



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Correspondence to Morgan James**

1958-1977

\*T-Mss 1981-013

## Summary

**Creator:** Barstow, Richard

**Title:** Correspondence to Morgan James

**Date:** 1958-1977

**Size:** .21 linear feet. (1 box)

**Source:** Gift, James, Morgan

**Abstract:** The correspondence consists largely of personal letters written by Richard Barstow to his friend Morgan James, as well as some business related correspondence and documents related to litigation. Also includes a script entitled THE RAINBOW YEARS, dated January 30, 1958, for a performance marking the twentieth anniversary of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, i.e. the "March of Dimes." The script features material written for celebrity performers such as Lillian Gish, Eddie Cantor, Don Ameche, and Rudy Vallée.

**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>

**Preferred citation:** Correspondence to Morgan James, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

## Creator History

Richard Barstow (1908-1981) was a director and choreographer, known for his work for the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus, for industrial shows, and for stage and television productions. Richard Barstow was born the youngest of seven children in Ashtabula, Ohio, on April 1, 1908; his family relocated to Seattle shortly after his birth. He travelled as part of a dance act with his sister Edith (1908-1960), then, upon her marriage, settled in Chicago where he found work at the Palmer House with Eddie Duchin's revue, learning choreography and directing. After Army service during World War II, Richard Barstow, who had never seen a circus, was offered a job by Ringling Brothers, for whom he

worked as choreographer for many years. He served as choreographer for Cecil B. DeMille's 1952 film THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. Richard Barstow died on May 2, 1981.

### **Scope and Content Note**

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### **Key Terms**

#### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Correspondence  
Scripts

#### **Names**

Barstow, Richard  
Ameche, Don  
Cantor, Eddie, 1892-1964  
Gish, Lillian, 1893-1993  
James, Morgan  
Valle\_e, Rudy, 1901-1986  
Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows