



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Richard Beckhard papers**

1937-1990 [bulk 1937-1947]

\*T-Mss 2002-011

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** Beckhard, Richard, 1918-1999

**Title:** Richard Beckhard papers

**Date:** 1937-1990 [bulk 1937-1947]

**Size:** 1.2 linear feet (4 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Donated by Sandra Barty, 2002.

**Abstract:** Richard Beckhard (1918-2000) was a theatrical stage manager and actor who worked on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and in regional theaters. The collection, dating 1937 to 1990, consists mostly of material documenting Richard Beckhard's work as a stage manager and holds scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, photographs, and printed matter.

**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>

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

## Creator History

Richard "Dick" Beckhard (1918- 2000) was a stage manager born in New York City, the son of Bruno and Isabel Beckhard. As a teenager, he managed a Highland, New York theatrical group. He worked as an assistant stage manager, director, and actor at Pomona College from 1936 to 1939.

Following graduation from Pomona College, Beckhard found success with uncle, Arthur J. Beckhard's production of *The Male Animal*. This show held performances throughout the United States, from 1939 to 1942 and starred Mary Astor and Elliott Nugent. The production eventually made its way to Broadway. Richard Beckhard held dual positions as the stage manager and in the feature role of Nutsy Miller. In 1942, a feature film inspired by the play starred Henry Fonda, Olivia de Havilland and Joan Leslie.

Beckhard's theatrical career was interrupted by WWII. Photographic evidence in the collection indicates that Beckhard joined the American Red Cross and was stationed in New Guinea, from 1943 to 1944, near Camp Sentani, the U.S. Navy Rest Camp.

Beckhard resumed his career after the war. He worked as an assistant stage manager with uncle Arthur J. Beckhard (1899-1961), a managing producer. Joint productions included *Woman Bites Dog* at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey, and productions at the Tanglewood Theatre and Martha's Vineyard Playhouse.

In 1950, his theatrical manager expertise was sought by members of the National Training Laboratories (NTL) who wanted him to develop training sessions. This request led to a new career as a founder of the field of organizational development and an adjunct professorship at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

Beckhard died in New York City at the age of 81. He was survived by his wife, Sandra Barty.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The collection dated from 1937 to 1990, documents the theatrical career of stage manager Richard Beckhard (1918-2000). The collection contains scrapbooks, photographs and printed matter such as programs and reviews.

Two scrapbooks document his work in the theater. The Pomona College scrapbook, dating to the late 1930's, recounts his work as an amateur actor, director and producer. The second scrapbook, dating from 1939 to 1942, holds memorabilia of *The Male Animal* with congratulatory telegrams, theatrical reviews, theatrical programs, photographs, and a poster for the Cort Theatre.

Loose theatre programs are mostly from productions that he staged managed with Arthur J. Beckhard. Reviews of some plays are located under printed matter.

There are a variety of photographs that document Beckhard's work in the theatre, film work, and during World War II. Beckhard had a feature part in the 1942 *Stage Door Canteen*. Prior to being stationed abroad, a photograph shows Beckhard with a teenage Lauren Bacall at a New Year's Eve party in 1943. Bacall had yet to be discovered by Hollywood.

Theatrical photographs include autographed photographs of actors who appeared in *The Male Animal*, and scenes from the play.

The remaining material is photographs of Richard Beckhard, family and friends, Germany post World War II, and New Guinea during the years 1943 to 1944. Photographs of New Guinea focus mostly on Camp Sentani, the U.S. Navy Rest Camp, the United States Red Cross, soldiers, and local scenery.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into Scrapbooks, Photographs, Printed Matter and Assorted Materials

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)  
Photographs  
Posters  
Scrapbooks  
Theater programs

### **Subjects**

College theater -- United States  
Pomona College -- Theater department  
Theater -- 20th century

### **Occupations**

Producers (managers)

### **Titles**

The male animal: a comedy in three acts

### **Names**

Beckhard, Arthur J.  
Pomona College (Claremont, Calif.). Theater Department

## Container List

### Scrapbooks

- b. 1 f. 1-3 Pomona College 1937-1939 (Disbound)
- b. 2 f. 1-13 The Male Animal 1939-1942 (Disbound)
  - o. 1 The Male Animal (Poster)

### Photographs

- b. 3 f. 1-2 Actors 1940s
- b. 3 f. 3 Bacall, Lauren and Beckhard, Richard 1943
- b. 3 f. 4 Beckhard, Arthur J. and Beckhard, Richard
- b. 3 f. 5 Family and Friends 1940s
- b. 3 f. 6 Germany. Post WWII
- b. 3 f. 7-13 New Guinea and the Philippines 1943-1944
- b. 3 f. 14 Scenic  
Photographs by George French.
- b. 3 f. 15 Stage Door Canteen 1943  
Film still.
- b. 3 f. 16 Wild Money 1937  
Film still.
- b. 3 f. 17 Unidentified images plays and individuals

### Printed Matter

#### Programs

- b. 3 f. 18 "Another Part of the Forest" 1946
- b. 3 f. 19 "Great Big Doorstep" 1942
- b. 3 f. 20 Martha's Vineyard Playhouse 1946-1947
- b. 3 f. 21 Tanglewood Theatre 1947
- b. 3 f. 22 "Woman Bites Dog" 1946

#### Reviews

- b. 3 f. 23-24 *All in Favor* 1942
- b. 3 f. 25 *Another Part of the Forest* 1946
- b. 4 f. 1 *Great Big Doorstep* 1942
- b. 4 f. 2 *Petticoat Fever* c. 1943
- b. 4 f. 3 *Skylark* 1942
- b. 4 f. 4 *Suspect* 1942
- b. 4 f. 5 *What Big Ears!* 1942
- b. 4 f. 6 *Woman Bites Dog* 1946
- b. 4 f. 7 Assorted Printed Matter 1930s-1940s

#### Assorted Materials

- b. 4 f. 8 General Correspondence 1940s, 1990
- b. 4 f. 9 Lake Sentani. U.S. Navy Rest Camp 1945  
Brochure
- b. 4 f. 10 Ticket Stub