



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin family papers**

1857-circa 1946

\*T-Mss 2003-019

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

## Summary

**Title:** Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin family papers

**Date:** 1857-circa 1946

**Size:** 3.06 linear feet (8 boxes, 1 volume)

**Source:** Donated by Carol Ortner, 2003.

**Abstract:** Harry Davenport (1866-1949) was a stage and film actor who appeared in films of the silent and sound eras. His second wife, Phyllis Rankin (1874-1934), was a stage and film actress who appeared in silent films. The Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin family papers, dating from 1857 to circa 1946, document the careers of Davenport and Rankin, as well as members of their extended family.

**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 Matthew Snyder, 2014

## Creator History

Harry Davenport (1866-1949) was a film and stage actor who appeared in many films of the silent and sound eras. He was best known for the role of Dr. Meade in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). His second wife, Phyllis Rankin (1874-1934), also a film and stage actor, appeared in many silent films.

Harry Davenport's parents were the actors E. L. Davenport (1815-1877) and Fanny Vining Davenport

(1829-1891). One of his sisters, Fanny Davenport (1850-1898), was also an actor.

Phyllis Rankin's parents were the actors McKee Rankin (1841-1914) and Kitty Blanchard (1847-1911). She had two sisters. One, the actress Doris Rankin (1887-1947), was the first wife of Lionel Barrymore. The other, Gladys Rankin, was the first wife of Sidney Drew, and performed with him in a comedy act called Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew. Their son, Sidney Rankin Drew, was a noted aviator who died in World War I.

## Scope and Content Note

The Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin family papers, dating from 1857 to circa 1946, document the careers of Davenport and Rankin; their extended family, which included members of the Drew and Barrymore families by marriage; and friends in the theatrical community. They consist of photographs, theater programs, scrapbooks, letters, scripts, clippings, and theater memorabilia. For an item-level description of the collection, see the inventory in additional resources. Identification numbers in the inventory also appear in the container list.

Photographs in good quality, some large, comprise half of the collection. A few are autographed. Dating from 1857 to 1941, they include posed production photographs as well as actor publicity images. Most have the subject written on the back. Some photographs are individually foldered and identified in the container list, while others (in box 6) are not identified. Researchers should look in both places for particular subjects.

The photographs include prints of Harry Davenport, Phyllis Rankin, E. L. Davenport, Fanny Vining Davenport, Fanny Davenport, McKee Rankin, and Kitty Blanchard. Other subjects include Louisa Lane Drew, Sidney Drew, Sidney Rankin Drew, Georgie Drew Barrymore, Sarah Bernhardt, Ethel Barrymore, Clara Louise Kellogg, Katherine Grey, and Julia Marlowe. Also present is a set of informal photographs of Irving Berlin taken on a military tour during World War II by Edward Davenport, the son of Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin.

Playbills and programs document the careers of E. L. Davenport, Fanny Vining Davenport, Harry Davenport, Phyllis Rankin, McKee Rankin, and Kitty Blanchard. They date from 1860 to 1935. The identification numbers in the inventory are in three sets: 1800s (18-1, 18-2, etc.), 1900s (19-1, 19-2, etc.), and undated (U-1, U-2, etc.).

Within the inventory, scrapbooks, clippings, and correspondence are arranged under the header of Miscellaneous Items, with identification numbers M-1, M-2, etc. This designation has been maintained. Dating from 1853 to 1946, they include scripts, a prompt book, and scrapbooks of programs and clippings for E. L. Davenport, McKee Rankin, Kitty Blanchard, and Harry Davenport. Letters are from McKee Rankin to Phyllis Rankin (1899-1914); and to McKee Rankin from friends and business associates (1868-1911). The letters to Rankin also hold contracts.

**Arrangement:** The papers are in three divisions: Playbills and Programs; Miscellaneous Items; and Photographs.

## Key Terms

**Occupations**

Actors (performing artists)

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)

Correspondence

Memorabilia

Photographs

Programs (documents)

Scrapbooks

**Subjects**

Motion picture actors and actresses -- United States -- 20th century

Theater -- United States -- 19th century

Theater -- United States -- 20th century

**Names**

Blanchard, Kitty, 1847-1911

Davenport, Edward Loomis, 1815-1877

Davenport, Fanny Elizabeth Vining, 1829-1891

Davenport, Fanny, 1850-1898

Davenport, Harry, 1866-1949

Rankin, McKee, 1844-1914

Rankin, Phyllis

## Container List

### Playbills and Programs

- b. 1 f. 1 1860-1898  
18-1 to 18-25
- b. 1 f. 2 1903-1935, undated  
19-1 to 19-21, U-1 to U-6.
- b. 6 f. 16 1927  
19-22

### Miscellaneous Items

- b. 2 f. 1 1881-1924  
M-1 to M-6
- b. 2 f. 2 E.L. Davenport Scrapbook 1877  
M-7
- b. 2 f. 3 *The Two Orphans* undated  
Script belonging to McKee Rankin.  
  
M-8
- b. 2 f. 4 *Civilization* undated  
Prompt book belonging to E. L. Davenport.  
  
M-9
- b. 2 f. 5 *The Golden Giant* undated  
Play by McKee Rankin.  
  
M-10
- b. 2 f. 6 Harry Davenport Scrapbook 1887-1888  
M-11
- b. 2 f. 7 *Clippings for The Danites* 1880  
M-12
- b. 3 f. 1 *Tallis's Shakespeare Gallery of Engravings* undated  
M-13
- b. 3 f. 2 "Stories of the Boston Stage" 1870s  
Newspaper article  
  
M-14
- b. 3 f. 3 Kitty Blanchard Scrapbook 1886-1887  
M-15
- b. 3 f. 4 McKee - Rankin 50th Anniversary Letters 1911  
M-16
- b. 3 f. 5 Commemorative Presentation to Harry Davenport circa 1946  
M-17
- b. 3 f. 6 Letters from McKee Rankin to Phyllis Rankin 1899-1914  
M-18
- b. 3 f. 7 *Set Drawings for The Danites* 1880  
M-19

Miscellaneous Items (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 1 *Scrapbook for 49* 1873-1884  
Play featuring McKee Rankin and Kitty Blanchard.
  
- M-20
- b. 4 f. 2 *Scrapbook for Gabriel Conroy* 1884  
Featuring McKee Rankin and Kitty Blanchard.
  
- M-21
- b. 4 f. 3 Scrapbook for McKee Rankin and Kitty Blanchard 1873-1886  
M-22
- v. 1 Harry Davenport 50th Anniversary Scrapbook 1922  
M-23
- b. 4 f. 4-5 Letters to McKee Rankin 1868-1911
- Photographs
- b. 5 f. 1 Blanchard, Kitty 1869-1873, undated
- b. 7 f. 1 Blanchard, Kitty 1898, undated
- b. 5 f. 2 Davenport, E. L 1857-1889, undated
- b. 7 f. 2-3 Davenport, E. L undated
- b. 5 f. 3 Davenport, Fanny undated
- b. 7 f. 4 Davenport, Fanny undated
- b. 7 f. 5 Davenport, Fanny Vining circa 1890
- b. 5 f. 4 Davenport, Harry 1880s-1900s
- b. 7 f. 6 Davenport, Harry with Phyllis Rankin 1880s, 1907
- b. 8 f. 1 Drew, Louisa, and Unidentified 1893, undated
- b. 5 f. 5 Drew, Sidney Rankin undated
- b. 5 f. 6 Rankin, McKee undated
- b. 7 f. 7 Rankin, McKee 1884, undated
- b. 5 f. 7 Rankin, Phyllis 1890s-1932
- b. 7 f. 8-10 Rankin, Phyllis 1890s
- b. 5 f. 8 Unidentified 1887, 1895, undated
- b. 6 f. 1-15 1880s-1900s, undated  
Includes Harry Davenport, Phyllis Rankin, McKee Rankin, Kitty Blanchard, and Fanny Davenport.
  
- b. 1 f. 3-4 Late 1800s - 1941  
Includes Sarah Bernhardt, Ethel Barrymore, Morris Gest, Katherine Grey, Ellen Terry, Clara Louise Kellogg, Fanny Vining Davenport, Georgie Drew Barrymore, and Irving Berlin.