



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Dorothy Kilgallen papers and scrapbooks

1936-1965

*T-Mss 1966-001

Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan.

Summary

Creator: Kilgallen, Dorothy

Title: Dorothy Kilgallen papers and scrapbooks

Date: 1936-1965

Size: 8 linear feet (18 boxes)

Source: Gift, Kilgallen Family, 1966

Abstract: The Dorothy Kilgallen Papers and Scrapbooks consists of personal papers, photographs, and clippings documenting her versatile career as newswoman, actress, TV personality, radio hostess, wife and mother from 1930 to her death in 1965. The collection is a wealth of photographs and clippings, but has virtually no correspondence. Photographs include such notables as: Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, Lucille Ball, Desi Arnaz, Joe DiMaggio and Rex Harrison, among others. The materials reveal Ms. Kilgallen as a celebrity; even personal family photographs have the flavor of posed publicity settings. The collection gives no glimpse of Dorothy Kilgallen's private life.

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:

Photocopying prohibited.

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Preferred citation: Dorothy Kilgallen Papers and Scrapbooks, *T-Mss 1966-001, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan. Materials were primarily scrapbooks and included 43 volumes of Ms. Kilgallen's newspaper columns from *The Journal-American*. These were discarded in 1983 since *The Journal-American* is available on microfilm. The remaining portion of the collection was fully processed in 1992. One oversized photograph of Dorothy Kilgallen's graduation class from Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn, New York was removed for conservation and separate oversized storage.

Creator History

Dorothy Kilgallen, newswoman, Broadway columnist and TV panelist was born in Chicago on July 3, 1913. Emulating her father, noted newsman James L. Kilgallen, she began her journalism career at the age of 17. In 1936 *The New York Evening Journal* sent her on an around-the-world trip in competition with reporters from two other daily newspapers. Romanticized as a modern Nellie Bly her fame was secured, receiving not only a role in the 1937 movie *Winner Take All*, but also a daily column entitled *The Voice of Broadway*. In 1945, Ms. Kilgallen and her husband, Richard Kollmar, became the stars of a morning radio program, *Breakfast With Dorothy and Dick*. It ran from 1945 until 1963. Her television career began when she appeared on the first panel of the quiz show *What's My Line?* in 1950. Dorothy Kilgallen was known for her tough reporting style, her stylish dress and her caustic commentary on notables of the day. She died on November 8, 1965.

Custodial History

The Dorothy Kilgallen Papers and Scrapbooks were donated to the Billy Rose Theatre Division by the family of Ms. Kilgallen in 1966.

Scope and Content Note

The Dorothy Kilgallen Papers and Scrapbooks consist of personal papers, photographs and scrapbooks documenting her versatile career as newswoman, actress, TV personality, radio hostess, wife and mother from 1930 to her death in 1965. The collection is a wealth of photographs and clippings but has virtually no correspondence. It reveals Ms. Kilgallen as a celebrity, even personal family photographs have the flavor of posed publicity settings. The collection gives no glimpse of Dorothy Kilgallen's private life.

Arrangement: I. Papers II. Photographs III. Photograph Scrapbooks IV. Clippings Scrapbooks V. Richard Kollmar Scrapbook

Key Terms

Subjects

Actors
Actresses
Celebrities
Gossip columnists -- United States
Women journalists -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings
Photographic prints
Programs
Scrapbooks

Names

Kilgallen, Dorothy
Arnaz, Desi, 1917-1986
Ball, Lucille, 1911-1989
Crawford, Joan, 1908-1977
Di Maggio, Joe, 1914-
Gable, Clark, 1901-1960
Harrison, Rex
Kilgallen, James L.
Kollmar, Jill
Kollmar, Kerry, 1954-
Kollmar, Richard
Kollmar, Richard, Jr

Container List

Series I - Papers 1936-1945 (.1 lin.ft.)

This series includes some correspondence and personal mementos from the early years of Ms. Kilgallen's career. Included is a souvenir passenger list from the Hindenburg [1936], and an invitation to funeral services for Jean Harlow [1937].

By form

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence 1936-1938
Includes invitation to funeral services of Jean Harlow.
- b. 1 f. 2 Telegrams 1938
- b. 1 f. 3 Certificate 1945
- b. 1 f. 4 Tickets, ephemera, etc.
- b. 1 f. 5 Miscellaneous papers

Series II - Photographs 1936-1965 (.3 lin.ft.)

This series contains loose photographs of Ms. Kilgallen's family and celebrity acquaintances. Included in the celebrity photographs are politicians, movie stars, baseball players, singers and the evangelist, Billy Graham.

Alphabetical

- b. 1 f. 6 Dorothy Kilgallen with children & husband
- b. 1 f. 7 Dorothy Kilgallen at the circus
- b. 1 f. 8 Dorothy Kilgallen in Hawaii
- b. 1 f. 9 Dorothy Kilgallen with parents
- b. 1 f. 10 Dorothy Kilgallen on trip around the world 1936
- b. 1 f. 11 Dorothy Kilgallen with Don Ameche
- b. 1 f. 12 Dorothy Kilgallen with Lucille Ball Desi Arnaz
- b. 1 f. 13 Dorothy Kilgallen with Tony Bennett Richard Kollmar, her husband
- b. 1 f. 14 Dorothy Kilgallen with Joan Crawford
- b. 1 f. 15 Dorothy Kilgallen at the Columbia School of Journalism
- b. 1 f. 16 Dorothy Kilgallen with Joe DiMaggio
- b. 1 f. 17 Dorothy Kilgallen with Ella Fitzgerald
- b. 1 f. 18 Dorothy Kilgallen with Clark Gable
- b. 1 f. 19 Dorothy Kilgallen with Billy Graham
- b. 1 f. 20 Dorothy Kilgallen with Rex Harrison
- b. 1 f. 21 Dorothy Kilgallen with Andre Kostelanetz
- b. 1 f. 22 Dorothy Kilgallen with Fiorello LaGuardia
- b. 1 f. 23 Dorothy Kilgallen with Patti Page
- b. 1 f. 24 Dorothy Kilgallen with Johnny Ray
- b. 1 f. 25 Dorothy Kilgallen with John A. Roosevelt 1938
- b. 1 f. 26 Dorothy Kilgallen with Frank Sinatra
- b. 1 f. 27 *Dorothy Kilgallen in Winner Take All*
- b. 1 f. 28 Dorothy Kilgallen with Kate Smith
- b. 1 f. 29 Dorothy Kilgallen at the Stork Club
- b. 1 f. 30 Dorothy Kilgallen on the Universal Studio Tour

Series II - Photographs (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 31 Dorothy Kilgallen with Claire Trevor
- b. 1 f. 32 Dorothy Kilgallen on King Vidor's yacht 1956
Letter included.
- b. 1 f. 33 *Dorothy Kilgallen in What's My Line*
- b. 1 f. 34 Dorothy Kilgallen 1957
- b. 1 f. 35 Dorothy Kilgallen 1960
- b. 1 f. 36 Dorothy Kilgallen (Miscellaneous)

Series III - Photograph Scrapbooks 1930-1965 (2.6 lin.ft.)

This series consists of photograph albums arranged by Dorothy Kilgallen. The albums are mostly thematic in content, with separate album for photographs of Dorothy and Dick, Jill, Dickie and Kerry Kollmar, her children and albums of publicity photographs of Ms. Kilgallen in all facets of her career.

NOTE: This series of photographs were originally in albums arranged by Dorothy Kilgallen. Due to the condition of the albums, the pages have been removed and they have been placed in acid free boxes. The original order of the photographs in each volume has been retained wherever possible. Because of this, the volumes may overlap in content.

Numerical

b. 2 Scrapbook No. I - Dorothy and Dick

- Folder 1 - Dorothy & Dick Wedding Photos
- Folder 2 - Dorothy & Dick - At Home Photos
- Folder 3 - Dorothy & Dick - 1
- Folder 4 - Dorothy & Dick - 2
- Folder 5 - Clippings

(items have been removed and placed in archival folders)

b. 3 Scrapbook No. II - Dorothy Kilgallen

- Folder 1 - Head shots
- Folder 2 - Fashion photographs
- Folder 3 - Publicity photographs - oversized
- Folder 4 - At home photographs
- Folder 5 - Miscellaneous
- Folder 6 - Balls and benefits
- Folder 7 - Publicity photographs (Washington Upholstery and Furniture Company)
- Folder 8 - Queen Elizabeth's visit (October 1957)
- Folder 9 - Graduation photographs from PS 119, June 1926
- Folder 10 - Baby shower
- Folder 11 - *What's My Line*
- Folder 12 - Dorothy Kilgallen and parents

(items have been removed and placed in archival folders)

Series III - Photograph Scrapbooks (cont.)

b. 4 Scrapbook No. III - Dorothy Kilgallen

Folder 1 - Dorothy Kilgallen with her father
Folder 2 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Milton Berle
Folder 3 - Dorothy Kilgallen at the circus, 1951
Folder 4 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Billy Graham
Folder 5 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Hedy Lamarr
Folder 6 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Vincent Lopez
Folder 7 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Sophia Loren
Folder 8 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Jane Powell
Folder 9 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Johnny Ray
Folder 10 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Sugar Ray Robinson
Folder 11 - Dorothy Kilgallen with Frank Sinatra
Folder 12 - Dorothy Kilgallen at Steeplechase (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
Folder 13 - Dorothy Kilgallen (Miscellaneous)

(items have been removed and placed in archival folders)

b. 5 Scrapbook No. IV - Dickie Kollmar, son of Dorothy Kilgallen

Folders 1-3 - Family photographs of son, Dickie
Folder 4 - Clippings
Folder 5 - Program - *Arsenic and Old Lace* with Jill Kollmar
Folder 6 - Postcards from Bikini Island, 1946

(items have been removed and placed in archival folders)

b. 6 Scrapbook No. V - Dorothy Kilgallen 1936-1965

Folder 1 - Photographs, 1951
Folder 2 - Photographs, 1960
Folder 3 - Photographs, 1961
Folder 4 - Publicity shots - Stephen Kennedy for Mayor
Folder 5 - Program from Grauman's Chinese Theatre
Folder 6 - Photographs, 1962
Folder 7 - Souvenir passenger list from the Hindenburg, September 30, 1936
Photograph from world trip, 1936
Undated photographs

(items have been removed and placed in archival folders)

Series IV - Clippings Scrapbooks 1936-1965 (3 lin.ft.)

This series consists of bound volumes of clippings documenting the career of Dorothy Kilgallen. The clippings and articles are written not by Ms. Kilgallen, but about her; and range from short gossip column references to full-length articles.

Chronological

- b. 7 Scrapbook No. I October 1936-September 1948
- b. 8 Scrapbook No. II September 8, 1948-January 20, 1951
- b. 9 Scrapbook No. III January 20, 1951-May 30, 1952
- b. 10 Scrapbook No. IV June 1, 1952-May 23, 1953
- b. 11 Scrapbook No. V May 24, 1953-June 8, 1954
- b. 12 Scrapbook No. VI June 8, 1954-January 30, 1956
- b. 13 Scrapbook No. VII February 1, 1956-December 10, 1957
- b. 14 Scrapbook No. VIII January 9, 1957-June 10, 1960
- b. 15 Scrapbook No. IX April 1960-January 1961

Series IV - Clippings Scrapbooks (cont.)

- b. 16 Scrapbook No. X January 20, 1961-December 29, 1962
- b. 17 Scrapbook No. XI January 4, 1963-October 11, 1965

Series V - Richard Kollmar Scrapbook 1940-1944 (2 lin.ft.)

This series consists of one bound volume of clippings on the stage career of Richard Kollmar.
Chronological

- b. 18 Richard Kollmar Scrapbook 1940-1944