

The New York Public Library
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the
Montgomery Clift papers, Additions

1929-1969

*T-Mss 1967-006

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, July 2012

Summary

Creator: Clift, Montgomery

Title: Montgomery Clift papers, Additions, 1929-1969

Size: 1.51 linear feet (4 boxes)

Source: Donated by Ethel Clift McGinnis in 2004.

Abstract: Montgomery Clift (1920-1966) was an American stage and Academy Award-winning film actor. The additions to the Montgomery Clift papers include production files, correspondence, photographs and personal ephemera.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photography and photocopying will apply. Advance notice maybe required.

Copyright information: For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Preferred citation: Montgomery Clift papers, Additions, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: This collection arrived in numbered folders, sometimes to the item level. A survey that came with the collection provided data for the first third of the folders. The remaining folders were identified and arranged into logical groupings.

Related collections

Montgomery Clift Papers, 1933-1966. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator history

Montgomery Clift was born in Omaha, Nebraska on October 17, 1920, hours after his twin sister Roberta (Ethel). He lived with his father William Brooks Clift, his mother Ethel "Sunny" Fogg Clift, and his older brother William Brooks, Jr. In the mid 1920s his family moved to Chicago and later, in the early 1930s the family settled in New York City.

At the age of twelve, Montgomery Clift made his first stage appearance in an amateur production of *As Husbands Go* in Sarasota, Florida. His professional stage debut was in a Stockbridge, Massachusetts production of a new comedy called *Fly Away Home*. In 1935, he made his Broadway debut in a New York production of *Fly Away Home*. Later that year he opened in a Broadway musical *Jubilee*. Other Broadway plays include *Yr. Obedient Husband*, *Eye on the Sparrow*, *Dame Nature*, *The Mother*, *There Shall Be No Night* with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, *The Skin of Our Teeth* with Tallulah Bankhead, *The Searching Wind*, *Foxhole in the Parlor*, and Tennessee Williams' *You Touched Me!* Montgomery Clift and his longtime friend Kevin McCarthy also wrote a screenplay of *You Touched Me!*, but it was never produced. Other plays he appeared in are *The Wind and the Rain*, *Out of the Frying Pan*, *Our Town*, and *Mexican Mural*. *The Sea Gull* in 1954 was his final stage appearance.

In 1946 Clift made his first film, a western entitled *Red River*, opposite John Wayne. Due to a delay in the release however, his film debut was *The Search* in 1948 which earned him an Academy Award nomination for best actor. Later that same year *Red River* was finally released. In 1949 he co-starred with Olivia DeHavilland in the film *The Heiress* and went to Germany to film a World War II movie *The Big Lift*. He earned two more Academy Award nominations for best actor for his performances in *A Place in the Sun* (1951) and *From Here to Eternity* (1953). His co-star in *A Place in the Sun*, Elizabeth Taylor, became one of his long time friends. He made two more films with Elizabeth Taylor, *Raintree County* (1957) and *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959).

On May 12 1956, Montgomery Clift was involved in a near fatal car accident after leaving a dinner party at Elizabeth Taylor's house in Beverly Hills. The accident disfigured his face, leaving it half paralyzed. Despite his injury he continued to make movies. He appeared with Marlon Brando, Dean Martin, and Hope Lange in *The Young Lions* (1958). He co-starred with Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable in the film *The Misfits* (1961). He also earned his fourth Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor for his 7-minute performance in *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961). In 1966, he made his last film entitled *The Defector*. Other films include *I Confess* (1953), *Indiscretion of an American Wife* (1953), *Lonelyhearts* (1958), *Wild River* (1960), and *Freud* (1962).

He died in New York on July 23, 1966 in his sleep. The cause of death was occlusive coronary artery disease. Later that year his last film *The Defector* was released.

Scope and content note

The additions to the Montgomery Clift Papers include production files, correspondence, photographs and personal ephemera.

Correspondence consists mainly of personal correspondence, from the 1930s through the 1960s, with Clift's family and such friends as Phyllis Bamberger, Louis Humphries, Estes Kefauver, Myrna Loy, Roddy McDowall, Robert C. McGinnis, Burt Padeel, Ben Piazza, E.W. Smith, Ninetta "Nan" Sunderland and Nancy Walker. The family correspondence includes many letters written from Clift to his father during his childhood and adolescence as well as condolence letters written to the family after Clift's death. There is also professional correspondence with Clift's doctors and many interesting letters from his agents and publicists, such as Robert Lantz and Irwin Franklyn, often discussing movie projects offered to Clift.

Production files contain photographs and programs from plays Clift appeared in such as *Eye of the Sparrow* and *Fly Away Home*. Production files from Clift's films include candid on-set photographs from *Red River* and *The Heiress*; call sheets from *Suddenly Last Summer* and *A Place in the Sun*; publicity shots from *From Here to Eternity* and *A Place in the Sun*; Clift's contract from *The Search*; a shooting schedule from *Judgment at Nuremberg*; and publicity files, agreements, photographs, scripts, production notes and programs from *Freud*.

The personal photographs include candid and professional shots of Clift as a child, teenager and adult with various friends and relatives. There is a group of shots of Clift and his crew on his yacht. Also included are autographed photographs of 1930s actors signed for the teenage Clift. As a teenager, Clift was an accomplished and published photographer and many of his own photographs are included. There are many photographs of Clift in Europe, possibly when shooting *Freud*.

Personal files includes Clift's childhood schoolwork, drawings and a newsletter he wrote for his father when he was staying with other relations. There is a copy of Clift's Actors' Equity card; the certificate for his first Academy Award nomination for *The Search*; and listings of eligible performances for the Academy Awards and the Donaldson Awards. The appointment book is a valuable document of Clift's social life in the last year of his life. Financial files consist of tax forms and pay stubs. There a few interviews which Clift gave during the filming of *The Misfits* and *Freud*. Clift's memorial service is documented with the funeral register and Mass card.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into four groupings: Correspondence, Production Files, Photographs, and Personal Files.

Key terms

Subjects

Motion pictures -- United States -- 20th century
Theater -- United States -- 20th century

Occupations

Actors -- Drama
Photographers

Names

Clift, Montgomery

Titles

A Place in the Sun -- motion picture
Freud -- motion picture
Judgment at Nuremberg -- motion picture

Special formats

Correspondence
Ephemera
Manuscripts
Photographs
Programs

Container list

Correspondence, 1931-1966

- b.1 f.1-4 Family, 1931-1966
- b.1 f.5-16 Friends, 1943-1963
- b.1 f.17 Professional, 1958-1966

Production Files, 1934-1962

- b.1 f.18 *Eye of the Sparrow*, 1938
- b.1 f.19 *Fly Away Home*, 1934
- b.1 f.20-25 *Freud*, 1961-1962
- b.2 f.1 *From Here to Eternity*, 1953
- b.2 f.2 *The Heiress*, 1948
- b.2 f.3 *Judgment at Nuremberg*, 1961
- b.2 f.4-5 *A Place in the Sun*, 1949-1951
- b.2 f.6 *Red River*, undated
- b.2 f.7 *The Search*, 1947
- b.2 f.8 *Suddenly Last Summer*, 1959
- b.2 f.9-10 Unidentified Stage Productions, 1930s, 1955
- b.2 f.11-24 Photographs, 1930s-1950s
- b.3 f.1 Photographs, 1930s-1950s
- b.4 f.1 Photographs

Personal Files, 1929-1969

- b.3 f.2 Appointment Book, 1965-1966
- b.3 f.3-6 Awards and Professional Organizations, 1943-1958
- b.3 f.7-10 Childhood Items, 1929-1934
- b.3 f.11 Financial Files, 1945
- b.3 f.12-13 Interviews, 1960-1962
- b.3 f.14-15 Memorial Service, 1969