

Guide to the Claudia & Ralph Morgan Papers, 1906-1962 and undated

***T-Mss 1975-002**

Billy Rose Theatre Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

Contact Information

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Billy Rose Theatre Division
40 Lincoln Center Plaza
New York, New York 10023-7498
Phone: 212/870-1639
Fax: 212/870-1868
Email: theatrediv@nypl.org
Web address: <http://www.nypl.org/research/lpa/the/the.html>

Processed by: Thea Constantine

Date Completed: October 2007

Processed and encoded through a gift from Robert W. Wilson.

© 2007 The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. All rights reserved.

Box/Folder **Description**

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Claudia & Ralph Morgan Papers
Collection ID:	*T-Mss 1975-002
Creator:	Morgan, Claudia & Ralph
Extent:	0.5 linear feet (1 box)
Repository:	Billy Rose Theatre Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract: The Claudia & Ralph Morgan Papers contain the certificates, contracts, correspondence, scripts, telegrams and miscellaneous material relating to the acting careers on stage, in motion pictures and with professional organizations (e.g. Screen Actors Guild) for this father and daughter collection.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Preferred Citation

The Claudia & Ralph Morgan Papers, *T-Mss 1975-002, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Claudia & Ralph Morgan Papers were donated to the Billy Rose Theatre Division by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Clark of New York City in 1975.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

Box/Folder Description

Biographical Note

Ralph Morgan (Raphael Kuhner Wupperman) was born on July 6, 1883 in New York City, NY. Despite earning a law degree from Columbia University, Ralph Morgan decided to turn his back on the courtroom and become an actor on stage and in film. In Hollywood, he played leading roles in such productions as *Strange Interlude* and *Rasputin and the Empress* before settling into secondary character parts—e.g. Randolph in *Magnificent Obsession*. Ralph Morgan is known for playing the “surprise” killer in Hollywood murder mystery films.

In addition to acting, Ralph Morgan focused on the politics and labor relations of actors within the film / stage industries. He was “largely concerned with issues of extras, and enacting the first Agency Regulations. As a President (1933 and 1938-1940), as well as one of the founders and charter members, of the Screen Actors Guild, he successfully fought a second attempt of IATSE President, George Browne and his ‘personal representative’ in Hollywood, Willie Bioff (from Frank "The Enforcer" Nitti's Chicago mob), to take over the jurisdiction of ALL actor unions”¹.

Ralph Morgan was the brother of Frank Morgan (who played the title role in *The Wizard of Oz* 1939), the husband to Grace Arnold (stage actress) and father of Claudia Morgan (an actress best known for her portrayal of Nora Charles on the "Thin Man" radio series).

Ralph Morgan died on June 11, 1956 in New York, NY.

Source:

¹<http://www.sag.org/history/presidents/morgan.html>

Claudia Morgan (Claudeigh Louise Wuppermann) was born on June 12, 1911 in Brooklyn, NY to Ralph Morgan and Grace Arnold. She debuted onstage as a teenager, and appeared in nearly two-dozen plays on Broadway between 1929 and 1952. She was most active on stage and in radio, making just a handful of film appearances; one, a lead role in the 1937 Universal feature *That's My Story*, with Ralph. In the 1940s she was nationally-known to radio audiences as "Nora Charles" in the *Thin Man* series. None of her four marriages resulted in a grandchild for Ralph and Grace, so when Claudia died on September 17, 1974, she was the last actor of the family line.

Source:

<http://www.sag.org/history/presidents/claudia.html>

Box/Folder **Description**

Scope and Content Note

The Claudia & Ralph Morgan Papers contain the certificates, contracts, correspondence, scripts, telegrams and miscellaneous material relating to the careers on stage, in motion pictures and with professional organizations (e.g. Screen Actors Guild) for this father and daughter collection. Of special interest in the collection is Claudia Morgan's script for *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, the two poems written by Ralph to his daughter, the numerous letters from Grace Arnold to Ralph Morgan and the references to Ralph Morgan's connection to the Screen Actors Guild.

Even though Frank Morgan is the uncle and brother of Claudia and Ralph Morgan, respectively, there are only a few items that refer to Frank Morgan in the collection. Also, there are no film or stage materials for Ralph Morgan, nor is there material from the *Adventures of the Thin Man* for Claudia Morgan.

Box/Folder	Description
	Claudia Morgan, 1911-1962 and undated Certificates, 1911-1958
Box 1	
F. 1	Actors' Fund, 1957-1958
F. 2	Baptism, 1911 Contracts, 1931
F. 3	<i>Modern Virgin</i>
F. 4	<i>No Scandal</i> (Possibly <i>Marriage for Three</i>)
F. 5	<i>The People on the Hill</i>
F. 6	Correspondence, 1929-1961 and undated
F. 7	Personal Papers, undated (2 poems written for Claudia from Ralph Morgan, 2 pieces of writing by Claudia Morgan, one with music sketch, and a membership card from Stratoliner Club) Scripts, ca 1928-1941
F. 8	<i>Jealousy</i> by Eugene Walter, ca 1928
F. 9	<i>The Man Who Came to Dinner</i> by Moss Hart, ca 1939-1941 Telegrams, 1933-1962 and undated Congratulatory, 1933-1962
F. 10	1933 (Beverly Hills Community Theatre and Pasadena Community Theatre)
F. 11	ca 1940-1941 (<i>The Man Who Came to Dinner</i>)
F. 12	1961 June (Possibly <i>A Fig Leaf in Her Bonnet</i>)
F. 13	1962 May (Papermill Playhouse)
F. 14	General, 1940-1941 and undated Ralph Morgan, 1906-1956 and undated Contracts, 1925-1926
F. 15	<i>The Dagger</i> , 1925
F. 16	<i>Damn the Tears</i> [?], 1926 (Buckland Steele, character name, for production with working title— <i>Burn Your Head</i>)
F. 17	<i>Glamour</i> , 1926 Correspondence, 1906-1956 and undated
F. 18	Arnold, Grace, 1909 and undated (Stage name of Ralph Morgan's wife—maiden name is Georgiana Louise Iverson and nickname is Daisy)
F. 19	A-B, 1909-1956 and undated (Actors Equity Association leather life membership patch included)
F. 20	C, 1917-1924 and undated
F. 21	E-F, 1908, 1917 and undated
F. 22	G, 1908, 1917 and undated
F. 23	H-J, 1908-1940 and undated
F. 24	K-L, 1925 and undated
F. 25	Morgan, Claudia, 1922-1926 and undated (Most written to father, a few to mother)
F. 26	M, 1906-1924 and undated

Box/Folder	Description
F. 27	N-O, 1912-1922
F. 28	P-S, 1906-1956 and undated
F. 29	T, 1908, 1938 and undated
F. 30	Wuppermann, 1908-1919 and undated
F. 31	W and unidentified, 1908-1912 and undated
F. 32	Personal Papers, 1909, 1956 and undated (Membership card to the San Francisco Golf & Country Club, memorial tablet with signatures of members of The Lambs club, 1 souvenir photograph of Ralph Morgan with friends at Charlie Low's Forbidden City Chinese Supper Club and 2 blank post cards)
F. 33	Telegrams, 1908-1925 and undated

Separated Materials

Microfilmed scrapbooks are available from the Billy Rose Theatre Division.