



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**American Play Company records on Guy Bolton**

1911-1965

\*T-Mss 2013-108

Compiled by Weatherly Stephan, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Bolton, Guy, 1884-1979

**Title:** American Play Company records on Guy Bolton

**Date:** 1911-1965

**Size:** .84 linear feet (2 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Guy Bolton, 1967.

**Abstract:** Guy Bolton (1884-1979) was a British-American playwright, librettist, and novelist. He wrote more than 50 plays and musicals, many of which were collaborations with P.G. Wodehouse and George and Ira Gershwin, including *Oh, Lady! Lady!*, *Oh, Boy!*, *Oh, Kay!*, and *Anything Goes*. The American Play Company records on Guy Bolton date from 1911 to 1965 and contain correspondence, contracts, financial statements, and other legal papers that document the negotiation process and royalty agreements made for Bolton's compositions represented through the American Play Company.

**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:** The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Theatre Division at [theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org).

**Preferred citation:** American Play Company records on Guy Bolton, \*T-Mss 2013-108. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Weatherly Stephan, 2015 This collection was previously known as the Guy Bolton papers and cataloged under the classmarks 8-MWEZ + n.c. 21,392 and 8-MWEZ + n.c. 21,393. During cataloging, the negotiations files were alphabetized, and correspondence and financial statements were arranged in partial chronological order. The current arrangement of the collection reflects this organization.

**Related Materials:**

American Play Company records, \*T-Mss 1966-002. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Creator History**

Guy Bolton (1884-1979) was a British-American playwright, librettist, and novelist. He wrote more than 50 plays and musicals, many of which were collaborations with P.G. Wodehouse and George and Ira Gershwin, including *Oh, Lady! Lady!*, *Oh, Boy! Oh, Kay!*, and *Anything Goes*. The American Play Company was a New York City-based agency that negotiated theatrical and film licensing for author and other rights holders from the 1890s through the 1960s. John Rumsey, and later Sheldon Abend, were Bolton's primary agents at the American Play Company.

**Custodial History**

Prior to the Library's acquisition, the records were held by Sheldon Abend of the American Play Company.

**Scope and Content Note**

The American Play Company records on Guy Bolton date from 1911 to 1965 and contain correspondence, contracts, and other legal papers that document the negotiation processes and royalty agreements made for Bolton's compositions represented through the American Play Company. Correspondence is between Bolton and agents John Rumsey and Sheldon Abend, and discusses ongoing business with Bolton's properties. Financial statements list royalty payments made to Bolton. The bulk of the collection is arranged under negotiation files, with contracts, legal documents, and correspondence filed alphabetically by show, song, or production company title. Lists and a card index of Bolton's properties represented by American Play Company, which were used as internal reference documents, precede the alphabetical negotiation files. Separate files for Bolton's contract with Metro Goldwyn Mayer and the shows *R. A. F.* and *Theatre* follow.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged alphabetically by file type.

**Key Terms****Subjects**

American drama -- 20th century  
Dramatists, American  
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York  
Theater -- Production and direction  
Theatrical agents -- New York (State) -- New York

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Contracts  
Financial statements

**Names**

Abend, Sheldon, 1929-2003

Rumsey, John (Henry St. John)

American Play Company

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence 1939-1965  
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21,392
- b. 1 f. 2 Financial Statements 1939-1961  
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21,392
- Negotiation Files  
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21,392 and 8-MWEZ + n.c. 21,393
- b. 1 f. 3 Lists of Titles and Contracts 1940s-1950s
- b. 1 f. 4-5 Alphabetical--A - O 1911-1950s
- b. 2 f. 1-2 Alphabetical--P - Z 1911-1950s
- b. 2 f. 3 Metro Goldwyn Mayer 1936
- b. 2 f. 4 *R. A. F.* 1941
- b. 2 f. 5 *Theatre* 1942-1947