

**JOHN MURRAY ANDERSON**

Papers

MF-288

Arranged & Described

by

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection contains a very miniscule representation of the work of John Murray Anderson, the Newfoundland-born, New York-based producer and writer of stage musicals and director of motion pictures: the words and music to the song "How High the Moon" and the program for a production of "Thumbs Up!".

In June 1995 the Archives was able to acquire a second, equally small, amount of material related to John Murray Anderson. It includes several autographed postcards and the syllabus for his theatre school for 1927-1928. There were three letters addressed to Anderson's father, two of which concern Anderson's hobby: autograph collecting.

## CUSTODIAL HISTORY

The score and the program were acquired from Livyers Antiques, St. John's, in 1989. The postcards, letters to Anderson's father and the syllabus were acquired from Livyers in June 1995. Livyers had acquired the material from a private collector who had purchased the items in the United States.

## RESTRICTIONS

There are no restrictions on access to or use of the items contained in this collection. All patrons should be aware that copyright regulations state that any copy of archival material is to be used solely for the purpose of **research and private study**. Any use of the copy for any other purpose may require the authorization of the copyright owner. It is the patron's responsibility to obtain such authorization.

Patrons should also be aware that the copyright regulations require that records be kept of all copies made of materials deposited prior to September 1, 1999 and that these records may be viewed by the author of the material, the copyright owner, or representatives of either.

## EXTENT

12 items

## BIOGRAPHY

John Murray Anderson was born in St. John's, Newfoundland on September 20, 1886, the son of John Anderson and Amelia Murray. His father was a prominent businessman, who served on the St. John's Municipal Council, as a Member of the House of Assembly and a Member of the Legislative Council. John Anderson is credited with being the father of Daylight Savings Time in Newfoundland, as he formulated the idea and shepherded its successful passage through the Newfoundland Legislature in 1917.

John Murray Anderson received his early education at Bishop Feild College in St. John's. Then, like many of his contemporaries from St. John's merchant families, he was sent to Europe to continue his education. He first went to the Edinburgh Academy in Scotland and then to Lausanne University in Switzerland. After graduating from Lausanne, he went to London where he studied voice with Sir Charles Santley and acting with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree. In 1909 he returned to St. John's where he spent time collecting antiques along the Southern Shore and other parts of the Avalon Peninsula, before moving to New York City where he hoped to make his fortune.

In New York he quickly became involved in theatre, first as a dance instructor, before becoming a writer and producer, particularly of musical comedy and revues. His first play was *The World Mother* starring Blanche Bates in 1918. Over the next 30 years he was responsible for over 30 productions including *The Greenwich Village Follies*, *The Music Box Revue*, and *Murray Anderson's Almanac*. After the death of Florenz Zeigfeld, Broadway's greatest producer of musical extravaganzas, in 1932, he became producer of *The Zeigfeld Follies*. Between 1926 and 1929 he produced 57 miniature revues for Paramount Famous Players Theatres. He also took shows to London and was involved in the 1937 production *The Coronation Revue*, staged to celebrate the coronation of King George VI. For a number of years in the 1920s, in partnership with Robert Milton, Anderson operated a school of theatre and dance located at East 58<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City. Some of the graduates of the school were Lucille Ball, Bette Davis, Paul Muni and Joan Blondell.

Anderson had a brief involvement with motion pictures. He spent 1929-1930 in Hollywood, during which time he was the driving force behind the first all-colour, musical motion picture, *The King of Jazz*, released by Universal Studios in 1930. *The New York Times* review of the production stated "John Murray Anderson's initial contribution to the audible screen, "King of Jazz," with the rotund Paul Whiteman, reveals this director to be a magician of far greater power than one imagined, even from his stage compositions. This Technicolor potpourri of songs, dancing and fun is a marvel of camera wizardry, joyous colour schemes, charming costumes and seductive lighting effects." The theatre remained his first love, however, and he returned to it to present live stage productions until shortly before his death. During the 1940s he was involved in the production of a number circus shows for Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus.

John Murray Anderson married Genevieve Lyon of Chicago in 1914. She died of tuberculosis in 1916. They had no children. He died in New York City on January 30, 1954. In the year before his death he, with his brother, Hugh, as writer, dictated his autobiography, *Out without my Rubbers*. He was a periodic visitor to Newfoundland throughout his life and was hailed here as one of the many Newfoundlanders who had "made good" abroad.

<b>ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION</b>
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## 1.0 Autographs

- 1.01 Robert Bond to John Murray Anderson, autographed postcard with Bond's picture on the front, postmark date 1903
- 1.02 Cavendish Boyle to John Anderson, letter dated March 10, 1904
- 1.03 Robert Thorburn to John Murray Anderson, autographed postcard with message, on blank postcard, dated April 20, 1904 together with a letter from Thorburn to John Anderson, father of John Murray Anderson, also dated April 20, 1904
- 1.04 Norah Drewett [Norah de Kresz], autographed postcard, image "Mount Moriah (Bay of Islands), Newfoundland", dated January 1906
- 1.05 M. Jones, Albert Arch Masons, image "Winter Scene, St. John's, Nfld.", dated January 5, 1906
- 1.06 Julia Caroli, autographed postcard, image "Placentia", undated
- 1.07 T. Hollman, autographed postcard, image "Government House, St. John's, Nfld.", undated

## 2.0 Theatre

- 2.01 The John Murray Anderson ~ Robert Milton School of the Theatre and Dance information booklet, 1927-1928
- 2.02 *Thumbs Up!* (revue production) - program, undated
- 2.03 *Two for the Show* - sheet music for the song "How High the Moon" copyright 1940
- 2.04 "Golden Tail" sheet music (acc. no. 04-120)
- 2.05 "Moonlight Kisses" sheet music (" " ")
- 2.06 "What's in a Name" c.1920, sheet music (acc. no. 04-120)
- 2.07 "The Greenwich Village Follies," Apr. 1925 – program (fragile) (acc. no. 04-120)
- 2.08 "John Murray Anderson's Almanac," Dec. 14, 1953 – program (acc. no. 04-120)
- 2.09 "John Murray Anderson's Almanac," 1999 – CD – cast recording (acc. no. 04-120)

## 3.0 Correspondence

- 3.01 Robert Bond to John Anderson asking him to second the motion for the appointment of a select committee to draft an Address and Reply to the Speech from the Throne, 23 February 1904