



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Forrest Bonshire photographs

1930s-2012

*MGZEB 21-0013

Processed by Nathan Evans in 2021.

Summary

Creator: Bonshire, Forrest

Title: Forrest Bonshire photographs

Date: 1930s-2012

Size: .42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Donated by John E. Remsen in 2013.

Abstract: Forrest Bonshire (1926-2012) was an American dancer and choreographer. The Forrest Bonshire photographs, dating from the 1930s to 2012, primarily document his dancing career with photographs, programs, letters, telegrams, clippings, contracts, and a scrapbook.

Preferred citation: Forrest Bonshire photographs, *MGZEB 21-0013. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Nathan Evans in 2021.

Creator History

Forrest Bonshire was an American dancer and choreographer. Born in 1926 in Muncie, Indiana, Bonshire studied with the Littlefield Ballet Company before performing, mostly in Broadway musicals and nightclubs, from 1943 to 1961. His Broadway credits include *Something for the Boys*, *Love Life*, *Look Ma, I'm Dancin'!*, and the original production of *Guys and Dolls*. In 1945, Bonshire toured with the United Service Organizations, performing for United States Armed Forces members in the Philippines. He also danced in a series of cabaret shows at the Lido de Paris in 1947 and accompanied singer Judy Johnson (born Betty Bonney) on a 1953 nightclub tour as Judy Johnson and Her Dates. A driving accident in 1961 ended Bonshire's dancing career, though he continued to be involved in the dance community, notably as president and resident choreographer of the Brookhaven Theatre Dance Guild from 1981 to the mid-1990s. Bonshire died in 2012 in Setauket, New York.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from the 1930s to 2012 and primarily documents Forrest Bonshire's dancing career with photographs, programs, letters, telegrams, clippings, contracts, and a scrapbook. Photographs make up the majority of the collection. It is grouped by Dancing; Brookhaven Theatre Dance Guild; Personal and Portraits; and Scrapbook.

The Dancing group covers Bonshire's career from the 1930s to 1957. There are several photographs of Bonshire dancing as a teenager in Muncie and with the Littlefield Ballet Company. Performance shots of Broadway musicals, such as *Look Ma, I'm Dancin'!* and *Love Life*, and his United Service Organizations (USO) tour are included. There are also performance and promotional photographs of Bonshire's tenure at the Lido de Paris and with Judy Johnson and Her Dates. Additionally, the Dancing group contains programs for the 1948 Tony Awards and 1950 *Guys and Dolls* production, telegrams to Bonshire mainly concerning *Love Life*, and a 1946 contract for *Billion Dollar Baby*. Letters, contracts, and passes for his USO tour accompany the photographs.

Brookhaven Theatre Dance Guild photographs depict rehearsals from the 1980s, as well as a 2008 tribute event for Bonshire.

The Personal and Portraits group contains headshots of Bonshire from the 1940s and photographs of him with friends and colleagues throughout his life. There are also portraits of other people, notably dancer Marilyn Mosier and Bonshire's first dance teacher, Marjorie Jeanne Burgauer. Some of these photographs are inscribed to Bonshire.

The Scrapbook mostly includes photographs of Bonshire performing, especially in Broadway productions.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by Dancing; Brookhaven Theatre Dance Guild; Personal and Portraits; and Scrapbook.

Key Terms

Subjects

Choreographers -- United States
Dancers -- United States

Occupations

Dancers.

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs
Theater programs

Names

Bonney, Betty
Bonshire, Forrest
Brookhaven Theatre Dance Guild
Lido (Cabaret : Paris, France)
United Service Organizations (U.S.)

Container List

Dancing

- b. 1 f. 1 Early Years 1930s-1942
- b. 1 f. 2-3 Broadway 1943-1957
- b. 1 f. 4-6 United Service Organizations 1945
- b. 1 f. 7-8 Nightclubs 1947-1953
- b. 1 f. 9 Brookhaven Theatre Dance Guild 1980s-2008

Personal and Portraits

- b. 1 f. 10-11 Bonshire 1940s-2000s
- b. 1 f. 12 Others 1930s-1970s
- b. 1 f. 13 Scrapbook 1930s-2012