

## Finding Aid to the Greg Hyman Papers, 1957-2010

### Summary Information

**Title:** Greg Hyman papers

**Creator:** Greg Hyman (primary)

**ID:** 2013.hyman

**Date:** 1957-2010 inclusive; 1976-2010 bulk

**Extent:** 1.75 linear feet

**Language:** The materials in this collection are in English. There is one catalog sheet in French.

**Abstract:** The Greg Hyman papers are a compilation of correspondence, publicity materials, legal papers, paper prototypes, and product descriptions created by Greg Hyman throughout his career in the toy and game industry. This collection also includes audio/visual prototype demonstrations. The bulk of the materials are dated from 1976 through 2010.

**Repository:**

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong  
One Manhattan Square  
Rochester, New York 14607  
585.263.2700  
library@museumofplay.org

### Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Use:** This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

**Custodial History:** The Greg Hyman papers were donated to The Strong in December 2010 as a gift from Greg Hyman, accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 110.14357. The same accession lot also included toy and game prototypes. Another set of papers was donated to The Strong in July 2013 as a gift from Greg Hyman, accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 113.3500.

**Preferred citation for publication:** Greg Hyman papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

**Processed by:** Michelle L. Parnett, October 2013

### Controlled Access Terms

**Personal Names**

- Greenberg, Larry
- Hyman, Greg

**Corporate Names**

- Greg Hyman Associates, Inc.

**Subjects**

- Alphie the Robot (Toy)
- Baby All Gone (Doll)
- Character toys
- Elmo (Fictional character: Henson)
- Game design and development
- Major Morgan the Electronic Organ (Toy)
- Patents
- Play
- Toys--Design and construction.

**Biographical Note**

Greg Hyman is an American toy designer. Hyman demonstrated his interest and talent for inventing at a young age. As a fourth grader in the 1950s, he offered his classmates lessons in invention. At 11 years old, Hyman sold “rocket ship” rides in a converted washing machine with a baby carriage cockpit. At age 16, Hyman cofounded a business installing home burglar alarms.

Fresh out of college, Hyman built customized electronic devices for advertising and public relations firms and for television game-show presentations. By 1974 Hyman had partnered with Larry Greenberg, a man he had met in television work. They started their own firm, Hyman/Greenberg Associates, and developed toy ideas to pitch to manufacturers. Because no manufacturers licensed any of their electronic toys for several years, the two inventors needed to keep “real jobs,” as Hyman described them.

In 1977, Creative Playthings manufactured the pair’s first toy, Little Maestro Piano Organ, and Milton Bradley signed Hyman and Greenberg to contracts that paid advances against future toy ideas. Playskool introduced their first big success, Alphie the Robot, whose lights, sounds, music, action, and games helped youngsters learn letters, numbers, songs, and more.

Hyman and Greenberg licensed 40 toys together before Greenberg passed away in 1992. Their inventions include Major Morgan the Electronic Organ, an electronic musical phone, a Win, Lose, or Draw game, and the Big Blaster Electronic Bike Horn. In the 1990s and after, Hyman continued inventing toys on his own or with other inventors.

In 1993 Playskool released Hyman’s Talking Barney, based on the popular dinosaur from the PBS television series. Around the same time, Hyman began collaborating with Ron Dubren, another toy inventor, on an electronic toy that laughed and squirmed when its tummy was tickled. Tyco saw Elmo, the fluffy, red, three-year-old Muppet from *Sesame Street*, as a perfect match for the Tickle Me Elmo toy. Tickle Me Elmo became the must-have toy of the 1996 holiday season, and numerous variations of the toy have been in production ever since. Tickle Me Elmo leads the list of Greg Hyman’s best-known toys, but the plush toy coexists in his portfolio with more than 120 other licensed toys.

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

The Greg Hyman papers contain materials from 1957 through 2010, with the bulk of the material dated between 1976 and 2010. This collection comprises toy prototype demonstrations, toy design notes, early product descriptions and schematics, catalog pages and sell sheets, photographs, and more. Additional scope and content information is listed for each series under the “Contents List” section of this finding aid.

The Greg Hyman papers are arranged into four series, three of which are further divided into subseries. The physical collection is housed in 3 archival document boxes.

**System of Arrangement**

Series I: Greg Hyman inventions, 1957-2010

Subseries A: Greg Hyman inventions documentation, 1957-2010

Subseries B: Greg Hyman Associates prototype demonstrations and Learn to Invent—audio-visual DVD, 1976-2010

Subseries C: Greg Hyman Notebooks, 1977-1995

Series II: Greg Hyman Associates early product descriptions and schematics, 1976-1997

Series III: Catalog pages and sell sheets, 1983-2010

Series IV: Miscellaneous publicity, 1987-2007

## Contents List

### Series I: Greg Hyman inventions, 1957-2010

#### Subseries A: Greg Hyman inventions documentation, 1957-2010

**Scope and Content Note:** The materials in this series document Hyman's foray into toy invention. Spanning from the late 1950s through 2010, these documents include notes, photographs, and miscellaneous press. The series includes 17 patents for toys (such as Major Morgan the Electronic Organ, Alpie the Robot, and Howdy the Horse) and microprocessor chips used in Alpie the Robot and Dolly Toy sound-activated crib mobile.

#### Box 1

Folder 1	Greg Hyman inventions, photos, and correspondence, 1957-1965
Folder 2	Greg Hyman inventions, photos, prototype illustrations, and news articles, 1970-2010
Folder 3	Greg Hyman Associates U.S. patents, 1974-2000
Folder 4	Microprocessor

#### Subseries B: Greg Hyman Associates prototype demonstrations and Learn to Invent—audio-visual DVD, 1976-2010

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries holds DVDs created as a result of converting the footage from its original media. Hyman produced footage of his demonstrations for several of his toy prototypes including Glob Man, Dream Machine, and Skip n' Splash Jump Rope, among others. This subseries also includes a video of Elmo interviewing his creator and puppeteer, Kevin Clash, and Hyman's "Learn to Invent" video.

#### Box 2

- Strong Museum Master CD, n.d.
- "Elmo Interviews Kevin Clash, his creator and puppeteer," 2008, DVD
- "Learn to Invent," (00:24:00), 2009, DVD
- "Baby All Gone" and "Baby Check-up Kenner Commercials," 1992 (0:01:00), DVD
- "Baby All Gone Hasbro TV Commercial," 2010 (0:00:22), DVD
- "Sound Activated Mobile," n.d. (0:02:00), DVD
- "Greg Hyman Associates Toy Prototypes," 2011 (0:32:00), DVD
- "Glob Man #502," 1992 (0:01:30), DVD
- "Dream Machine #728," 1993 (0:10:00), DVD
- "Fly Wheels #496," 1998 (0:02:35), DVD
- "Land Surfer #448," 1996 (0:02:30), DVD
- "Skip n' Splash Jump Rope #912," 1996 (0:01:00), DVD
- "Ant Man #501," 1993 (0:02:30), DVD
- "Rescue Chopper #844," 1996 (0:04:15), DVD
- "Jumpin' Jack Pup #891," 1996 (0:02:30), DVD
- "Off-Road Rider aka Space Cycle #525," 1995 (0:01:04), DVD
- "Story Time Sam #840," 1995 (0:06:30), DVD

**Subseries C: Greg Hyman Notebooks, 1977-1995**

**Scope and Content Note:** The materials within this subseries include three notebooks. Hyman referred to the notebooks as his “lab books.” His handwritten notes reference “Alphie,” and the “Dolly mobile,” among others. The notebooks also include sketches and measurements.

**Box 3**

- Folder 1 Lab Book 1977-1978
- Folder 2 Lab Book 1987-1990
- Folder 3 Lab Book 1988-1995

**Series II: Greg Hyman Associates early product descriptions and schematics, 1976-1997**

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries describe the attributes of Hyman’s early product designs for toys such as Lullaby Lamb, Talking Barney, and Howdy the Horse. Also included are schematic diagrams for various products including Alphie the Robot and crib mobiles.

**Box 1**

- Folder 5 Greg Hyman Associates, early product descriptions, n.d.
- Folder 6 Greg Hyman Associates, early product schematics, 1976-1997

**Series III: Catalog pages and sell sheets, 1983-2010**

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains toy catalog and sell sheet pages collected by Greg Hyman. The products advertised include Little Maestro Piano-Organ, Electronic Musical Phone, Big Blaster Electronic Bike Horn, Musical Lullaby Bird, and Baby Check-Up, among others. The series also documents catalog and sell sheets for several iterations of Alphie the Robot.

**Box 1**

- Folder 7 Catalog pages and sell sheets, 1976-1989
- Folder 8 Catalog pages and sell sheets, 1990-1993
- Folder 9 Catalog pages and sell sheets, 1995-2003
- Folder 10 Alphie the Robot catalog pages and sell sheets, patent, 1978-2010.

**Series IV: Miscellaneous publicity, 1987-2007**

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains copies of articles and correspondence saved by Greg Hyman. A few articles discuss Hyman’s career. The majority of clippings concentrate on Tickle Me Elmo. Hyman also provided a copy of his “Learn to Invent” advertisement from 1957. The series also includes miscellaneous photographs of children playing with his toys, a photograph of Hyman with his partner Larry Greenberg, and a photograph of Hyman’s mother.

**Box 1**

- Folder 10 Miscellaneous publicity 1987-2007
- Folder 11 Miscellaneous photographs
- Folder 12 Miscellaneous correspondence

**Revision Note**

“Extent” under Summary Information section was updated to reflect revision to “linear feet.”