man*; and black and white photographs, some of which are publicity shots, of Octavus Roy Cohen and his wife and son. There is also a reproduction of a group photograph of the "Class of 1911" (probably Clemson College). The illustration is an ink and watercolor, 1940, by Gilbert Darling, created for an installment of Cohen's serialized novel *Kid Tinsel*. It depicts an African American couple dancing.

Note: Almost all these items were removed from a binder in which each image was individually described and numbered. The original numbers are listed for each item in parentheses.

Preferred citation: Visual materials from the Octavus Roy Cohen papers, 1923-1940. (0695.00 VM) South Carolina Historical Society.

Search terms:

Cohen, Inez Lopez.
Cohen, Octavus Roy, 1891-1959.
Darling, Gilbert.
African Americans in art
Authors, American -- 20th century
Magazine illustration

Container listing:

BOX 1

- 1 Lantern slide (1B), advertising a 1942 movie *Gallant Lady*. Also, a glass slide advertising a film *The Law and the Man*.
- 2 Two photographs (5A, 5B) of Octavus Roy Cohen, one of which is dated 1933.
- 3 Five black and white photographs (6, 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B) of Octavus Roy Cohen, 1929-1933.
- 4 Three b & w photographs (9A, 9B, 10) of Octavus Roy Cohen, his son, and actor Walter C. Kelly, 1933-1935.
- 5 Three b & w photographs (11A, 11B, 12) of Octavus Roy Cohen and his son and wife, 1925-1929.
- 6 Matted, autographed photograph (13) of Octavus Roy Cohen, inscribed "To Seymour Halpern."
- 7 Three photographs (42, 43, 44) of Octavus Roy Cohen and his wife and son.
- 8 Three photographs (46, 47, 48) of Octavus Roy Cohen and family and friends, 1923-1933.
- 9 Three photographs (49, 50, 51) of Octavus Roy Cohen, his wife, and friends.
- 10 Four photographs (52, 53, 54, 55) of Octavus Roy Cohen and a colleague, 1933-1935. Several images of him were used in conjunction with his obituary.
- 11 Reproduction of a group photograph (60) of "Class of 1911" (Clemson?).
- 12 Photograph of Octavus Roy Cohen, 1933.
- 13 Reproduction of an illustration for a 1940 magazine story, "Kid Tinsell," by Octavus Roy Cohen.

OVERSIZE Visual Materials (located in VM flat files)

- 1 Black and white photograph of Octavus Roy Cohen and fellow authors Jerome Beatty and Courtney Riley Cooper, n.d. This was removed from a frame which included a cardboard panel with autographs of the three men.
- 2 Original ink and watercolor illustration on drawing board, 1940, by Gilbert Darling for Cohen's magazine story (serial) *Kid Tinsel*. Illustration depicts an African American couple dancing.