



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

John Randolph papers

1921-1998 [bulk 1940-1975]

*T-Mss 2004-003

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2013

Summary

Creator: Randolph, John, 1915-2004

Title: John Randolph papers

Date: 1921-1998 [bulk 1940-1975]

Size: 7.35 linear feet (18 boxes, 3 oversized folders)

Source: Donated by Hal Randolph, 2004.

Abstract: John Randolph (1915-2004) was an American stage, television, and film actor. The John Randolph papers, dating from 1921 to 1998, reflect Randolph's theater acting career, and to some extent, his work for television and film. The collection holds scripts, scrapbooks, clippings, correspondence, programs, and photographs. Scripts make up the bulk of the collection.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Processing note: Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2013 Original order and folder titles, when present, were maintained. The scrapbooks are fragile and care should be used when examining them.

Creator History

John Randolph (1915-2004) was an American stage, television, and film actor. Randolph was born Emmanuel Hirsch Cohen in the Bronx, New York. During his childhood and teenage years, he was known as Mortimer Romer Lippman, after his mother remarried. He changed his name to John

Randolph in 1940.

Shortly after attending City College in New York City, Randolph began acting and became involved with the Federal Theatre Project. His earliest public performance was in a 1934 production of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* at the Artef Theatre in New York City. Other early works include *A Doll's House* (1935) and *Medicine Show* (1940). He made his Broadway debut in *Coriolanus* in 1938. During the late 1930s, Randolph directed *The Transit Players*, a theater troupe in Boston that put on plays relating to labor issues. Their 1938 production of *A Plant in the Sun* was particularly well received. Randolph took a break from theater to serve in the United States Air Force during World War II. Shortly after his return from the war, he appeared in the original Broadway production of *Command Decision* in 1947.

In 1955, Randolph was blacklisted from Hollywood for refusing to cooperate with the House Committee on Un-American Activities. During the time he was blacklisted, he acted in several Broadway and Off-Broadway theater productions, including *Miss Isobel* (1957), *The Visit* (1958), and *The Sound of Music* (1959). Soon after the blacklist was lifted in 1960, Randolph returned to film and television, and in 1966, appeared in the science-fiction film *Seconds*. Throughout his career, he acted in dozens of television shows, including *Actor's Studio*, *The Bob Newhart Show*, *Bonanza*, *Roseanne*, *Matlock*, and *Family Ties*. In film, he was in *Serpico* (1973), *Prizzi's Honor* (1985), *National Lampoons Christmas Vacation* (1989), and *You've Got Mail* (1998). Randolph won a Tony Award in 1987 for Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Play for his performance in Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*.

Randolph married actress Sarah Cunningham in 1942. They performed together in *The Visit* (1958) and *My Sweet Charlie* (1966), among other theater productions. Their last performance together was in James G. Richardson's *Eulogy*, in 1983, three years before Cunningham's death. John Randolph died in 2004 in Hollywood, California.

Scope and Content Note

The John Randolph papers, dating from 1921 to 1998, reflect Randolph's theater acting career, and to some extent, his work for television and film. The collection holds scripts, scrapbooks, clippings, correspondence, programs, and photographs. Scripts make up the bulk of the collection.

This collection holds over 100 scripts dating from the 1930s to the 1990s, the bulk of which date from the 1940s to 1970. The majority of the scripts are for theater productions that Randolph acted in, though some television and film scripts are present. In some cases the scripts are incomplete or are accompanied by clippings, rehearsal schedules, sheet music, or notes. Randolph's annotations to the scripts provide insight into the productions' developments, such as added or omitted lines, acting and lighting cues, or other changes in character dialogue. Some of the scripts were sent to Randolph for review from colleagues, such as Emmanuel Fried's *Elegy for Stanley Gorski* (1980), which also contains publicity material and correspondence from Fried. A large portion of the scripts are bound typescripts, but plays published by Samuel French Inc. and Dramatists Play Service are also present. In general, each production is represented by a single script.

The scrapbooks represent Randolph's acting career in theater from the 1930s to the 1960s. They reflect Randolph's personal experiences throughout the production process through handwritten descriptions accompanying photographs, clippings, ephemera, correspondence, and contracts. Randolph's written accounts of tryouts, rehearsals, and performances for several of the plays describe script and scene changes, challenges faced by the cast, and his reactions to reviews. Photographs in the scrapbooks are sometimes labeled with detailed information, such as the act and scene documented in the photograph, or quotes from the script. Fan letters, good-luck notes, and letters

regarding contract agreements are among the correspondence in the scrapbooks. Several highlights of Randolph's career are represented, such as his first stage performance in a 1934 production of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*; his work with the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theater in Boston; his direction of the Transit Players, a theater troupe in Boston; and several Broadway and Off-Broadway productions. Randolph's written accounts of rehearsals and tryouts for Kermit Bloomgarden's *Command Decision* (1947) in Princeton are particularly rich. Other productions represented through the scrapbooks include *Paint Your Wagon* (1951), *The Visit* (1958), and *My Sweet Charlie* (1966), among others.

Professional files in this collection, documenting Randolph's work and interests, are arranged into two subcategories: productions and subjects. These files typically hold reviews, announcements, and programs, though a limited amount of correspondence is present. Production files are relatively limited in terms of content and generally contain clippings and programs. *The Sound of Music* is the best-represented production; the file holds correspondence from Randolph describing tryouts in New Haven, Connecticut in addition to clippings and reviews. Other productions include *Front Page* (1947), *An Evening's Frost* (1965), and *Our Town* (1969). Subjects represented in the professional files are limited, and include playwright and union activist Emanuel Fried, the Philadelphia Drama Guild, and Randolph's wife, Sarah Cunningham. Material documenting Randolph's work with the Philadelphia Drama Guild consists of reviews, press releases, and programs for productions put on at the Walnut Theater that Randolph acted in or was artistic director for during the early 1970s. Sarah Cunningham's performance in *Zulu and the Zayda* (1965) is represented through clippings, programs, and telegrams sent to her on the night of the performance.

Programs and certificates are present in this collection. Programs represent stage productions that Randolph either attended or acted in, such as *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944), *My Fair Lady* (1962), and *Broadway Bound* (1986). An Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences membership certificate and Randolph's high school diploma are also present.

This collection holds a limited amount of photographs. The majority of the photographs are headshots and portraits of Randolph from the 1970s. Some production photographs are present, as well as images of Randolph's dressing room, and back stage of performances. Photographs dating from the 1930s to the 1950s can be found throughout the scrapbooks in this collection.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged into the following categories: Scripts, Scrapbooks, Professional Files, Programs and Certificates, and Photographs. Professional files are subdivided into productions and subjects. Professional files and scripts are arranged alphabetically by title or subject; all remaining material is arranged chronologically.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scrapbooks

Scripts (documents)

Subjects

Theater -- New York (State)

Container List

Scripts

- b. 5 f. 6 *2 1/2 Jews* 1991
- b. 12 f. 7 *2 1/2 Jews* 1991
- b. 6 f. 4 *After the Fall* 1964
- b. 12 f. 8 *Annie in Blue* 1974
- b. 3 f. 7 *Arsenic and Old Lace* 1942
- b. 13 f. 6 *Back in the Race* 1981
- b. 1 f. 5 *Beyond the Horizon* 1975
- b. 9 f. 4 *The Borgia Stick* 1966
- b. 3 f. 2 *Born Yesterday* 1946
- b. 8 f. 1 *Born Yesterday* 1972
- b. 9 f. 1 *Broadway Bound* 1986
- b. 7 f. 6 *California Wine* 1970
- b. 9 f. 5 *Christy* 1964
- b. 12 f. 6 *Come Back, Little Sheba* 1949
- b. 5 f. 8 *Conversation at Midnight* 1964
- b. 4 f. 5 *Coriolanus* 1953
- b. 12 f. 2 *The Current Rage* 1973
- b. 1 f. 3 *A Death of Innocence* 1971
- b. 11 f. 3 *Death of a Salesman* 1974
- b. 12 f. 1 "Different Pines, Same Wind" 1968
Bonanza
- b. 11 f. 1 *Discovery '67* 1967
- b. 13 f. 5 *The Dodo Bird* 1968
- b. 8 f. 7 *Dreamhouse* 1989-1991
- b. 5 f. 5 *Elegy for Stanley Gorski* 1980
- b. 9 f. 3 "Even the Weariest River" 1956
- b. 11 f. 4 *Everyone Calls Him Smith* 1968
- b. 7 f. 5 *Fair Game* 1957
- b. 4 f. 3 *Fever for Life* 1957
- b. 4 f. 2 *Gaily, Gaily* 1968
- b. 4 f. 7 "Gideon" 1951
Lyric poem
- b. 10 f. 3 *Give us this Day* 1938
- b. 5 f. 9 *The Grey Eyed People* 1952
- b. 5 f. 2 *Growing Old with Grace* 1991
- b. 3 f. 1 *Guys and Dolls* 1955
- b. 6 f. 12 *Hamlet* 1964
- b. 10 f. 6 *Handy Dandy* 1984
- b. 3 f. 9 *The Happy Journey* 1934

Scripts (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 8 *The Happy Journey to Camden and Trenton* 1962
- b. 2 f. 3 *Here Dies Another Day* 1996-1997
- b. 10 f. 5 *The Hounds of God* 1955
- b. 8 f. 6 *The House of Bernarda Alba* 1950
- b. 2 f. 5 *Housesitter* 1990
- b. 13 f. 3 *The Hotel Manor Inn* 1992
- b. 10 f. 2 "How to Make a Speech" 1973
- b. 4 f. 4 *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* 1969
- b. 4 f. 8 *In Praise of Paper Power* 1967
- b. 1 f. 8 *Inherit the Wind* 1955
- b. 2 f. 1 *Inherit the Wind* 1955
- b. 13 f. 4 *Inherit the Wind* 1965
Television adaptation
- b. 5 f. 1 *The Investigator* 1954
- b. 3 f. 11 *It's Like a Touch* 1959
- b. 4 f. 6 *Joan of Lorraine* 1946
- b. 6 f. 3 *Journey of Simon McKeever* 1949
- b. 2 f. 6 *Junior Miss* 1944
- b. 8 f. 8 *Life With Father* 1955
- b. 6 f. 8 *Light Up the Sky* 1959
- b. 7 f. 1 *Little Murders* 1967
- b. 3 f. 13 *The Long Winter of '39* 1991
- b. 9 f. 8 *Look Homeward, Angel* 1957
- b. 2 f. 10 *Mademoiselle Columbe* 1954
- b. 6 f. 7 *The Man Who Came to Dinner* 1941
- b. 8 f. 2 *Mating Dance* 1964
- b. 6 f. 2 *Miss Isobel* 1957
- b. 2 f. 7 *Mojo and String* 1970
- b. 7 f. 4 *A Moon for the Misbegotten* 1957
- b. 2 f. 11 *The Moon is Blue* 1951
- b. 8 f. 3 *Mother Courage and Her Children* 1963
- b. 11 f. 6 "My Wife Belongs to Daddy" 1973
The Bob Newhart Show
- b. 1 f. 1 *The Nihilist* 1970
- b. 6 f. 1 *Nourish the Beast* 1974
- b. 11 f. 5 *Nourish the Beast* 1974
- b. 1 f. 4 *Number Our Days* 1981
- b. 10 f. 8 *Paint Your Wagon* 1951
- b. 8 f. 4 *The Peddler* 1967
- b. 3 f. 12 *Peer Gynt* 1951
- b. 6 f. 9 *Plaza Suite* 1969
- b. 3 f. 10 *Portrait of a Madonna* 1959

Scripts (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 2 "The Possessed" 1967
Mannix
- b. 3 f. 5 *Purlie Victorious* 1961
- b. 10 f. 4 *The Prize* 1972
- b. 12 f. 3 *Pro* 1968
Early version of the film *Number One*
- b. 12 f. 4 *Pueblo* 1973
- b. 5 f. 4 *Rain* 1954
- b. 2 f. 4 *Respectful Prostitute* 1949
- b. 3 f. 8 *Room Service* 1937
- b. 6 f. 6 *Room Service* 1953
- b. 6 f. 10 *The Seagull* 1966
- b. 3 f. 3 *The Shining Hour* 1935
- b. 7 f. 3 *Slander!* 1963
- b. 11 f. 2 "Sometime Before Morning" 1949
Radio show for the United Nations
- b. 7 f. 2 *The Sound of Music* 1959
- b. 11 f. 7 "The Spores" 1967
The Invaders
- b. 6 f. 5 *Sun Up* 1937
- b. 2 f. 9 *Ten Little Indians* 1946
- b. 6 f. 11 *Tevya and His Daughters* 1958
- b. 13 f. 1-2 *There was a Crooked Man* 1969-1970
- b. 12 f. 5 *This Town* 1996
- b. 9 f. 6 *Too True to be Good* 1963
- b. 1 f. 2 *Trapper John, M.D* 1970
- b. 5 f. 7 *Trial By Fury* 1960
- b. 10 f. 7 *Troilus and Cressida* 1958
- b. 7 f. 7 *'Twas Brillig* 1973
- b. 1 f. 6-7 *Twelve Angry Men* 1957
- b. 7 f. 8 *Vision and Synthesis* 1962
- b. 10 f. 1 *Volpone* 1957
- b. 3 f. 6 *The Waltz of the Toreadors* 1953
- b. 8 f. 5 *The Waltz of the Toreadors* 1973
- b. 9 f. 7 *The Wedding Breakfast* 1957
- b. 5 f. 3 *Wedding Song* 1987
- b. 4 f. 1 *Widow Chich* 1960
- b. 2 f. 2 *Wild Oats* 1984
- b. 3 f. 4 *The World of Shalom Aleichem* 1953
- b. 10 f. 9-10 *You've Got Mail* 1998

Scrapbooks

Scrapbooks (cont.)

- b. 16 f. 2-4 1934-1941
Productions represented: Ghosts, A Doll's House, Medicine Show, Hold on to Your Hats, Wozzek, Any Day Now.
- b. 16 f. 5 1938
Productions represented: The Great Barrington, Created Equal, A Plant in the Sun.
- b. 16 f. 6-8 1947-1950
Productions represented: Front Page, Command Decision, Come Back Little Sheba.
- b. 17 f. 1-2 1951
Productions represented: Paint Your Wagon, Seagulls over Sorrento, Grey Eyed People, Animal Kingdom, Come Back Little Sheba, Respectful Prostitute.
- b. 17 f. 3-4 1953-1957
Productions represented: Room Service, Maya, Madam Will You Walk, Coriolanus, Life with Father, Too True to be Good, Farmer's Hotel, Rain, 3 Men on a House, Fever for Life.
- b. 18 f. 1 1957-1959
Productions represented: Miss Isobel, The Visit, Triple Play.
- b. 18 f. 2-3 1966-1967
Productions represented: Seconds, My Sweet Charlie, Little Murders, Ivory Tower, Like a Beautiful Child, She Let Him Continue, Portrait of an Artist, Dodo Bird/The Peddler, "Camera Three" (CBS), The Unknown Chekhov.

Professional Files

Productions

- b. 15 f. 7 *An Evening's Frost* 1965-1966
- b. 15 f. 10 *Front Page Reviews and Publicity* 1947
- b. 15 f. 3 *The Journey of Simon McKeever* 1949
- b. 15 f. 1 *Little Murders* 1971
- b. 15 f. 6 *Mating Dance* 1964
- b. 15 f. 11 *Motive* 1971
- b. 15 f. 5 *Our Town* 1969
- b. 15 f. 9 *Rap on Race* 1971
- b. 15 f. 2 *Seconds* 1965
- b. 15 f. 17 *Sound of Music* 1959
- o. 2 *There was a Crooked Man* 1970
poster; in map case LPA C12 Dwr #18
- b. 15 f. 4 *Toys in the Attic* 1960

Subjects

- b. 15 f. 12 Emanuel Fried 1991
- b. 14 f. 11 Peggy Fleming 1966-1969
- b. 15 f. 14-15 Philadelphia Drama Guild 1971-1973
- b. 15 f. 6 Political Notes 1971
This file contains newspaper clippings
- b. 15 f. 13 Sarah Cunningham 1961-1965
- b. 15 f. 8 Television 1975

Programs and Certificates

- b. 14 f. 1-10 1932-1988
- o. 1 1985-1991
Map case LPA C12 Dwr #18

Photographs

- b. 16 f. 1 1915
- b. 15 f. 18-19 1947-1987
 - o. 3 1955
 - Map case LPA C12 Dwr #18