

**Guide to the Kay Barnes Papers, 1903-1972**

\*T-Mss 1996-020

Billy Rose Theatre Division



The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts  
New York, New York

The Billy Rose Theatre Division. New York Public Library.  
40 Lincoln Center Plaza  
New York, NY 10023-7498  
(212) 870-1639

[theatrediv@nypl.org](mailto:theatrediv@nypl.org)

<http://nypl.org/research/lpa/the/the.html>

Processed by: Susan MacArthur

Date Completed: May 1996

Encoded by: Elisabeth Elkind

©2004 The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. All rights reserved.

## **Descriptive Summary**

Title: Kay Barnes Papers.

Collection ID: \*T-Mss 1996-020

Extent: .5 lin. ft. (1 box)

Repository: Billy Rose Theatre Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. 40 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-7498

---

## **Administrative Information**

Access: Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notification may be required.

Preferred Citation: Kay Barnes Papers, \*T-Mss 1996-020, The Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

---

## **Biographical Note**

Actress Kay Barnes was the daughter of theatrical manager James R. Barnes. She appeared with the Rochester Players, the Mrs. Fiske Company and the Coburn Players. In 1927 she married radio vice-president and general manager, Theodore Franklin Allen (Ted Allen).

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Kay Barnes papers consist of correspondence, a scrapbook and ephemera documenting her career, as well as aspects of the career of her father, James R. Barnes. The correspondence includes a few letters from John Philip Sousa to Kay Barnes' mother, letters from Ivah Wills Coburn and some cards and letters from Charles Coburn. The ephemera contains materials from Kay Barnes' work with the Mrs. Fiske Company. Her scrapbook contains clippings, telegrams and letters documenting her career from 1919. Productions include *Oh, My Dear*, *Apple Blossoms*, *Enter Madame*, and *The Bat*, among others.

## Organization

- Series I: Correspondence
- Series II: Ephemera
- Series III: Scrapbooks

## Series Descriptions and Container Listing

### Series I. Correspondence, 1909-1960.

4 folders

Alphabetical

The correspondence includes family correspondence: letters to Kay Barnes' mother from her father, theater manager James Barnes about Kay and a letter to Kay from her husband Ted Allen. Also contains letters mainly from Ivah Wills Coburn, also Charles Coburn, to Kay Barnes and letters to her mother from John Philip Sousa, for whom her father worked.

- b. 1 f. 1      Correspondence / James R. Barnes, 1928-1942.  
1 folder  
A letter and a telegram (1928) from theatrical business manager James R. Barnes to his wife give good reports of Kay taking over for an ailing actress in Springfield, Massachusetts. Also included are his theatrical manager credits and his obituary (1942).
- b. 1 f. 2      Correspondence / Charles Coburn, 1922-1942.  
1 folder (7 letters, 9 Christmas cards  
Letters and Christmas cards (1922-1927 and undated) from Charles and Ivah Wills Coburn to Kay Barnes. Includes a condolence letter (1942) to Mrs. James R. Barnes.
- b. 1 f. 3      Correspondence / John Philip Sousa, 1909-1910.  
1 folder (2 letters, 2 invitations  
Two letters from John Philip Sousa to Mrs. James R. Barnes. James Barnes was manager and director of tours for Sousa. Includes two invitations.
- b. 1 f. 4      Miscellaneous correspondence, 1920-1960.  
1 folder  
Letters, telegrams, and notes (1920-1960) to Kay Barnes. Includes a letter from her husband Theodore Allen and a contract cover letter for the 1925 production of *Weeds* by Le Roy Clemens and John B. Hymer.

## **Series II. Ephemera, 1903-1972.**

5 folders

By type

Ephemeral items include photographs, clippings and programs. Two snapshots of John Philip Sousa ca. 1903, a silk program for *Alias the Deacon*, and a half-tone of the Mrs. Fiske Company in 1928 are the gems of this series.

- b. 1 f. 5            **Miscellaneous photographs, 1903 and n.d.**  
1 folder  
Miscellaneous photographs of Kay Barnes' family and friends.  
Includes two snapshots of John Philip Sousa ca. 1903.
- b. 1 f. 6            **Clippings / Kay Barnes, 1936-1972.**  
1 folder  
Clippings about the life of Kay Barnes.
- b. 1 f. 7            **Miscellaneous programs, 1926-1928.**  
1 folder  
Programs for plays in which Kay Barnes appeared include the 1926 production of *Alias the Deacon* (2 programs) and Mrs. Fiske's 1928 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.
- b. 1 f. 8            **Assorted ephemera.**  
1 folder  
A few ephemeral items belonging to Kay Barnes.
- b. 1 f. 9            **Ephemera / Mrs. Fiske Company, 1928.**  
1 folder.  
Newspaper article and small photograph of members of The Mrs. Fiske Company.

## **Series III. Scrapbooks, 1919-1926.**

1 volume

The scrapbook documents Kay Barnes' career beginning in 1919 with *Oh, My Dear*. Other productions include *Apple Blossoms*, *Bronx Express*, *Temptation*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Enter Madame*, *Clarence*, *The Bat*, and *Weeds*. The scrapbook contains clippings, half-tones, telegrams and letters.

- b. 1 f. 10           **Scrapbook / Kay Barnes, 1919-1926.**  
1 scrapbook.  
Scrapbook of clippings, programs, telegrams, and notes documenting the career of actress Kay Barnes.

## Separated Materials

Placed in the Theatre Collection's Photograph Files (B files are 8 x 10 and C files are larger).

### Photographs

- Kay Barnes - 7 B file photos
- *Bronx Express* - 9 C file photos
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor* - 1 C file photo
- *Much Ado About Nothing* - 1 photo added to MWEZ + n.c. 18,869
- The Mrs. Fiske Company - 2 C file photos
- Hope Williams - 2 B file photos
- Otis Skinner - 1 B file photo
- Henrietta Crosman - 1 B file photo
- Mrs. Fiske - 1 C file photo
- *Enter Madame* - 1 B file photo
- Wilda Bennett (Autographed photograph)
- Berton Churchill (Autographed photograph)
- Donald Foster (Autographed photograph)
- Lorraine Manville (Autographed photograph)