



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Aarons Family papers**

circa 1870-1979

\*T-Mss 2010-021

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Aarons Family

**Title:** Aarons Family papers

**Date:** circa 1870-1979

**Size:** .9 linear feet (3 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Janis Uhley, 2009.

**Abstract:** The Aarons Family papers (circa 1870-1979) mainly document the career of the producer Alfred E. Aarons, as well as his family life with the vocalist Leila Hughes and their children. A small amount of papers pertains to Alfred's children: Ruth Aarons and Alexander A. Aarons.

**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:** 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 Matthew Snyder, 2015

## Creator History

Alfred E. Aarons (1865-1936) was a theatrical producer, director, composer, and lyricist. His career began in Philadelphia before he moved to New York, where he produced or wrote music for 17 plays and musicals from 1900 to 1933.

Aarons's son from his first marriage was Alexander A. Aarons (1890-1943), who was also a well-known

producer, often associated with George Gershwin.

Alfred Aarons's second wife was a light opera singer named Leila Hughes who appeared in five Broadway productions between 1912 and 1915. She retired from performing after marrying Aarons and bore two children, Lisle and Ruth.

Ruth Hughes Aarons (1918-1980) was the only U.S. player ever to win a World Singles Championship in table tennis, and later became a successful artist manager.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Aarons Family papers (circa 1870-1979) mainly document the career of Alfred E. Aarons, as well as his family life with Leila Hughes and their children. A small amount of papers pertains to Ruth Aarons and Alexander Aarons. The collection contains photographs, scrapbooks, sheet music, writings, and keepsakes belonging to Alfred Aarons. Most of the collection dates from the 1900s to 1945.

The photographs contain formal and informal prints of Alfred Aarons and Leila Hughes, and prints of their children and home life, as well as of their house. Also present are signed prints of actors and impresarios, autographed to Aarons (and in one case to Ruth Aarons). Subjects of the autographed prints include Winthrop Ames, Stanley Ridges, Roberta Beatty, George Christie, Malcolm Douglass, Gilbert Miller, Charles Previn, George Ade, Diana Bourbon, Tom Wise, and Irene Delroy.

The three unbound scrapbooks, dating from 1906 to 1945, mostly document Alfred Aarons's career through programs, clippings, handbills, honors, certificates, awards, obituaries, and condolence letters. They also contain programs for Leila Hughes; a letter from and photograph of Ruth Aarons; and an obituary for Alexander Aarons.

The sheet music is for two songs from shows produced by Alexander Aarons: "To Know You Is To Love You" from *Hold Everything!*, and "Luckiest Man In the World" from *Pardon My English*.

The writings contain poetry by Ruth Aarons, as well as her ASCAP membership certificate, and a travel diary by Leila Hughes.

The collection also holds medals and keepsakes belonging to Alfred Aarons. These are located in the \*T-Cabinet.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by format.

### **Key Terms**

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

Photographs  
Scrapbooks

#### **Occupations**

Producers (managers)  
Singers

**Subjects**

Theater -- United States -- 20th century

**Names**

Aarons, Alfred E.

Aarons, Ruth Hughes

Hughes, Leila

## Container List

### Keepsakes undated

Medals, pins, and jewelry with photographs, all belonging to Alfred Aarons.

These are located in the \*T-Cabinet.

Researchers must make an appointment to view these items.

### Photographs

b. 1 f. 1 Aarons, Alfred E circa 1870-1920s

#### Actors and Impresarios

b. 1 f. 2 1904-1936, undated

b. 2 f. 1 1926-1979, undated

#### Family

b. 1 f. 3 1915-1920s

b. 2 f. 2 1917-1925

b. 2 f. 3 Family Home 1920s

b. 1 f. 4 Hughes, Leila 1910s-1920s

### Scrapbooks

b. 2 f. 4 1906-1931

b. 1 f. 5 1914-1945

b. 2 f. 5 1945-1943

b. 3 f. 1 Sheet Music 1929, 1933

### Writings

b. 3 f. 2 Aarons, Ruth 1930-1941, 1956, undated

b. 3 f. 3 Hughes, Leila 1908-1909