

**The New York Public Library
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Billy Rose Theatre Division**

Guide to the

Lilian Okun papers

1925-1984 (bulk 1930-1970)

*T-Mss 2001-076

Compiled by Sarah Clinet, INP, 2011, March 2012

Summary

Creator: Okun, Lilian

Title: Lilian Okun papers, 1925-1984 (bulk 1930-1970)

Size: 4.19 linear feet (12 boxes)

Source: Gift of Nancy Rubinger, February 2002.

Abstract: Lilian Okun worked as an actress, an assistant to radio commentators and a producer of children's and teenage radio and television programs. Documenting the personal and working life of Lilian Okun, the papers contain photographs, correspondence, and scrapbooks, as well as a very rich collection of scripts.

Access: This collection has no restrictions. This collection is open to the public. Library policy on photography and photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Preferred citation: Lilian Okun papers, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: The collection has been foldered, re-boxed and arranged as needed. The duplicates have been deaccessioned.

Creator history

Lilian Okun (1907-1999) began her career as a child actress, appearing in many Broadway hits from 1927 to 1933, and in motion pictures as well. She then became one of the first women stage managers in the legitimate theatre, managing shows for such stars as Jane Cowl and Blanche Yurka.

In 1933, Okun started working as an assistant to radio commentators and then hosted by herself programs such as *Your Personal Friend* on WJZ. During the World War II years, she worked with commentator Sydney Moseley, and at the same time did her own Civilian Defense programs, for which she received the highest award given to a civilian by Mayor La Guardia and Grover Whalen.

Beginning in 1943, she produced and directed children's and teenage radio and television programs. Okun decided to specialize in that particular branch of the industry because she thought it was very difficult for a woman to get to the top in the business. Several programs, such as *Let's Listen to a Story*, lasted for more than ten years, while *Young Book Reviewers* won three awards from the Institute for Education by Radio & TV of the Ohio State University.

In the meanwhile, she found time to freelance, writing for magazines and television, and studied continuously, taking as many courses as she could to keep up with all that was new in radio and TV.

Scope and content note

The collection documents the personal and professional life of Lilian Okun between 1925 and 1984, though the bulk of the collection concerns the period between 1930 and 1970. Some files are concerned with her personal life: they contain her accounting, her diaries, as well as a university diploma. The bulk of the photographs cover her personal life, including portraits and scenes with family and friends. Lastly, both the photograph album and most of the scrapbooks are devoted to personal holidays and trips abroad.

The major part of the collection is devoted to Lilian Okun's professional work. From her time as an actress, there are brochures, programs, and scripts. From her radio and television broadcast productions are several files about the management of the programs, and a large collection of scripts from the *Work of Love* and *Let's Listen to a Story* broadcasts. From her work as a book author there are two typescripts: *Everybody Loves a Story* and *Children are People*. There are also several publications for which she wrote articles, and a professional correspondence file. Lastly, there are 5 audiotapes of the radio broadcast *Let's Listen to a Story*.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Key terms

Subjects

Radio and children
Radio broadcasting -- United States
Television and children
Theater -- 20th century

Names

Okun, Lilian

Special formats

Audiotapes
Correspondence
Photograph albums
Photographs
Scrapbooks

Container list

- b.1 f.1-2 Accounting, 1950-1984
- b.1 f.3 Annotated Books, undated
- b.1 f.4 Autograph Book, 1917
- b.1 f.5 Biography, undated
- b.1 f.6 Certificates, 1933-1951
- b.1 f.7 *Children are People*--Proposal, undated
- b.1 f.8 Clippings, 1940-1960
- b.2 f.1 Correspondence, 1941-1973
- b.2 f.2 Diaries, 1955-1972
- b.2 f.3 Drafts and Notes, 1939, undated
 - Everybody Loves a Story*
- b.2 f.4 Book Management, 1953
- b.2 f.5 Draft, undated
- b.2 f.6 Illustrations, 1927, undated
- b.2 f.7-8 Memberships, 1956-1961
- b.4 f.1 New York Public Library, 1960-1978
 - Photographs
- b.8 f.13 Autographed Portraits, 1925-1948
- b.8 f.14 Headshots, undated
- b.8 f.15 Personal Life, 1930-1958
- b.8 f.16 Radio and Television, 1971, undated
- b.3 f.3 Theatre, undated
 - Photograph Albums
- b.3 f.1-2 1930-1954
- b.12 f.4 1955
 - Plays
- b.4 f.2 Programs, 1928
 - Scripts
- b.4 f.3 *A Broadway Broad*, 1933
- b.4 f.4 C-T, undated
- b.4 f.5 Postcards, undated
- b.4 f.6 Publications, 1953-1956
 - Radio Broadcasts
- b.4 f.7 General, 1938-1961
- b.5 f.1 *A Clearing House for Defense Work*, undated
- b.5 f.2 *A Faith to Live By*--Spots, undated
 - Let's Listen to a Story*
- b.5 f.3-4 Calendars, 1944-1960
- b.5 f.5 Program Management, 1950-1960
 - Scripts
- b.5 f.6 *Adam and the Golden Cock*, 1959
- b.7 f.11 *Adventures of Robin Hood*, 1953

Radio Broadcasts (cont.)

Let's Listen to a Story (cont.)

Scripts (cont.)

- b.5 f.7 *All Alone*, undated
- b.5 f.8 *Androcles and the Lion*, undated
- b.5 f.9 *Andy Jackson's Water Well*, 1959
- b.5 f.10 *Arabian Nights*, undated
- b.5 f.11 *Auntie Robbo*, 1959
- b.5 f.12 *Augustus and the River*, 1960
- b.5 f.13 *The Blind Colt*, 1960
- b.5 f.14 *The Borrowers Afloat*, 1959
- b.5 f.15 *The Boy Who Had No Birthday*, 1959
- b.5 f.16 *The Boy Who Made Magic*, 1959
- b.5 f.17 *A Brother for the Orphelines*, 1959
- b.5 f.18 *The Case of the Sensational Scent*, 1960
- b.5 f.19 *Charles Dickens: His Life*, 1959
- b.5 f.20 *Charlotte's Web*, 1953
- b.5 f.21 *The Cheerful Heart*, 1960
- b.5 f.22 *Chief Takes Over*, undated
- b.5 f.23 *Clancy's Witch*, undated
- b.5 f.24 *Columbus and His Brothers*, 1951
- b.5 f.25 *Cristy at Skipping Hills*, 1958
- b.5 f.26 *Danny Dunn and the Homework Machine*, 1958
- b.5 f.27 *Danny Meets Big Red*, 1956
- b.5 f.28 *Deadline at Spook Cabin*, 1959
- b.5 f.29 *Dugan of Gravelly Dumps*, 1959
- b.5 f.30 *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, undated
- b.5 f.31 *Esmeralda Ahoy*, 1960
- b.6 f.1 *The Family under the Bridge*, 1958
- b.6 f.2 *The Far Frontier*, 1960
- b.6 f.3 *A Feather for His Cap*, 1959
- b.6 f.4 *Flaxen Braids*, 1960
- b.6 f.5 *Freddy and the Dragon*, 1959
- b.6 f.6 *Freddy Goes Camping*, 1953
- b.6 f.7 *Freddy the Detective*, 1932
- b.6 f.8 *The Fir Tree*, undated
- b.6 f.9 *The First Thanksgiving*, 1954
- b.6 f.10 *The Gay Poet*, 1959
- b.6 f.11 *The Ghost Rock Mystery*, 1959
- b.6 f.12 *Ginger Box*, 1960
- b.6 f.13 *Ginger Pye*, 1951
- b.6 f.14 *Greek Legends and Myths*, undated

Radio Broadcasts (cont.)

Let's Listen to a Story (cont.)

Scripts (cont.)

- b.6 f.15 *The Great Geppy*, 1959
- b.6 f.16 *Hansel and Gretel*, undated
- b.6 f.17 *Henry Reed, Inc.*, 1959
- b.6 f.18 *Homer Price and the Doughnuts*, 1959
- b.6 f.19 *Horse in the Cloud*, 1959
- b.6 f.20 *The Horse without a Head*, 1959
- b.6 f.21 *Hunter's Hideout*, 1959
- b.6 f.22 *Jeb and the Bank Robbers*, 1959
- b.6 f.23 *Jerry's Charge Account*, 1960
- b.6 f.24 *John Treegate's Musket*, 1960
- b.6 f.25 *Lee Natoni, Young Navajo*, 1959
- b.6 f.26 *A Lemon and a Star*, 1955
- b.6 f.27 *The Light on Tern Rock*, 1951
- b.6 f.28 *The Log of the Ark*, 1960
- b.6 f.29 *The Lone Hunt*, 1956
- b.6 f.30 *The Long Winter*, 1959
- b.6 f.31 *Magnus and the Squirrel*, 1960
- b.6 f.32 *Miss Cathy Leonard*, 1958
- b.6 f.33 *The Moffats*, undated
- b.6 f.34 *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, undated
- b.6 f.35 *Mystery on Echo Ridge*, 1960
- b.6 f.36 *Oscar on Rollerskates*, 1950
- b.6 f.37 *Paul Bunyan--Paul's Cradle*, undated
- b.7 f.1 *Pennywink Carnival*, 1959
- b.7 f.2 *The Pink Motel*, 1959
- b.7 f.3 *Pirate's Promise*, 1959
- b.7 f.4 *Pocket Handkerchief Park*, 1959
- b.7 f.5 *Polly Patchwork*, 1959
- b.7 f.33 *Prairie Winter*, 1959
- b.7 f.6 *The Princess and the Glass Mountain*, 1959
- b.7 f.7 *The Promised Year*, 1959
- b.7 f.8 *The Ranch by the Sea*, 1959
- b.7 f.9 *The Richest Boy in the World*, 1959
- b.7 f.10 *Rip Van Winkle*, 1959
- b.7 f.12 *The Sea Snake*, 1943
- b.7 f.13 *Silent Night: The Story of a Song*, 1943
- b.7 f.14 *The Silver Fawn*, undated
- b.7 f.15 *The Silver Spoon Mystery*, 1958
- b.7 f.16 *Snow Treasure*, 1960

Radio Broadcasts (cont.)

Let's Listen to a Story (cont.)

Scripts (cont.)

- b.7 f.17 *The Spettekake Holidays*, 1958
- b.7 f.18 *The Story of Abraham Lincoln*, 1959
- b.7 f.19 *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, undated
- b.7 f.20 *Summer at Buckhorn*, 1959
- b.7 f.21 *Summer at Hasty Cove*, 1959
- b.7 f.22 *The Terrible Churnadryne*, 1960
- b.7 f.27 *Thief Island*, 1960
- b.7 f.23 *The Three Tripps*, 1960
- b.7 f.28 *Time for Lissa*, 1959
- b.7 f.24 *The Tinder Box*, 1958
- b.7 f.29 *Treasure of Green Knowe*, 1959
- b.7 f.30 *Treasure of Rattlesnake Hill*, 1960
- b.7 f.31 *Treasures of the Sea*, 1939
- b.7 f.32 *Two Boys and a Soap Box Derby*, 1958
- b.7 f.25 *The Two Uncles of Pablo*, undated
- b.7 f.34 *What Cabrillo Found*, 1959
- b.7 f.35 *Whittington and His Cat*, undated
- b.7 f.26 *The Year the River Froze*, 1960

Work of Love

- b.7 f.36 Program Management, 1961
- b.8 f.1 Scripts--A-W, undated
- b.8 f.2 *Young Book Reviewers*, 1959-1960

Scrapbooks

- b.9 f.1-3 1931-1938
- b.10 f.1-4 1938-1956
- b.11 f.1-3 1956-1959
- b.12 f.1-3 1960-1967

Television Shows

- b.8 f.3 *Cooking for Pleasure*, 1970
- b.8 f.4 Educational Television, 1951-1960
- b.8 f.5 *It's Fun to Read*, 1969
- b.8 f.6 Parent-Teacher Meetings, 1954
- b.8 f.7 Puppet Program, 1961
- b.8 f.8 *Teen Age Book Club*, 1948
- b.8 f.9 *The Beauty Shop*, undated

University

- b.8 f.10 Diploma, 1961
- b.8 f.11 Spanish Lessons, undated
- b.8 f.12 U.S. Army Special Services, 1961