



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Jay Barney papers

1948-1980

*T-Mss 1986-012

Compiled by Lea Jordan, 2014

Summary

Creator: Barney, Jay B.

Title: Jay Barney papers

Date: 1948-1980

Size: 2.1 linear feet (5 boxes)

Source: Unknown, 1986.

Abstract: Jay Barney (1913-1985) was an actor, writer, and active Actor's Equity member. The Jay Barney papers hold correspondence, diaries, programs, and files relating to his military service and involvement with performers unions.

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<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Processing note: Compiled by Lea Jordan, 2014

Creator History

Jay Barney (1913-1985) was an actor, writer, and active Actor's Equity member. Barney was born John B. Kleinschmidt in Chicago and served in the Army before and during World War II, continuing as an Army Reservist until the late 1960s. During World War II, he directed and produced training films for the military as well as being an active member of the Signal Corps.

He performed in more than 20 Broadway shows, including *Eugenia* (1957) and *The Immoralist*, (1954). His film career included roles in *Return of Jesse James* (1950) and *The Shrike* (1955) among others. He also appeared in more than 20 television shows. He often worked in radio and originated the role of Kurt Bonine on CBS's *The Romance of Helen Trent*, which at the time was the oldest continuous serial on the air.

Barney was a member of the Screen Actors Guild, American Federation of Television and Radio Actors, and Actor's Equity. He was especially active in Actor's Equity and often served as deputy representative to various shows. Later in his career, he authored a column for Backstage Magazine titled "Theatre News" from 1973 to 1985. At the time of his death in 1985, he was living in New York City and Columbus, New Jersey.

Scope and Content Note

The Jay Barney papers hold correspondence, diaries, programs, and files relating to his military service and involvement with performers unions.

Correspondence includes copies of letters sent to casting agencies as well as correspondence from fellow actors, military servicemen, agents, producers, and movie studio staff. There is also a file of clipping acknowledgments from casting agents and producers.

Barney's diary details his unexpected cover of the lead in the Broadway show *The Immoralist* for the final two performances, his work in television and radio, filming *The Shrike* and balancing his military reserve duty with his acting jobs. The diary was composed on a typewriter and entries often include copies of letters Barney sent to family and friends with news.

Photographs consist of various head shots and production promotional shots, including many images from *The Shrike*. Most promotional shots are unidentified. There is also a set of images taken for a "Day in the Life" feature about Barney which ran in the "Radio TV Mirror" in 1957. Many of the photographs were ultimately not used in the article.

Military service files hold certificates of promotion, army correspondence, forms, and training materials for Barney's time with the military, both as a full-time soldier and as a reservist.

Union files include handbooks, correspondence, meeting notes, and other material relating to Barney's various union memberships. The Actor's Equity files hold correspondence and notes from his service as union deputy on many shows.

Programs date from 1948 to 1973 and are from Broadway, off-Broadway, regional, and dinner theater productions in which Barney was a participant, as well as Equity showcase performances and acting class presentations.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by file type.

Key Terms

Subjects

Acting
Military training camps
Motion pictures
Radio -- United States
Theater -- United States -- 20th century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Diaries

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1-9 A-Z 1948-1980
- b. 2 f. 1 Clipping Acknowledgments 1950-1973
- b. 2 f. 2-4 Diary 1948-1964
8-MWEZ + n.c. 27,302

Military Service

- b. 2 f. 5-8 General 1945-1965
- b. 3 f. 1 American Theatre Wing Professional Training Program 1951-1952
- b. 3 f. 2 Certificates 1946-1960
- b. 3 f. 3 Handbooks 1957

Photographs

- b. 3 f. 4 *Day in the Life shoot* 1957
- b. 3 f. 5 Headshots 1950-1969
- b. 3 f. 6-8 Promotional Shots 1948-1970
- b. 4 f. 1-3 Programs 1949-1973
- b. 4 f. 4 Publicity and Clippings 1950-1968
- b. 4 f. 5 Resumes 1950-1966

Unions

- b. 4 f. 6 Actors Equity 1955-1970
- b. 5 f. 1-3 Actors Equity 1955-1970
- b. 5 f. 4 American Federation of Television and Radio Artists 1960-1963
- b. 5 f. 5-6 Screen Actors Guild 1952-1962