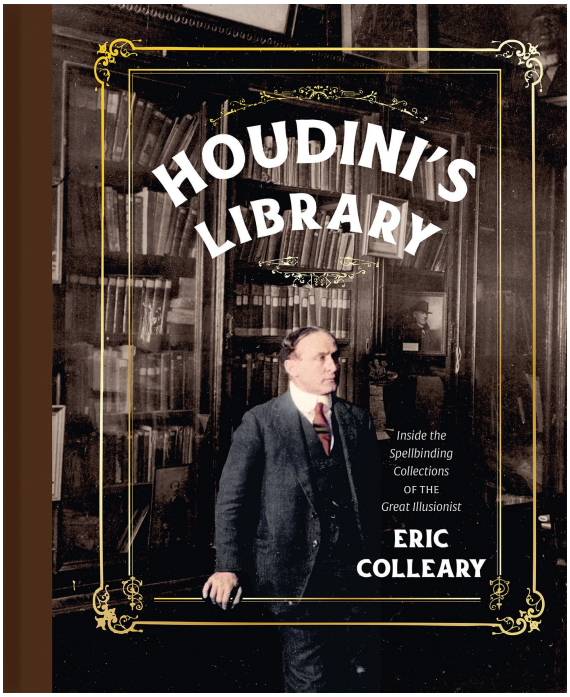
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Houdini's Library

Inside the Spellbinding Collections of the Great Illusionist

Eric Colleary

ISBN	9780789215390
Publisher	Abbeville Press
Binding	Hardback
Territory	World excluding USA, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Australia
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Price	£50.00

- The first-ever book about Harry Houdini's legendary personal collection devoted to the history of magic and the theatre
- Published to coincide with a major exhibition at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, where a substantial portion of Houdini's library is preserved
- Published on the centennial of Houdini's death
- Traces the growth of Houdini's collection in tandem with his career, and includes many fascinating tales of his collecting exploits
- Illustrates hundreds of treasures, many for the first time, from rare books to playbills to prints and photographs
- The author, who is Curator of Performing Arts at the Ransom Center, is an authority on Houdini's library and well connected in the world of magic
- Published to coincide with an exhibition of Harry Houdini's extensive collection at the Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin (August 29, 2026 to January 27, 2027)

A landmark volume in the history of magic—the first-ever book on Houdini's legendary personal collection, published on the centennial of his death.

Harry Houdini (1874–1926) was not only a great magician but a great collector. Every corner of his townhouse at 278 West 113th Street in New York was filled with books, pamphlets, prints, clippings, playbills, and photographs documenting the history of magic and theatrical performance. *"It would cost fully a million dollars to forge the collection of evidence now in my hands,"* Houdini wrote in 1908. *"These programs, advertisements, newspaper notices, and crude cuts trace the history of magic as no romancer, no historian of a single generation possibly could. They are the ghosts of dead and gone magicians, rising in this century of research and progress to claim the credit due them."*

This handsome oversize volume is published to coincide with a major exhibition at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, where much of Houdini's library is preserved. It traces the growth of the legendary illusionist's collections throughout his career and illustrates hundreds of his treasures—many for the first time. They range from a priceless copy of Reginald Scot's 1584 volume *Discovery of Witchcraft*, the first book to reveal the secrets of sleight-of-hand; the irreplaceable collection of playbills and programs that Houdini obtained from the British conjuror Henry Evans Evanion; the travel diary of David Garrick, the 18th-century actor who defined modern theatre; and much more. Houdini's Library will be a source of fascination for anyone interested in the history of magic and performance.

Dr. Eric Colleary is a curator, historian, and writer who has spent more than two decades bringing the stories of theatre, performance, and popular culture to life. As Curator of Performing Arts at the Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin, he has organised award-winning exhibitions that uncover how performance shapes and is shaped by history, and his work has been featured in major national outlets.

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