

## Inventory of the Edward Harrigan Papers, 1871-1984

\*T-Mss 1941-003

Billy Rose Theatre Division



The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

New York, New York

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## Descriptive Summary

Title: Edward Harrigan Papers, 1871-1984.

Collection ID: \*T-Mss 1941-003

Creator: Edward Harrigan .

Extent: 7 boxes and 3 vols.

Repository: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.  
Billy Rose Theatre Division.

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## Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited.

Preferred Citation: Edward Harrigan Papers, \*T-Mss 1941-003, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

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## Biographical Note

Born in New York City, the grandson of Irish immigrants, and originally apprenticed in the shipbuilding trade like his father, William, Edward (Ned) Harrigan ran away from home and made his theatrical debut in San Francisco's burgeoning variety theaters in 1867. His early partners were Alexander O'Brien, then Sam Rickey. The latter partnership was a success with a sketch called *The Little Fraud*, but Rickey's drinking problems led to the act being disbanded.

In 1871 Harrigan met Tony Hart in Chicago and they first appeared together in a sketch called *The Big and Little of It*. Together they were one of vaudeville's most popular attractions. Harrigan wrote sketches and song lyrics, Dave Braham, who became his father-in-law, wrote the music, and Hart, apparently an amazingly convincing female impersonator with a beautiful singing voice, played the wife, son or black maid to Harrigan's fatherly figure. Soon Harrigan expanded his sketches to full-length musicals. In 1879, *The Mulligan Guards' Ball*, the first of Harrigan's *Mulligan Guard* series, a spoof of the then popular paramilitary groups and a major hit, was produced. Harrigan played Dan Mulligan and Hart was his wife. Other plays included *The Major*, *Squatter Sovereignty*, *Cordelia's Aspirations*, *Dan's Tribulations*, *The Leather Patch* and *Old*

*Lavender*. Harrigan and Hart played at the Theatre Comique on Broadway near Spring Street in New York City under the management of Martin Hanley. They had great success and opened a New Theatre Comique a bit further up Broadway in 1881, but a fire destroyed the building in 1884. They moved to the Park Theatre, later known as the Herald Square, but due to lingering bad feelings stemming from the fire, their partnership ended in 1885.

Harrigan continued at the Park Theatre until 1890 when he opened a new theater on 35th Street that he named for himself. His first production there, in which he played the title role, and his last real success, was *Reilly and the Four Hundred*. In later years Harrigan appeared in revivals of his plays, acted intermittently in plays written by others and leased his own theater that later became the Garrick Theatre.

Harrigan died of heart failure on June 6, 1911, leaving a widow, Annie Harrigan, and six children, two of whom, William and Nedda, also went on the stage. At the time of his death he believed himself forgotten by the public, but the outpouring of remembrances in the press belied this. His songs had been among the most popular of his era with hits such as *The Mulligan Guard March*, *The Babies on Our Block*, and *Maggie Murphy's Home*. His plays, presenting urban working class life in relatively realistic if comic terms, were one of the first attempts of American musical theater to identify with everyday life and indigenous themes.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers document the life and career of actor, playwright, lyricist and producer Edward Harrigan with correspondence, scripts, songs, articles, programs and clippings. Highlights include extensive correspondence with his wife when he was touring with Tony Hart in the 1870s, photocopies of two handwritten scripts: *Dan's Tribulations* and *Squatter Sovereignty*, bound volumes of his songs, and illustrated sheet music covers. While Harrigan's caricatures of various ethnic groups, primarily Irish and German immigrants and African Americans, seems dated today, in his lifetime he enjoyed tremendous popularity and respect. His work, innovative both in its subject matter, tenement life, and in its realism, reflects the social life and sensibilities of his times.

## Organization

- Series I. Correspondence
- Series II. Family Papers
- Series III. Scripts
- Series IV. Other writings by Harrigan
- Series V. Songs
- Series VI. Articles about Harrigan
- Series VII. Programs and other printed material
- Series VIII. Clippings

## Series Descriptions and Container Listing

### Series I. Correspondence, 1875-1954

16 folders

Almost entirely family correspondence, the jewel of this series is the extensive correspondence between Edward and Annie Harrigan while he was on tour. The largest portion was written between 1875 and 1877 and the progression of their relationship is reflected in his salutations beginning with "My dear Annie," then "My darling Annie," and finally "My darling wife." Annie Braham and Edward Harrigan were married on November 18, 1876.

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence / Edward Harrigan, 1875-1902  
1 folder  
Letters [1875-1902, bulk 1875-1877] by Edward Harrigan to his wife Annie while he was on the road.
- b. 1 f. 2 Correspondence / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Letters [undated] by Edward Harrigan to his wife Annie while he was on the road.
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence / Edward Harrigan, ca. 1880-1899  
1 folder  
Letters by Edward Harrigan to his mother.
- b. 1 f. 4 Correspondence / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Letters [n.d.] by Edward Harrigan to his son.
- b. 1 f. 5 Correspondence / Annie Harrigan, 1881-1883  
1 folder  
Letters [1881-1883 and n.d.] by Annie Harrigan to her husband Edward (Ned) Harrigan.
- b. 1 f. 6 Correspondence / Annie Harrigan, 1883-1911  
1 folder  
Letters [1883 and 1911] by Annie Harrigan are on business and personal matters.
- b. 1 f. 7 Correspondence / Harrigan family, 1871-1884  
1 folder  
Letters [1871-1884 and n.d.] to Edward Harrigan from his parents.
- b. 1 f. 8 General correspondence, 1879-1902  
1 folder

Letters [1879-1902 and n.d.] received by Edward Harrigan are mostly on professional matters.

- b. 1 f. 9            General correspondence, 1901  
1 folder  
Personal letter addressed to Ned and Annie.
- b. 1 f. 10          General correspondence, 1883-1915  
1 folder  
Letters [1883-1915 and n.d.] to Annie Harrigan are on personal, family and business matters.
- b. 1 f. 11          Correspondence / Braham family  
1 folder  
Letters [undated] to Annie Harrigan from her mother, Annie Braham.
- b. 1 f. 12          Correspondence / Braham family, 1880  
1 folder  
Letter to David Braham from his father.
- b. 1 f. 13          General correspondence, 1876  
1 folder  
Letter to Dave Braham on professional matters.
- b. 1 f. 14          Business correspondence re Harrigan and Hart, 1883-1887  
1 folder  
Miscellaneous letters pertaining to business matters of Harrigan and Hart.
- b. 1 f. 15          Correspondence / Anthony Hart Harrigan, 1923-1927  
1 folder  
Correspondence of Anthony Harrigan, a son of Edward and Annie Harrigan, mostly letters to Albert Davis concerning Harrigan and Hart pictures.
- b. 1 f. 16          Third party correspondence, 1923-1954  
1 folder  
Miscellaneous personal correspondence.

## **Series II. Family Papers**

1 folder (1 notebook)

Consists of a notebook belonging to Annie Harrigan containing accounts and French lessons.

- b. 1 f. 17            Notebook / Annie Harrigan

1 folder

Notebook [n.d.] which belonged to Annie Harrigan contains accounts and French lessons.

### **Series III. Scripts**

18 folders

Alphabetical

Mostly clean photocopies, both typescript and handwritten, are for *Cordelia's Aspirations*, *Dan's Tribulations*, *The Mulligan Guard Nominee*, *Mulligan Guard's Ball*, *Squatter Sovereignty*, and *Telephone*. Also contains synopses for *The Leather Patch* and *Old Lavender*.

- b. 1 f. 18                    *Cordelia's aspirations* / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Carbon typescript [n.d.] with some pencil marks is for the play *Cordelia's Aspirations*. Includes property and gas plots.
- b. 1 f. 19-21                    *Cordelia's aspirations* / Edward Harrigan  
3 folders  
Photocopied typescript [n.d.] in 3 Acts and 3 folders is of the play *Cordelia's Aspirations*. Includes costume, property and gas plots.
- b. 1 f. 22-24                    *Dan's tribulations* / Edward Harrigan  
3 folders  
Photocopy of handwritten script [n.d.], 3 acts in 3 folders, is for Harrigan's play, *Dan's Tribulations*.
- b. 1 f. 25                      *The leather patch* / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Typescript synopsis [n.d.] of Harrigan's play, *The Leather Patch*.
- b. 1 f. 26                      *The Mulligan Guard nominee* / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Carbon typescript [n.d.] with some pencil marks is for Harrigan's play, *The Mulligan Guard Nominee*.
- b. 2 f. 1-3                      *Mulligan guard's ball* / Edward Harrigan  
3 folders  
Photocopied typescript [n.d.], 3 Acts in 3 folders, is for Harrigan's play, *The Mulligan Guard's Ball*.
- b. 2 f. 4                        *Old lavender* / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Typescript synopsis [n.d.] for Harrigan's play, *Old Lavender*.
- b. 2 f. 5-7                      *Squatter sovereignty* / Edward Harrigan

3 folders

Negative photocopy of handwritten script [n.d.], with some revisions, is for Harrigan's play, *Squatter Sovereignty*. The play is in 3 acts and 3 folders.

b. 2 f. 8

*Squatter sovereignty* / Edward Harrigan

1 folder

Carbon typescript [n.d.] for Harrigan's play, *Squatter Sovereignty*.

b. 2 f. 9

*The telephone: a farce* / Edward Harrigan

1 folder

Negative photocopy [n.d.] of Harrigan's handwritten script for a scene called *The Telephone*.

#### **Series IV. Other writings by Harrigan**

4 folders

Consists of a photocopy of his novel, *The Mulligans*, published by G.W. Dillingham Company in 1901 and dedicated to the memory of Tony Hart, a couple of autobiographical articles and a handwritten pamphlet on celebrities, probably by Harrigan.

b. 2 f. 10-  
11

*The Mulligans* / Edward Harrigan, 1901

2 folders

Photocopy [1901], 451 p. in 2 folders, of Harrigan's published novel, *The Mulligans*.

b. 2 f. 12

Miscellaneous writings / Edward Harrigan

1 folder

Handwritten pamphlet [n.d.], *Behind the Curtain, or Peeps into the Real and Unreal Lives of our Prominent Celebrities* was probably written by Edward Harrigan.

b. 2 f. 13

Miscellaneous writings / Edward Harrigan

1 folder

Negative photocopies [n.d.] of autobiographical articles by Edward Harrigan including  *Holding the Mirror Up to Nature* from Pearson's Magazine.

#### **Series V. Songs, 1873-1903**

3 volumes, 2 boxes and 3 folders

The bound volumes, probably prepared by Harrigan's daughter Nedda, contain songs by Harrigan and Braham arranged alphabetically by title (with a few filing discrepancies). The boxes contain loose copies of what is in the volumes. The series also includes sheet music covers, a list of song titles and a notebook of handwritten song lyrics by

## Harrigan.

- b. 2 f. 14 List of song titles / Harrigan and Hart  
1 folder  
Two alphabetical lists of titles [n.d., incomplete] of the songs of Harrigan and Hart.
- b. 2 f. 15 Lyrics / Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
A notebook [n.d.] and one loose sheet of handwritten song lyrics by Harrigan.
- b. 3 f. 1-12 Songs / David Braham.  
1 box containing 12 folders  
Photocopied sheet music [n.d.] for songs with lyrics by Edward Harrigan and music by Dave Braham is arranged alphabetically by title.
- b. 4 f. 1 Songs / David Braham, 1873-1880  
1 folder  
Original sheet music for songs by Edward Harrigan with music by Dave Braham, many with illustrated covers.
- b. 4 f. 2 Songs / David Braham  
1 folder  
Sheet music fragments.
- b. 4 f. 3 Sheet music covers / Harrigan and Hart  
1 folder  
Photocopies of illustrated sheet music covers for three songs by Harrigan and Hart.
- b. 4 f. 4 *Polly McGilligan's band* / Harry Dacre, 1893  
1 folder  
Sheet music for a song dedicated to Edward Harrigan.
- b. 4 f. 5-11 Songs / David Braham, 1873-1903  
7 folders  
Loose sheet music [some undated] for songs with lyrics by Edward Harrigan and music by Dave Braham which was filmed to create the two bound volumes, "Songs by Harrigan and Braham" and follows the numerical order of the volumes, also in this collection. The arrangement is alphabetical by title with a few differences of opinion on filing and a few pages missing. Unlike the bound volumes, some sheet music covers are included here.
- b. 5 f. 1-10 Songs / David Braham, 1873-1903

10 folders

Loose sheet music [some undated] for songs with lyrics by Edward Harrigan and music by Dave Braham which was filmed to create the two bound volumes, "Songs by Harrigan and Braham" and follows the numerical order of the volumes, also in this collection. The arrangement is alphabetical by title with a few differences of opinion on filing and a few pages missing. Unlike the bound volumes, some sheet music covers are included here.

- b. 6                    Songs / David Braham, 1876-1903  
1 volume  
A bound volume entitled "Songs by Harrigan and Braham"  
Volume I contains a collection of sheet music [also undated] arranged alphabetically by title (A-Mc), with a few filing oddities. These are the same songs in the same order as the loose sheets of Box 4-5. The volume belonged to Nedda Harrigan Logan (Mrs. Joshua), a daughter of Edward Harrigan and a granddaughter of Dave Braham.
- b. 7                    Songs / David Braham, 1876-1903  
1 volume  
A bound volume entitled "Songs by Harrigan and Braham"  
Volume II contains a collection of sheet music [also undated] arranged alphabetically by title (Mi-W), with a few filing oddities. These are the same songs in the same order as the loose sheets of Box 4-5. The volume belonged to Nedda Harrigan Logan (Mrs. Joshua), a daughter of Edward Harrigan and a granddaughter of Dave Braham.
- b. 8                    Songs / David Braham, 1874-1887  
1 volume  
One bound volume (in poor condition) entitled "Songs by Edward Harrigan and Dave Braham" contains sheet music [also undated], in no discernible order. In some cases, only the illustrated covers are here. The volume belonged to Nedda Harrigan Connolly (Logan), a daughter of Edward Harrigan and a granddaughter of Dave Braham.

## **Series VI. Articles about Harrigan, 1883-1984**

7 folders

Consists of critical analyses of Harrigan's playwriting, including a thesis (1984) on Harrigan's comedy, part of a book-length biography of Harrigan and various magazine articles.

- b. 9    f. 1-2                    *A critical analysis of Edward Harrigan's comedy* / Alicia Kae

- Koger, 1984  
2 folders  
A photocopy of a Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1984. Pages are numbered to 421, though there are gaps, the footnotes were not copied. In 2 folders.
- b. 9 f. 3      *H A double R I G A N spells Harrigan* / Richard Moody  
1 folder  
Photocopy (n.d., incomplete: 116 pages of 346 page text) of a biography of Edward Harrigan.
- b. 9 f. 4      Biographical material on Edward Harrigan  
1 folder  
Miscellaneous, unsigned biographical material [n.d.] on Edward Harrigan.
- b. 9 f. 5      Magazine articles on Edward Harrigan, 1883-1930  
1 folder
- b. 9 f. 6      Articles on Edward Harrigan's *Mulligan Guard* series  
1 folder  
Articles and partial articles on Harrigan's plays in the *Mulligan Guard* series.
- b. 9 f. 7      Article on Tony Hart, 1955  
1 folder  
Transcription of an article about Tony Hart from the Worcester, MA, Gazette.

**Series VII. Programs and other printed material, 1874-1917**

- 3 folders and 1 oversized box  
Contains programs, advertising, printed ephemera, and visual materials, mostly photographs from newspapers and magazines.
- b. 9 f. 8      Programs and other printed material, 1876-1917  
1 folder  
Programs and printed ephemera [also undated] are primarily for Harrigan and Hart productions.
- b. 9 f. 9      Programs / Edward Harrigan, 1878-1895  
1 folder  
Photocopied programs [also undated] are for productions written by and often starring Edward Harrigan and usually performed at his theater.
- b. 9 f. 10      Visual materials

1 folder

Drawings and photographs mainly of Edward Harrigan and his colleagues in various roles, or of his theater, are primarily taken from newspapers and magazines.

b. 10

Programs and other printed material, 1874-1891

1 map box, oversized

Rolled programs and printed advertising [also undated] are primarily for Harrigan and Hart productions. Originals belong to the Free Library of Philadelphia.

### **Series VIII. Clippings, 1874-1942**

13 folders

Clippings, now photocopied, are on Edward Harrigan's life and career. Includes a few scrapbooks; one was a memorial scrapbook. Also contains a few clippings on his colleagues, Johnny Wild and David Braham, and on his family members, mostly his actor children, William and Nedda.

b. 9 f. 11

Clippings / Edward Harrigan, 1874-1893

1 folder

Clippings, now photocopied, on Harrigan's career were pasted onto sheets in what was once probably a scrapbook.

b. 9 f. 12

Clippings / Edward Harrigan, 1894

1 folder

Clippings, now photocopied, on Harrigan's career were pasted onto sheets in what was once probably a scrapbook.

b. 9 f. 13

*Old lavender* / Edward Harrigan, 1885

1 folder

Photocopied clippings [1885 and n.d.] are on Edward Harrigan's play, *Old Lavender*.

b. 9 f. 14

*Notoriety* / Edward Harrigan

1 folder

Photocopied clippings [n.d.] are on Edward Harrigan's play, *Notoriety*.

b. 9 f. 15

Clippings / Edward Harrigan, 1900-1903

1 folder

Photocopied clippings and fragments [1900-1903, but mostly n.d.] are on the career of Edward Harrigan.

b. 9 f. 16

Clippings / Edward Harrigan, 1911

1 folder

"In Memoriam Edward Harrigan: Newspaper Tributes to the Memory of Edward Harrigan," [1911], a scrapbook, now photocopied.

- b. 9 f. 17      Clippings / Edward Harrigan, 1911  
1 folder  
Obituaries, now photocopied, on the death of Edward Harrigan, June 6, 1911.
- b. 9 f. 18      Clippings / Edward Harrigan, 1915-1942  
1 folder  
Posthumous clippings [1915-1942 and n.d.], now photocopied, on Edward Harrigan.
- b. 9 f. 19      Clippings / Johnny Wild, 1898  
1 folder  
Photocopied clippings on the death of Johnny Wild, a comedian in Edward Harrigan's company.
- b. 9 f. 20      Clippings / David Braham, 1904-1923  
1 folder  
Photocopied clippings are on David Braham, the musician who composed the music for Edward Harrigan's songs.
- b. 9 f. 21      Clippings / Nedda Harrigan Logan, 1939-1942  
1 folder  
Photocopied clippings [1939-1942 and n.d.] are on the career of actress Nedda Harrigan, a daughter of Edward Harrigan.
- b. 9 f. 22      Clippings / William Harrigan, 1916-1941  
1 folder  
Photocopied clippings [1916-1941 and n.d.] are on the career of actor William Harrigan, a son of Edward Harrigan.
- b. 9 f. 23      Clippings / Harrigan family, 1918-1944  
1 folder  
Photocopied clippings [1918-1944 and n.d.], mostly non-theatrical, are on Harrigan family members.

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### **Separated Material**

See also the following collection of materials: Edward Harrigan Papers, c. 1870-1908

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