



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Roxy Theatre reminiscences**

1992

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## Summary

**Creator:** North, John Joseph

**Title:** Roxy Theatre reminiscences

**Date:** 1992

**Size:** .25 linear feet (39 p.)

**Source:** Papers: gift, North, John J, 04/--/92

**Abstract:** John Joseph North was an usher in 1951 at the Roxy Theatre, which was located at 7th Avenue and 50th Street in New York City. When the Roxy opened in 1927 it was New York's most lavish combination movie and stage showplace, and with 6,200 seats, perhaps the largest and most luxurious film house in the world. Built by theatrical impresario, Samuel Lionel Rothafel, or "Roxy", in an exuberant mix of Renaissance, Gothic and Moorish styles, it marked the pinnacle of the era of the picture palace and was called "the cathedral of the motion picture." The theater had three pipe organs raised and lowered on elevators, a 110 piece orchestra and a ballet corps of fifty. The Roxy had a rocky history during the depression, was run by the Fox Film Corporation, then leased by National Theatres, Inc., and finally taken over in the late 1950s by Rockefeller Center which ran it as a first-run movie house without a stage show. It was demolished in 1960 as Rockefeller Center expanded. The typescript is a chapter from North's unpublished autobiography, *Quest for Love*. It describes his experiences working at the Roxy in 1951 when the theater still had stage shows with stars such as Josephine Baker, chorus girls called roxyettes, and a large corps of uniformed young men known for their decorum: the ushers. It also contains photographs of North then and now and of his collection of celebrity shots from his Roxy days.

**Preferred citation:** Roxy Theatre reminiscences, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

## Creator History

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## **Scope and Content Note**

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## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Motion picture theaters -- Employees  
Motion picture theaters -- New York

### **Names**

North, John Joseph  
Roxy Theatre (New York, N.Y.)