



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Rowley family ephemera**

ca. 1870-1953

\*T-Mss 1997-039

Compiled by cdee, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Rowley family

**Title:** Rowley family ephemera

**Date:** ca. 1870-1953

**Size:** .3 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Gift of Margaret Rowley, 1997

**Abstract:** The collection consists of scrapbook pages of clippings, photographs, and programs documenting the careers of the Rowley theatrical family, especially that of actor Edward M. Rowley.

**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:** Rowley family ephemera, \*T-Mss 1997-039. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by cdee, 2015

## Creator History

The Rowley Brothers, Ed and Fred, began working in the theater in the 1870s. The two brothers married the two Gay Sisters, also performers under that name. Nina Gay and Ed Rowley performed in vaudeville as Rowley and Gay, working from the Keith Orpheum Circuit to Captain French's *Sensation*, the showboat that inspired the musical *Show Boat* by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. Their son, Edward M. (a.k.a. Bud and Buddy) Rowley, joined his parents' act at age three and was known as Little Buddy. He continued to act in the theater for his entire career, appearing on Broadway in the play *Round Trip* (1945). During the Depression, the family ran a traveling tent show in the Midwest. Edward M. Rowley died in Florida in 1996.

An unidentified and undated clipping indicates the marriage of "Bud Miller" to "Patricia Bryant" of the Buddy Players. There is also a clipping about "Marguerite Bryant." The relationship of these names to Edward M. Rowley and his wife, Margaret Rowley, is unclear.

## Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of pages from several scrapbooks containing clippings, photographs and programs documenting the careers of the Rowley theatrical family, from approximately the 1870s to 1953. Most of the material covers actor Edward M. ("Bud") Rowley (1911-1996), but a number of items relate to his parents—performers Ed Rowley and Nina Gay. There is also a red wool tam-o-shanter hat worn by Ed Rowley Sr. in the Scotch act for the Orpheum Circuit in 1914. Some family photographs are also included, as well as several color and ink cartoons, signed "By Bud," "E.M. Rowley," and "Rowley," possibly by the younger Edward Rowley. Two copies of a typed script, *Perfect Tribute* (1953), and a handwritten sheet of jokes are also included.

Of note are two postcards signed by George M. Cohan, as well as snapshots, publicity material and a radio script about the Buddy Players, a traveling tent show in the Midwest during the Depression, run by the Rowleys.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Actors -- United States

Tent shows

Vaudeville

### Occupations

Actors and actresses

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings

Photographs

Radio scripts

Scrapbooks

Scripts

### Names

Rowley, Edward M., 1911-1997

Buddy Players