



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Lew White papers**

1931-1936

\*T-Mss 2003-032

## Summary

**Creator:** White, Lew

**Title:** Lew White papers

**Date:** 1931-1936

**Size:** (1 portfolio)

**Abstract:** Lew White (1902?-1955) was a keyboard musician who specialized as an organist, touring theaters and college campuses across the United States, performing on radio, in short films, and recording for various companies. Born in Philadelphia, Lew White studied violin as a boy with his father, a prominent music teacher, and later graduated from the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music. In the silent movie era White provided accompaniment for films, and for a time was in charge of the 'Mighty Wurlitzer' organ at New York's Roxy Theatre, accompanying live stage shows. During the period when talkies were replacing live entertainment White continued to tour the United States as a successful attraction. In addition to his performing, White also maintained a studio in New York, the White Institute of Organ, Inc., where he gave music lessons and sold organs. Lew White was also active in the development of new electrical keyboard instruments such as the Electrovox. Lew White died in New York in March of 1955 at the age of 52. The Lew White papers consist mostly of correspondence concerning White's career as a touring performer in the mid-1930s. Although White had an agent who managed his bookings, it appears that he nonetheless handled much of his own business and promotional correspondence himself. Most of his letters concern the business side of touring, such as scheduling, fees, ticketing, advertising, etc. There is also material pertaining to a 1934 variety show radio broadcast in which Lew White participated as performer and director.

**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:** Lew White papers, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

## Creator History

Lew White (1902?-1955) was a keyboard musician who specialized as an organist, touring theaters and college campuses across the United States, performing on radio, in short films, and recording for various companies. Born in Philadelphia, Lew White studied violin as a boy with his father, a prominent music teacher, and later graduated from the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music. In the silent movie era White provided accompaniment for films, and for a time was in charge of the 'Mighty Wurlitzer' organ at New York's Roxy Theatre, accompanying live stage shows. During the period when talkies were replacing live entertainment White continued to tour the United States as a successful attraction. In addition to his performing, White also maintained a studio in New York, the White Institute of Organ, Inc., where he gave music lessons and sold organs. Lew White was also active in the development of new electrical keyboard instruments such as the Electrovox. Lew White died in New York in March of 1955 at the age of 52.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Lew White papers consist mostly of correspondence concerning White's career as a touring performer in the mid-1930s. Although White had an agent who managed his bookings, it appears that he nonetheless handled much of his own business and promotional correspondence himself. Most of his letters concern the business side of touring, such as scheduling, fees, ticketing, advertising, etc. There is also material pertaining to a 1934 variety show radio broadcast in which Lew White participated as performer and director.

### **Key Terms**

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

Correspondence

#### **Subjects**

Organists -- United States

Performing arts -- United States

#### **Names**

White, Lew