



**Walter Havighurst Special Collections
Miami University Libraries**

**Labiche – Leveaux Papers
1830-1887**

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title:	Labiche-Leveaux Papers
Creator:	Leon P. Irvin
Dates:	1830-1887
Media:	Typescripts of letters, manuscript books, scrapbook
Quantity:	0.5 cubic feet
Location:	Closed Stacks: Manuscript Shelving

COLLECTION SUMMARY

This collection contains correspondence, manuscript books, newspaper clippings, and printed material pertaining to the French dramatist Eugène Marin Labiche (1815-1888) and Alphonse Leveaux (1810-1893).

PROVENANCE OF THE COLLECTION

Leon P. Irvin donated these papers to the Walter Havighurst Special Collections in 1982.

Original letters between Labiche and Leveaux were originally bequeathed to Irvin by the Vicomtesse Louise Courbot de Liniers, who was the granddaughter of Alphonse Leveaux. Irvin had made her acquaintance when he was a student in Paris in 1921-1922. Later, in 1926-1927, she permitted him to read many of the letters as he wrote a thesis on Labiche, but was unwilling to permit the publication of the letters without the consent of Labiche's grandson. Madame de Liniers bequeathed the letters and the dramatic library of her grandfather to Irvin

upon her death in 1940. In 1967, Dr. Irvin donated the original letters to the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, but retained typescript copies of those letters.

Information about how Irvin obtained the other items in the collection is not available.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Eugène Marin Labiche (May 5, 1815-January 23, 1888) was a French dramatist. After writing dramatic criticism and a romance novel, he contributed comic plays interspersed with couplets to various Paris theatres. The series culminated in the five-act farce, *Un Chapeau de paille d'Italie* (*The Italian Straw Hat*) in August 1851. More comedic plays followed for the next 25 years.

In 1877, Labiche retired to his rural property in Sologne, superintending agricultural work. He later published a collected and revised edition of his works; a successful ten-volume series of his comic plays was issued during 1878 and 1879. Labiche died in Paris.

Alphonse Leveaux (1810-February 10, 1893) was a historian and occasional playwright. He served as curator of the library of the chateau of Compiègne, which was then the favorite of Napoleon III. As a historian, Leveaux published several books, including a work on court theatre in Compiègne during the reign of Napoleon III (1882-1885). At the beginning of the Third Republic, he became mayor of Compiègne.

Leveaux befriended Labiche at Lycee Condorcet, and they remained lifelong friends. They traveled to Italy together between January and July 1834. They also collaborated on three works; on those occasions, he took the pseudonym of Alphonse Jolly, to avoid confusion between their names.

Leon P. Irvin (May 4, 1896-March 3, 1993) was a professor of French and Spanish at Miami University from 1919 to 1961. He edited five books of intermediate French readings, of which his *Vingt et Un Contes* was the most successful; three editions of it were published and used in many universities until well after his retirement.

A veteran of the first and second World Wars, Irvin was especially proud of his military service. He was appointed by the Pentagon as Chief of Education, Cultural and Religious Affairs in all occupied countries.

Irvin believed that mastering a foreign language was key to understanding its culture, so he was especially committed to providing students with the best linguistic formation possible. In 1986, Irvin established the L.P. Irvin Fund as an annual scholarship for study abroad.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

A manuscript book titled *Ville de Compiègne, Société Saint-François-Xavier, Conférences faites par Alphonse Leveaux, 1859-1878* includes Leveaux's notes about meetings of the St. Francis Xavier Society, which met in Compiègne on the third Sunday of the month. Founded in 1853,

the society was composed of 150 members. Highlights from this volume include visiting Naples and seeing Vesuvius and Pompeii (June 1860; p. 15); California and San Francisco (May 1861; p. 28); people met in the theatre (September 1862, p. 43); Don Quixote (November 1864; p. 61); ideas for a comedy, with text of the play included (February 1868; p. 77); Australia and Captain Cook (May 1870, p. 106); a travel narrative of Siam (May 1870; p. 106); and reading about scientific topics (February 1878; p. 138).

Lettres d' Eugène Labiche a Alphonse Leveaux mises en ordre en accompagnies de preface, notes en lettres par Alp. Leveaux is a bound volume containing handwritten copies of correspondence from Labiche to Leveaux between 1835 and 1887, annotated by Leveaux. The volume concludes with the last letter Leveaux received before Labiche's death.

Another bound volume features a manuscript account of Leveaux's voyage to Switzerland in June 1830.

"Les Quarante-Neuf Représentations données par les Théâtres de Paris au Palais de Compiègne Pendant le Règne de Napoléon III, 1852-1869, par Alphonse Leveaux" is a bound volume of Leveaux's notes about 49 plays given by Paris theatres during the reign of Napoleon III. Playbills for the plays are also included.

The collection includes a printed copy of Labiche's speech on the occasion of his acceptance into L'Académie Française on November 25, 1880. The pre-eminent body on matters pertaining to the French language, the Academy was established in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu. Its 40 members are elected for life. Its primary task is publishing an official dictionary of the French language. A printed copy of *Eugène Labiche et L'Académie*, written by Leveaux, is included in the volume.

A scrapbook of newspaper clippings titled *Echo de l'Oise, 1850-1880 and Progrès de l'Oise, 1853-1880* includes printed accounts of meetings of the Société Saint-François-Xavier; speeches and prize distributions given at ceremonies held at the end of the school year; meetings of historical societies and other organizations; banquet toasts; poems about Joan of Arc; amateur theatrical plays, charades and concerts; memoirs of a trip to Palermo; and other topics.

The collection concludes with four folders containing typescripts of letters of Labiche to Leveaux. Before donating the original letters to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Irvin arranged them in chronological order and prepared these typescripts of them. Some of the letters bore no date, but, by studying the contents of the letters and the dates of the first performances of the plays of the author, Irvin was able to determine the month and year when they were written. Irvin noted that several letters which were in the collection when he first read them in the library of Madame de Liniers were missing when he received them.

All materials in the collection are written in French.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

Series I: Manuscript Books

Series II: Printed Materials

Series III: Typescripts of Labiche-Leveaux Correspondence at the Bibliotheque Nationale

RELATED MATERIALS

Miami University Libraries holds a number of works by Labiche, Leveaux, and Irvin.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University Libraries.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to cite *The Labiche-Leveaux Papers, The Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University Libraries* in all footnote and bibliographic references.

Provenance: Donated to the Walter Havighurst Special Collections by Leon P. Irvin.

Processed By: Betsy Butler, October 2008

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the box and folder numbers shown below.

Series I: Manuscript Books

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	Voyage en Suisse	1830
	2	Ville de Compiègne, Société Saint-François-Xavier,	1859-1878

Box	Folder	Title	Date
		Conférences faites par Alphonse Leveaux	
	3	Les guarante neuf representations données par les theatres de Paris au Palais de Compiègne pendant le regne de Napoléon III, 1852-1869, par Alphonse Leveaux	1877
	4	"Lettres d' Eugène Labiche a Alphonse Leveaux mises en ordre en accompagnies de preface, notes en lettres par Alp. Leveaux"	1887

Series II: Printed Materials

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	5	<i>Echo de l'Oise, 1850-1880 and Progrés de L'Oise, 1853-1880</i>	1853-1880
	6	<i>Discours prononcés dans la Séance Publique tenue par L'Académie Francaise pour la Réception de M. Labiche le 25 novembre 1880, together with Eugène Labiche et L'Académie Francaise</i>	1880

Series III: Typescripts of Labiche-Leveaux Correspondence at the Bibliotheque Nationale

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	7	Typescripts, pages 1-100	January 1834-October 4, 1852
	8	Typescripts, pages 101-200	October 18, 1852-October 9, 1866
	9	Typescripts, pages 201-300	November 9, 1866-May 15, 1877
	10	Typescripts, pages 301-383	May 19, 1877-December 28, 1887