



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Herman Shumlin papers**

ca. 1902-1989 [bulk 1932-1978]

\*T-Mss 1996-049

Compiled by cdee, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Shumlin, Herman, 1898-1979

**Title:** Herman Shumlin papers

**Date:** ca. 1902-1989 [bulk 1932-1978]

**Size:** 1.2 linear feet (3 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Gift of Irene and Richard Donohoe in Lola Shumlin's name, 2013.

**Abstract:** The Herman Shumlin papers contain correspondence, photographs, contact sheets, negatives, programs, financial papers, contracts, sheet music, and some personal papers documenting the career and life of producer and director Herman Shumlin.

**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 cdee, 2015

## Creator History

Producer and director Herman Shumlin was born December 6, 1898 in Atwood, Colorado. He produced and directed over forty productions on Broadway from 1928 to 1974, most notably *The Little Foxes* (1939), *The Corn Is Green* (1940), *Watch on the Rhine* (1941), *Inherit the Wind* (1955), and *The Deputy* (1964, for which he won a Tony Award as Best Producer). Shumlin also directed the motion picture version of *Watch on the Rhine* (1943). He died of heart failure at Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City, at

the age of 80.

## Scope and Content Note

The collection contains correspondence, photographs, contact sheets, negatives, programs, financial papers, contracts, sheet music, and some personal papers documenting the career and life of producer and director Herman Shumlin from ca. 1902 to ca. 1989 (bulk dates 1932-1978).

Correspondence includes letters concerning professional projects and notes from celebrities such as Russell Baker, Agnes de Mille, Peter de Vries, Christopher Fry, Peter Sellers, Neil Simon, and Orson Welles. There is also a telegram regarding *Inherit the Wind*, signed "Spence," March 13, 1956, possibly from Spencer Tracy. Some letters relate to Shumlin's professional and personal financial difficulties. One of Shumlin's creditors was Julie Clayburgh (actress Jill Clayburgh's mother, who mentions her daughter in two notes, August 18, 1964 and ca. 1964).

Financial papers include bank statements for Shumlin's proposed production of a musical version of *All the King's Men* (1971-1972) and the play, *How to Be Hip Over Thirty*, as well as correspondence and papers relating to his personal finances. There are also contracts and agreements for productions such as *Spofford* (1967) and *The Deputy* (1964).

There is also a piece of published sheet music for *Get Together* (1963) with an original sheet of music for a scene change inserted.

Among Shumlin's personal papers are passports, membership and identification cards and appointment books. Also included is a command to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committees (January 24, 1957) and a copy of an undated memorandum submitted to the judge that appears to be related. There is also a copy of a letter and a typed memo regarding Shumlin's meeting with Associate Justice Arthur Goldberg (October, 1964) on Goldberg's opinion of *The Deputy's* portrayal of Pope Pius XII.

Photos and contact sheets for productions include the National Theatre marquee of Tallulah Bankhead in *The Little Foxes* (1939), *The Corn Is Green* (1940), publicity photos with the 1954-1955 Outer Circle Award for *Inherit the Wind* (1955), *As You Like It* (1974), *The Deputy* set (1964), and unidentified rehearsal photos.

Photos of *Watch on the Rhine* contain both the stage production (1941) and a few publicity photos for the motion picture (ca. 1943); Lillian Hellman and cinematographer James Wong Howe are also pictured. Oversized photos include *Inherit the Wind*, signed by some cast members with a note by Staats Cotsworth), and one of Paul Muni. There are also some portraits, personal photos and negatives (some color), including some of Shumlin fishing, and vacation photos.

A folder of Shumlin's step-daughter, Lila Shumlin's, papers containing her resume and a manuscript titled "The Circle," is included with the collection. Folder titles do not reflect the contents accurately.

**Arrangement:** Alphabetical by folder title

## Key Terms

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Contact sheets  
Correspondence  
Financial records  
Negatives (Photographic)  
Photographs  
Theater programs

**Occupations**

Directors (performing arts)  
Producers (managers)

**Titles**

Inherit the wind  
The Corn is Green  
The deputy  
Watch on the Rhine

**Subjects**

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York -- 20th century  
Theater -- Production and direction

**Names**

Hellman, Lillian, 1905-1984  
Shumlin, Lila

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Address and Appointment Books ca. 1955-1963
- b. 1 f. 2 Arthur Goldberg--Letter and Memo 1941-1970
- b. 1 f. 3-4 Bank Statements 1971-1972
- b. 1 f. 5 Correspondence 1964-1976
- b. 1 f. 6 Correspondence--Mortimer Caplin Re: Internal Revenue 1964-1965
- b. 1 f. 7-8 Debt List; Passports (Old) 1932-1972
- b. 1 f. 9 *The Deputy--Photos by Friedman-Abeles* ca. 1964-1965
- b. 1 f. 10 Florida--Carmen and I 1956
- b. 1 f. 11 *Get Together Sheet Music* 1963
- b. 1 f. 12 Herman Shumlin Personal Creditors 1964-1965
- b. 1 f. 13 Important Letters 1967-1970
- b. 2 f. 1 *Keysheets-- The Deputy* ca. 1964
- b. 2 f. 2 *Keysheets-- Watch on the Rhine, The Corn Is Green; Some Photos of Lillian Hellman, Herman Shumlin* 1940-1941
- b. 2 f. 3-4 Manager's Account 1971-1972
- b. 2 f. 5 Memo to Judge ca. 1957
- b. 2 f. 6 Name Lists
- b. 2 f. 7 Photographs ca. 1902-1970s
- b. 2 f. 8 Photographs ca. 1920s-1950s
- b. 2 f. 9 Photographs 1939-1978
- b. 2 f. 10 Photographs ca. 1940s
  - o. 1 Photographs ca. 1955
- b. 2 f. 11 Photos of Set ca. 1964
- b. 3 f. 1 Programs 1968-1978
- b. 3 f. 2 *The Rothschilds--Songs* 1970
- b. 3 f. 3 Screen Directors' Guild and AFTRA--H. S 1946
- b. 3 f. 4 Shumlin, Lila--Papers ca. 1989
- b. 3 f. 5 *Spofford Agreement* 1968
- b. 3 f. 6 Week Ending November 28th 1942-1957