



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers, Additions

1909-1985

*T-Mss 1986-014

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Summary

Creator: Lindsay, Howard, 1889-1968

Title: Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers, Additions

Date: 1909-1985

Size: 3.31 linear feet (9 boxes)

Source: Donated by Peggy Egbers, 1998

Abstract: The Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers, Additions date from 1909 to 1985 and document the careers of American actress and writer Dorothy Stickney (1896-1998) and her husband, actor, playwright, and producer Howard Lindsay (1889-1968). The collection holds photographs, scripts, writings, scrapbooks, articles, and programs.

Conditions Governing Access:

Inquiries regarding audiovisual materials in the collection may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Audiovisual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Conditions Governing Use: The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Theatre Division at theatrediv@nypl.org.

Preferred citation: Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers, Additions, *T-Mss 1986-014. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014 Original order was maintained. One scrapbook was disassembled and the pages placed into folders.

Related Materials:

Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers and scrapbooks, 8-MWEZ 27,702-27,724.. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator History

Dorothy Stickney (1896-1998) was an American actress and writer. She studied theater at the Western Dramatic School in Minneapolis, Minnesota before beginning her career in vaudeville and summer stock companies. Stickney made her Broadway debut in *The Squall* in 1926. One year later she married actor, playwright, and producer Howard Lindsay. Together they starred in *Life with Father* (1939), for which Stickney received the 1940 Barter Award for Best Performance. The couple also starred in the show's sequel, *Life with Mother* (1948). Stickney wrote and acted in *A Lovely Light* (1960), a dramatization of the poetry and letters of Edna St. Vincent Millay, which toured for nine years after its initial Broadway debut. Other productions she acted in included *Chicago* (1926), *Another Language* (1932), *To Be Continued* (1952), and *The Honeys* (1955). Her last role on Broadway, as Bertha in *Pippin*, was in 1973. In 1979 she published her memoir, *Openings and Closings*.

Howard Lindsay (1889-1968) was an American actor, playwright, and producer. Following his graduation from Boston Latin School in 1907, he attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts for six months and in 1909 began traveling with the road show *Polly of the Circus*. Lindsay made his Broadway acting debut in *Billeted* in 1917, and began directing shortly thereafter. He started writing for theater in 1927 with Bertrand Robinson before he met and began collaborating with Russell Crouse in 1933. Together they wrote and produced several successful original Broadway comedies and musicals including *Anything Goes* (1934), *Life with Father* (1939), and *The Sound of Music* (1959). Lindsay and Crouse were awarded the 1946 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *State of the Union* (1945), and later won the Tony Award for Best Musical for *The Sound of Music*. Howard Lindsay was president of The Players (or, The Players Club) and The Dramatists Play Service. He held both positions, as well as that of vice president of The Dramatists Guild, until the mid-1960s.

Howard Lindsay died in 1968. Dorothy Stickney died in 1998.

Scope and Content Note

The Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers, Additions date from 1909 to 1985 and document their individual and combined theater and writing careers through photographs, scripts, writings, scrapbooks, articles, and programs. The collection is arranged into three series: Dorothy Stickney, Howard Lindsay, and Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay.

The bulk of Dorothy Stickney's career, from her college studies until her final Broadway performance in *Pippin* (1972-1973), is documented in Series I. Series II highlights Lindsay's essay and play writing and his involvement with The Players Club and The Dramatists Play Service. Series III documents the intersection of their careers, specifically the productions *Life with Father* and *Life with Mother*.

Arrangement: The Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay papers, Additions are arranged into the following series: Series I: Dorothy Stickney Series II: Howard Lindsay Series III: Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Playwrights

Subjects

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Names

Stickney, Dorothy

Container List

Series I: Dorothy Stickney 1910-1985 (3.5 boxes)

This series contains biographies, writings, scripts, photographs, programs, articles, and scrapbooks relating to the career of Dorothy Stickney.

Biographies are for articles and press releases. Writings by Stickney are unpublished essays detailing her childhood, early career, and her relationship with Howard Lindsay. Scripts are present for *Pippin* and *A Lovely Light*, the latter of which is annotated with lighting and sound cues, a stage plan, and stage requirements, and accompanied by correspondence with the University of Richmond regarding the staging of the show there in 1969. The script for *Pippin* is a clean production version with two different programs. Photographs span Stickney's entire career and consist of portraits, headshots, and a photograph album containing pictures of her on stage and with friends. Programs are for productions she acted in, such as *To Be Continued* (1952), *The Honeys* (1955), and *The Mundy Scheme* (1969). Articles consist primarily of reviews of Stickney's performances.

There are two scrapbooks in this series. One was compiled by colleague and friend Gene Fuller and holds reviews, quotes, and photographs relating to *Life with Father*. The other scrapbook contains clippings, photographs, and programs for early productions Stickney acted in at drama school and after graduation, including *Southern Belles*, *Yoto*, and *The Nervous Wreck*. Some loose material from this scrapbook was placed into folders.

- b. 1 f. 1-4 Biographical Material 1924-1985
- b. 1 f. 5 Writings 1950s
- b. 1 f. 6-9 Scripts 1960-1973
- Photographs
- b. 7 f. 1-2 1910-1940
- b. 1 f. 10-12 1910-1978
- b. 2 f. 1-3 1968-1973
- b. 2 f. 4-5 Programs 1932-1979
- b. 2 f. 6 Articles 1947-1973
- Scrapbooks
- b. 2 f. 7 Gene Fuller 1947-1985
- b. 8 f. 1-4 Early Work 1916-1929
- b. 6 f. 4-5 Loose Material 1916-1929

Series II: Howard Lindsay 1909-1968 (2 boxes)

This series holds Howard Lindsay's scripts and writings dating from 1938 to 1967, photographs, and correspondence and administrative documents relating to his involvement with The Players Club, The Dramatists Guild, and The Dramatists Play Service.

Scripts include *A Slight Case of Murder* (1935) and *Who Sups with the Devil* (1938), as well as a script for a *Player's Club Pipe Night* honoring James Thurber. *Who Sups with the Devil* was originally written by Canadian fiction writer Hulbert Footner under the title *Publicity - A Comedy of Crime*; the title was changed by Baltimore's *The Vagabond Players* upon their production of the work. In 1938, Footner optioned the work to Lindsay, though the production was never staged. Annotated drafts of acts and scenes for the play are present in addition to a clean, typewritten version. The *Pipe Night* script is accompanied by correspondence with the show's producers, Leland Hayward, Haila Stoddard, and Marshall Jamison, regarding their contribution of the show's profits for the Walter Hampden Library. Writings consist of essays and articles. The articles are chiefly for *The Saturday Review* and date from 1962 to 1967. They include published articles and typewritten drafts that cover theater events and stories about actors, directors, and plays. Pamphlets written by Lindsay when he was president of the Dramatists Play Service include *How to Start a Theatre* and *Some Things You Didn't Know About the Dramatists Play Service until Now*. Also present is speech entitled "A Talk on Playwriting" (1942).

Photographs of Lindsay are portraits, production photographs, and casual shots of social events with Russell Crouse and other colleagues. A photograph from 1909 of Lindsay dressed for his role as Doctor Hartley in *Polly of the Circus* is present. Material concerning Lindsay's presidency of The Dramatists Play Service and his vice presidency of The Dramatists Guild consists of letters of recognition and event announcements. Lindsay's longtime commitment to and presidency of The Players Club is represented through a program acknowledging his resignation, letters of recognition, and a limited amount of correspondence.

Scripts

- b. 2 f. 8 1935
- b. 3 f. 1-6 1938-1962

Writings

- b. 3 f. 7 1942-1968
- b. 4 f. 1-2 1947-1967
- b. 4 f. 3 The Players Club 1962
- b. 4 f. 4 Dramatists Play Service and the Dramatists Guild 1942-1968
- b. 4 f. 5 Photographs 1909-1968

Series III: Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay 1926-1985 (3.5 boxes)

Material concerning Stickney and Lindsay's professional relationship consists of photographs, acting and playwriting notes, and a scrapbook. Photographs chiefly document *Life with Father* and *Life with Mother* through production stills, images of the cast and crew, candid backstage photographs, publicity shots, and portraits of Stickney and Lindsay. The photographs document several different productions throughout the shows' runs, including the 1967 revival of *Life with Father*, co-starring Leon Ames in place of Lindsay. Acting notecards consist of typewritten quotes, acting cues, and small narratives on playwriting and acting.

The scrapbook, titled *The Empire Theatre: 1893-1953*, contains photographs of Stickney and Lindsay; reviews and programs for *Life with Father* and *Life with Mother*; photographs of the theater's interior and exterior; the theater's 60th anniversary program; a fifty year chronology of the theater; and articles regarding the theater's closing in 1953. Some loose material from the scrapbook was placed into a folder.

The collection holds three recordings. Inquiries regarding audiovisual materials in the collection may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Audiovisual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

- b. 4 f. 6 Programs 1939-1956
- b. 4 f. 7 Biographical Material 1942-1985
- Photographs
- b. 4 f. 8-10 1926-1960

Series III: Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay (cont.)

Photographs (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 3 1939-1943
- b. 5 f. 1-7 1939-1967

Notes

- b. 5 f. 8 1940s
- b. 6 f. 1-2 1940s
- b. 9 **Empire Theatre Scrapbook 1939-1970**
Refers to the Empire Theatre formerly on Broadway in New York City.
- b. 6 f. 3 **Loose Material 1943-1970**