



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Grayce S. Burian collection of Aileen Stanley materials**

1898-1983

\*T-Mss 1996-045

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** Burian, Grayce S.

**Title:** Grayce S. Burian collection of Aileen Stanley materials

**Date:** 1898-1983

**Size:** 2.18 linear feet (6 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Grayce S. Burian, 1996.

**Abstract:** Aileen Stanley was a popular singer and vaudeville performer active from the 1900s through the 1930s. The Grayce Burian collection of Aileen Stanley materials (1898-1983) was assembled by Burian in the preparation of a biography of Stanley. The collection includes correspondence, research notes, scrapbooks, photographs, promotional materials, and other memorabilia from Stanley's career.

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**Preferred citation:** Grayce S. Burian collection of Aileen Stanley materials, \*T-Mss 1996-045. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014 Materials in the collection were removed from envelopes and binders and placed in folders. The collection contains one complete scrapbook, which was disassembled during processing. The collection also holds various loose scrapbook pages, which were placed in folders.

## Creator History

Aileen Stanley was a popular singer and vaudeville performer. She was born Maude Elsie Aileen Muggeridge in Chicago in 1893. When she was nine years old, she and her brother formed a vaudeville act under the direction of their mother, touring as Stanley and Aileen. In the 1910s, she began to perform alone as Aileen Stanley, and became known for singing popular songs. By the 1920s, she was a headliner on the Keith-Albee and Orpheum vaudeville circuits; at the same time, she frequently traveled to London to perform in nightclubs like the Kit-Cat Club and Chez Victor. From the 1920s to the 1930s, she recorded songs for a number of companies, notably Victor Talking Machine Company. She

was known as the "Victrola Girl." She married her accompanist, Robert Bittenuth; the two later divorced. After her retirement from recording and performing in 1937, she became a singing coach and manager to young performers. Stanley retired from coaching in 1958. She died in 1982 in Los Angeles, California.

Grayce Burian is a theater scholar and actor who was a professor of theater at the University of Albany. She researched Aileen Stanley's life and conducted interviews with Stanley in preparation of a biography titled *Aileen Stanley, a Chronicle of Her Life and Times*, which was never published. Burian published several encyclopedia entries on Stanley's life, as well as an article, "Stanley and Aileen: Children in Vaudeville" (*Journal of American Culture*, 1984).

## Scope and Content Note

The Grayce Burian collection of Aileen Stanley materials (1898-1983) contains research material assembled by Grayce Burian in the preparation of a biography of Aileen Stanley. The collection contains photographs, correspondence, notes, clippings, promotional materials, scores, and programs. Most of the materials are original, though some are later copies.

Material created while Burian was writing Stanley's biography dates from the 1970s to 1983. It includes correspondence with or regarding Stanley, transcripts of interviews with Stanley, and Burian's research notes. Most of the correspondence is between Stanley and Burian. Burian's other correspondents include Stanley's nephew Donald Muggeridge and Burns Miller Kattenberg, a collector, fan, and friend of Stanley. The material also includes a 1977 paper that Burian wrote on Stanley's life and a detailed chronicle of Stanley's career, compiled by Burian.

Material from Stanley's career as a performer and recording artist dates from 1898 to the 1930s, with some copies made in the 1970s. The earliest material consists of publicity photographs of Stanley as a child and photographs of her and her brother as Stanley and Aileen. A Stanley and Aileen flier is also present. The bulk of the material in the collection documents Stanley's solo career and includes scrapbooks, clippings, photographs, programs, posters, fliers, contracts, scores, and letters of thanks and congratulations. Photographs depict Stanley, her family, and her colleagues. Scores consist of manuscript and published sheet music. Some of the manuscript scores have Stanley's original arrangements. The collection also contains a photocopy of Robert Bittenuth's handwritten record of Stanley's performances and tours from 1932 to 1935.

The collection includes a small amount of material from Stanley's career as a coach and manager. The material primarily dates from 1938 to the 1950s and consists of clippings, publicity materials, photographs of Stanley and her clients, and scores. Many of the scores are for the Murphy Sisters, a trio managed by Stanley. The scores date from 1922 to the 1950s.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged in three categories: files created by Grayce Burian while working on her biography of Aileen Stanley; material from Stanley's recording and performance career; and material from her coaching and management career.

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings

Correspondence  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks

**Subjects**

Music-halls (Variety-theaters, cabarets, etc.)  
Popular music -- 1911-1920  
Popular music -- 1921-1930  
Vaudeville

**Occupations**

Singers

**Names**

Buttenuth, Bobby  
Stanley, Aileen, 1893-1982

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-9 Aileen Stanley, a Chronicle of Her Life and Times Files 1971-1983  
Performance and Recording Career
- b. 2 f. 1-13 1898-1930s, 1970s
- b. 6 f. 1-9 1910s-1935
- b. 5 f. 1-15 1910s-1939
- b. 3 f. 1-13 1918-1945, 1970s
- b. 4 f. 1-3 Scores 1920s-1930s
- b. 4 f. 4-6 Coaching and Management Career 1922-1950s