



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**John DeVries papers**

1900-1992

\*T-Mss 1993-029

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** De Vries, John, 1915-1992

**Title:** John DeVries papers

**Date:** 1900-1992

**Size:** 1.4 linear feet (4 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Donated by the estate of John DeVries, 1992.

**Abstract:** John DeVries was a designer, artist, and lyricist. In the 1970s, he worked with Helen Hayes on a proposed book documenting her life from 1900 to 1956. The John DeVries papers (1900-1992) contain Hayes' letters to DeVries, her photographs, and transcripts of commentary she recorded for the book. The collection also contains sketches, photographic negatives, and other material related to DeVries' design work for jazz clubs, notably Eddie Condon's.

**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>

### Conditions Governing Access:

Inquiries regarding audio recordings in the collection may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division ([theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org)). Audio recordings will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

**Conditions Governing Use:** The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Theatre Division at [theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org).

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

## **Creator History**

John DeVries (1915-1992) was a designer, artist, and lyricist. As a lyricist, he collaborated with Joe Bushkin and Eddie Condon. His work as a designer included album covers and fliers for jazz musicians. He also did designs for New York City jazz clubs, including Famous Door, Eddie Condon's two eponymous clubs, and the Eddie Condon's club which opened in 1975, after Condon's death.

DeVries was friends with Helen Hayes. In the 1970s, DeVries and Hayes collaborated on a proposed book called *Helen Hayes Family Album: They Were Emeralds*, documenting Hayes' family and professional life from her birth in 1900 through the death of her husband, Charles MacArthur, in 1956.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The John DeVries papers (1900-1992) contain material related to Helen Hayes, Eddie Condon, and a small amount of DeVries' art and designs.

Helen Hayes materials include photographs and ephemera collected in preparation of a book about her life and family from 1900 to 1956. There are transcripts and excerpts of Hayes' commentary for the book, probably recorded in the 1970s, as well as mock-ups of the book and correspondence regarding its potential publication. Also present are DeVries' personal photographs of Hayes and letters from Hayes, dating mostly from the 1970s to the early 1990s. Hayes and DeVries were friends with Lillian Gish, and a small number of letters from and photographs of Gish are present. The collection also includes two film scripts by Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht, one of which is annotated.

Sketches and design materials mostly relate to design work that DeVries did for the jazz club, Eddie Condon's. There are photographic prints and negatives of Condon and his colleagues, including George Wettling and Bud Freeman. Some miscellaneous designs and sketches are also present.

The collection includes a poster for "Joe Papp Sings," signed by Papp.

The collection contains audio recordings, including recordings of Hayes. Inquiries regarding audio recordings in the collection may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division ([theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org)). Audio recordings will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Correspondence  
Photographs

### **Names**

Condon, Eddie, 1905-1973  
Hayes, Helen, 1900-1993  
MacArthur, Charles, 1895-1956

## Container List

- Helen Hayes
- b. 1 f. 1-14 1900s-1992  
Includes letters from Lillian Gish.
  
  - b. 2 f. 1-8 1920s-1991
  - b. 4 f. 1-2 1929-1978
  - b. 3 f. 1 *The Scoundrel by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur* 1935  
"Release dialogue script." No annotations.
  
  - b. 3 f. 2 *Twentieth Century by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur* circa 1934  
Film script. With handwritten changes.
  
  - b. 3 f. 3-7 Photographs, Sketches, and Designs 1930s-1970s  
Includes Eddie Condon material.
  
  - b. 4 f. 3-6 Photographs, Sketches, and Designs 1920s-1970s  
Includes Eddie Condon material.
  
  - o. 1 Joe Papp Poster 1978  
C12, Dwr. #31