



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Charles Bruce Millholland papers**

1921-1974

\*T-Mss 1967-004

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Millholland, Charles Bruce

**Title:** Charles Bruce Millholland papers

**Date:** 1921-1974

**Size:** 9.9 linear feet (18 boxes, 3 volumes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Donated by Charles Bruce Millholland in 1967 and 1977.

**Abstract:** Charles Bruce Millholland (1903-1991) was an American playwright, author, dancer, actor, model, and artist best known for his play *The Napoleon of Broadway*, which was the basis for Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's hit comedy *Twentieth Century*. The Charles Bruce Millholland papers contain writings, personal papers, scrapbooks, and artwork.

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**Preferred citation:** Charles Bruce Millholland papers, \*T-Mss 1967-004. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2015

### Related Materials:

Charles Bruce Millholland papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Drawings, 1946-1961. Millholland, Charles Bruce. Performing Arts Research Collections – Theatre, The New York Public Library.

Poems, 1932-1926. Millholland, Charles Bruce (Author). Indiana State Library – Indianapolis.

## Creator History

Charles Bruce Millholland was born on February 3, 1903 in Chicago, Illinois. Between 1921 and 1925 he studied Fine Arts at the University of Kansas, Indiana University, the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, and The Chicago Art Institute School. Between 1922 and 1928 he studied ballet and performed in the

Chicago Opera Ballet. Millholland also began writing during the 1920s, publishing poems and articles in such publications as *Dance Magazine*, *Theatre Magazine*, and *Paris Comet*, and writing scripts for radio programs in Hollywood, California, and Indianapolis, Indiana.

Millholland's plays *Two Rings* (1927), *Faun* (1933), and *The Green Stick* (1940) were produced in Indianapolis. He wrote and directed productions for Camp Balfour and Camp Robin Hood where Millholland worked during the summers after moving to New York. During the late 1920s, Millholland worked as a press agent for New York theatre luminaries such as Morris Gest, Eve Le Gallienne, and David Belasco. Millholland's experience working for the imperious impresario Belasco inspired his most notable work, *Napoleon of Broadway*. This unproduced play came to the attention of the popular writing team of Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, who'd made a big hit with *The Front Page* (1928). Adapted by Hecht and MacArthur, the play became *Twentieth Century* (1932), which was a success on stage, screen, and as the musical *On the Twentieth Century* in 1978.

Millholland wrote the screenplay adaptation of his brother Ray Millholland's novel, *The Splinter Fleet*. The film was made as *Submarine Patrol* (1938), but Millholland's contribution was not credited. In 1944, Millholland's play *Dear Guinea Pig* was presented in the *Stars Over Hollywood* radio series. Millholland was also an artist, actor, and model, and he taught continuing education classes in writing and literature.

Charles Bruce Millholland died in New York City on May 18, 1991.

## Scope and Content Note

This collection documents the career and life of American writer, actor, dancer, model, and artist Charles Bruce Millholland with writings, personal files, scrapbooks, and artwork. Sometimes he acted and modeled under the name Bruce Millholland.

Millholland's writings consist of annotated drafts, fragments of drafts, outlines, and notes for works written by Millholland from the 1920s to the 1940s. These works, arranged alphabetically by title, include plays, poems, short stories, novels, and nonfiction articles on dance, theatre, and Buddhism. With the exception of some of the articles, all of these works are unpublished. Writings occasionally include correspondence pertaining to the piece in question, but the majority of correspondence is included in Personal Files.

Personal Files document Millholland's personal life, his writing career, and to a lesser extent, his career as an actor, dancer, model, and artist. The files, arranged chronologically, contain correspondence, diaries, photographs, resumes, job applications, programs from performances Millholland participated in or attended, astrological charts and reports, tax forms, clippings, contracts and agreements, notes, and outlines for potential projects. Personal files may include some casual sketches and doodles, but all larger-scale drawings and paintings will be found in Artwork. Millholland's diaries and correspondence provide insight into his personal relationships, his attitudes to his life and work, and his process of revising and submitting literary works for production or publication. Millholland's correspondence during the early 1940s includes interesting letters between the draft board and him discussing his draft status and possible military service. Photographs document Millholland's friends and family and his international travels. There are many photographs of his stage performances and of advertisements in which he appeared as a model.

This collection contains three scrapbooks of photographs, clippings, letters, and drawings of and by Millholland. They mainly document his career as a dancer and actor and his personal life.

Artwork consists of pencil, crayon, chalk, and charcoal drawings; watercolor paintings; and set designs created by Millholland.

**Arrangement:** This collection is arranged in the following categories: Writings, Personal Files, Scrapbooks, and Artwork.

## **Key Terms**

### **Occupations**

Actors  
Artists  
Dancers  
Playwrights  
Writers

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Correspondence  
Drawings  
Paintings  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Scripts

### **Subjects**

Dance -- United States -- 20th century -- History  
Motion pictures  
Radio plays  
Television  
Theater -- 20th century  
Theater -- Production and direction -- New York (State) -- New York

## Container List

### Writings 1925-1974

- b. 1 f. 1-19 *According to Freud - Chicago Gal* 1933-1959
- b. 2 f. 1-15 *Cleo or Dr. Caesar - The Divine Father* 1928-1968
- b. 3 f. 1-12 *Double Trouble - Faun* 1928-1973
- b. 4 f. 1-6 *Faun - The First Farewell or Ode to Sappho* 1947-1974
- b. 5 f. 1-17 *For Love of Money or The Other Woman - Here at Home* 1932-1972
- b. 6 f. 1-16 *Here at Home - It's a Woman's World* 1926-1959
- b. 7 f. 1-21 *James Whitcomb Riley - The Minataur* 1930-1973
- b. 8 f. 1-18 *Miss Hercules - Pike's Peak or Bust* 1930-1959
- b. 9 f. 1-21 *Pioneers of Aviation - Share the Profits* 1925-1959
- b. 10 f. 1-26 *Sing, America, Sing! - Walking Death* 1927-1959
- b. 11 f. 1-11 *Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass - Various* 1926-1973

### Personal Files 1925-1969

- b. 11 f. 12-14 1925-1931
- b. 12 f. 1-7 1925- 1939
- b. 13 f. 1-4 1937-1960s
- b. 14 f. 1-8 1940-1949
- b. 15 f. 1-4 1945-1949
- b. 16 f. 1-5 1945-1949
- b. 17 f. 1-2 1947, 1969
- o. 1 Modeling Photographs undated  
Location: LPA Mapcase C12 Dwr #32

### Artwork 1921-1960s

- b. 17 f. 3-5 Drawings and Set Designs 1921-1940s
- b. 18 f. 1-6 Drawings, Paintings, and Sketches 1927-1960s
- o. 1 Drawings, Paintings, and Sketches 1960s  
Location: LPA Mapcase C12 Dwr #32

### Scrapbooks 1934-1946

- v. 1 1934-1935
- v. 2 1938-1940
- v. 3 1946