



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Lewin collection of Broadway Show League materials

1950s-1990s [bulk 1970s-1980s]

*T-Mss 2006-013

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

Summary

Creator: Lewin, Frances Froehlich

Title: Lewin collection of Broadway Show League materials

Date: 1950s-1990s [bulk 1970s-1980s]

Size: 3.44 linear feet (9 boxes)

Source: Donated by Jay Lewin, 2006.

Abstract: The Broadway Show League (incorporated in 1955) is a non-profit organization that offers casts and crews from Broadway and Off-Broadway the opportunity to engage in softball games. Frances Froehlich Lewin (c.1921-1998) served as the commissioner of the League from 1968 to 1984. The collection, dated 1950s to 1990s, documents the League mostly during Lewin's tenure. The files hold correspondence, financial data, memorandums, notes, notebooks, memorabilia, photographs and printed matter.

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 Use: The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Theatre Division at theatre@nypl.org.

Preferred citation: Lewin collection of Broadway Show League materials, *T-Mss 2006-013. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

Creator History

Beginning in the 1950s, Broadway casts and crews went to Central Park on Wednesday afternoons for picnics and softball games on Hecksher Fields (Central Park West, 63rd Street). Afterward, they returned to their respective shows for the evening performances. This activity prompted John Effrat (1908-1965), a stage manager and actor, to create the Broadway Show League.

The Broadway Show League, created under the auspices of the Actor's Fund of America, regulates the softball games.

Shortly after Effrat's death, Frances Froehlich Lewin (Mrs. Richard E. Lewin) became the commissioner of the League. She held this voluntary position from 1968 to 1984. As an advocate for the League, she frequently lobbied the city's elected officials and the park's commissioner to provide a safe and secure environment in Central Park. One of her major complaints regarded the condition of the Hecksher Fields and the fees charged to use the park for softball games.

The League's popularity resulted in special playoffs. For example, in 1980, the League played at Shea Stadium against the New York State legislature. Garnering much publicity in the press, the League's all-star line-up included Richard Burton, Meat Loaf, and Joe Piscopo.

In recognition for her work, a division was named after Lewin. She died in New York City in 1998.

The Broadway Show League official website: www.Broadwayshowleague.com

Scope and Content Note

The collection, dated 1950s - 1990s (bulk dates, 1970s-1980s), documents the Broadway Show League during the tenure of Commissioner Frances Froehlich Lewin. There is also some material that documents the parent organization the Actors Fund of America, and the founder of the League, John Effrat.

The collection contains bulletins and rosters, correspondence, financial data, flyers, notices, photographs, printed matter and memorabilia.

The Actors Fund of America files hold a copy of the reorganization of the Broadway Show League for 1972; letters to the Broadway Show League regarding their financial contributions; and several copies of the Fund's annual reports from the 1970s to the 1980s, including the centennial edition report, from 1982.

John Effrat files hold a copy of the articles of the incorporation of the League, a certificate list of officers, rules and regulations of the game, acknowledgments of contributions, financial status, and two rosters for the games of 1956 and 1957.

The bulletins and rosters files contain press releases, forms for registration, rules and regulations, release agreements for playing in games, and the results of the softball divisions.

During Lewin's tenure the League's correspondence was arranged in two files: correspondence to officials and correspondence to others. Lewin's correspondence illustrate her position as an advocate and her letters were sent to officials, such as Mayor John Lindsay, Mayor Ed Koch, Carol Bellamy, and Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern. Her major concerns involved the deterioration of the Hecksher Fields, the substandard park facilities for the League, and park fees charged for the use of the ball fields.

Lewins' correspondence to others holds announcements for registration, entry and playing rules, memos to prospective sponsors and managers, results from games, invitations to playoffs, flyers, solicitations for sponsors, and feedback from games.

The special events file holds minor information about The All-Star game held at Shea Stadium and the Oldtimers' Day games.

Lewin also kept two notebooks which she used to track appointments, schedules, telephone numbers, and her League duties.

Photographs, dating from the 1970s to 1980s, are mostly black and white, and show casts and crews from Broadway playing Hecksher Fields and spectators watching the games. Danny Aiello, Lauren Bacall, Richard Burton, Colleen Dewhurst, Pat Hingle, and Gwen Vernon were photographed either playing or watching the games. Printed matter consists of clippings, and brochures advertising of the Broadway Show League and Central Park.

Key Terms

Geographic Names

Central Park -- (New York, N.Y.)
New York (N.Y) -- New York

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings
Memorabilia
Photographs
Press releases

Subjects

Softball -- New York (State)
Sports -- New York (State) -- 20th century
Sports -- United States

Names

Effrat, John, approximately 1908-1965
Lewin, Frances Froehlich
Broadway Show League

Container List

Bulletins and Rosters

- b. 1 f. 1-15 1964-1980
- b. 2 f. 1-11 1981-1994

Correspondence

- b. 3 f. 1-4 Lewin's Correspondence with Officials 1967-1985
- b. 3 f. 5-9 Lewin's Correspondence with Others 1966-1990
- b. 3 f. 10-11 Special Events Games 1979-1984
 - b. 4 f. 1 Issues Concerning the Broadway Show League 1980s
 - b. 4 f. 2 Draft of Resignation Concerning the Broadway Show League 1984
 - b. 4 f. 3 Address Book circa 1980
 - b. 4 f. 4-5 Notebooks 1982, 1984

Photographs

- b. 4 f. 6-7 1958, 1965-1979
- b. 5 f. 1-10 1980-1988
 - b. 5 f. 11 Contact Prints 1970s-1980s
 - b. 5 f. 12 Slides 1980s

Printed Matter

- b. 5 f. 13-16 Clippings 1950s-1970s
- b. 6 f. 1-3 Clippings 1980s-1990s
- b. 6 f. 4-5 Advertisements 1960s-1980s
- b. 6 f. 6-7 Central Park 1970s-1980s

Actor's Fund of America

- b. 6 f. 8 Correspondence 1956-1977
- b. 6 f. 9-11 Annual Reports 1971-1984
 - b. 7 f. 1 Annual Report--Centennial Edition 1982
- b. 7 f. 2-4 Effrat, John 1957-1965
- b. 7 f. 5 New Yorker Magazine Cover
- b. 7 f. 6 Stationary, Blank Forms

Memorabilia

- b. 8 f. 1 Pennants, Medallions, Button Banner and Ticket circa 1980
- b. 9 f. 1 T-Shirt circa 1980