



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.

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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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