Collection Summary
Title: Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers
Span Dates: 1921-1993
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1940-1959)
ID No.: MSS85114
Creator: Gordon, Ruth, 1896-1985
Creator: Kanin, Garson, 1912-1999
Extent: 5,900 items
Extent: 19 containers
Extent: 7.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2004085114
Summary: Author and actress Ruth Gordon and her husband Garson Kanin, actor, author, producer, and director.
Correspondence with colleagues in the entertainment industry.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Bagnold, Enid--Correspondence.
Beaton, Cecil, 1904-1980--Correspondence.
Chevalier, Maurice, 1888-1972--Correspondence.
Cohn, Harry, 1891-1958--Correspondence.
Cukor, George, 1899-1983--Correspondence.
Evans, Edith, 1888-1976--Correspondence.
Guthrie, Tyrone, 1900-1971--Correspondence.
Holliday, Judy.
Mainbocher, 1891-1976--Correspondence.
Olivier, Laurence, 1907-1989--Correspondence.
Schary, Dore--Correspondence.
Tracy, Spencer, 1900-1967.

Organizations
Columbia Pictures Corporation. It should happen to you. 1954.

Subjects
Fashion--United States.
Motion picture actors and actresses.
Motion picture industry--United States.
Symbolism.
Theater--England--London.
Theater--United States.
World War, 1939-1945--Theater and the war.
Titles
Garson Kanin papers
Ruth Gordon papers

Occupations
Actors.
Authors.
Motion picture directors.
Motion picture producers.
Theatrical directors.
Theatrical producers.

Provenance
The papers of Ruth Gordon, author and actress, and Garson Kanin, actor, author, director, and producer, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2004. Material given by Ed Slakter in 2003 was added to the collection in 2006.

Transfers
A dictaphone record has been transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where it is identified as part of these papers.

Related Material
The Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers complement separate collections of their papers, the Ruth Gordon Papers and the Garson Kanin Papers, which are also held by in the Manuscript Division.

Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note
Ruth Gordon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Appeared as Nibs in <em>Peter Pan</em> (play)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1918 Married Gregory Kelly (died 1927)
1936 Appeared as Margery Pinchwife in *The Country Wife* (play)
1940 Appeared as Mary Todd Lincoln in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (film)
1942 Married Garson Kanin
1946 Wrote *Years Ago* (play)
1949 Wrote *Adam's Rib* (film)
1952 Wrote *Pat and Mike* (film)
1953 Wrote *The Actress* (film based on play *Years Ago*)
1955 Appeared as Dolly Levi in *The Matchmaker* (play)
1965 Appeared as Mrs. Clover in *Inside Daisy Clover* (film)
1968 Appeared as Minnie Castevet in *Rosemary's Baby* (film)
1969 Won 1968 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in *Rosemary's Baby*
1971 Appeared as Maude in *Harold and Maude* (film)
1978 Appeared as Ma Boggs in *Every Which Way But Loose* (film)

**Garson Kanin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912, Nov. 24</td>
<td>Born, Rochester, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932-1933</td>
<td>Attended American Academy of Dramatic Arts, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Appeared as Tommy Deal in <em>Little Ol' Boy</em> (play)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Married Ruth Gordon (died 1985)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Wrote <em>Born Yesterday</em> (play)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directed <em>Years Ago</em> (play)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Wrote <em>Adam's Rib</em> (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Wrote <em>Pat and Mike</em> (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Wrote and directed <em>The Diary of Anne Frank</em> (play)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Directed <em>Funny Girl</em> (play)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Married Marian Seldes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999, Mar. 13</td>
<td>Died, New York, N.Y.</td>
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**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Ruth Gordon (1896-1985) and Garson Kanin (1912-1999) span the years 1921-1993, with the bulk of the material dating from 1940 to 1959. Gordon and Kanin were a married couple prominent in the American theater and film industry as actors and writers for half a century. They used their collaborative relationship as a model for their film *Pat and Mike* starring Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. The papers consist mainly of correspondence with attached and related newspaper clippings and printed ephemera. An addition to the collection includes more correspondence and miscellaneous personal files.

The correspondence contains incoming letters and copies of outgoing letters. Chief correspondents are Enid Bagnold, Cecil Beaton, Hugh (“Binkie”) Beaumont, Main R. Bocher, Maurice Chevalier, Harry Cohn, George Cukor, Edith Evans, Tyrone Guthrie, Laurence Olivier, and Dore Schary. Letters from Bagnold discuss the symbolism and characterizations in the plays *The Chalk Garden* and *A Matter of Gravity*. The correspondence from Bocher contains an inventory of Gordon's collection of *haute couture* designed for her by Mainbocher. The letters of Cohn and Cukor provide insight into film personalities, especially Judy Holliday and Spencer Tracy. They discuss all aspects of production for films such as *The Marrying Kind*, *The Actress*, and *It Should Happen to You*. Evans and Guthrie describe the state of London theater during World War II.

An addition contains further correspondence as well as contracts, insurance policies, investment material, printed matter, and Gordon's and Kanin's marriage certificate.
Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged alphabetically by correspondent, followed by an addition arranged alphabetically by type of material.
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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| BOX 1     | Correspondence  
Acheson, Dean and Alice, 1961-1969, undated  
Aldrich, Richard, 1948  
Alsop, Joseph, 1969-1977  
Anderson, Judith, 1950-1952  
Anderson, Maxwell and Gertrude (“Mab”) Higger, 1946-1951, undated  
Aronson, Boris, 1955-1963, 1974-1975  
Ashcroft, Peggy, 1953, undated  
Aumont, Jean-Pierre, 1954  
Barry, Philip, 1949  
Baylis, Lilian, 1937  
Beaton, Cecil, 1936-1938, 1944-1972, undated  
(4 folders)  
Beaumont, Hugh (“Binkie”)  
1946-1953  
BOX 2     | 1954-1972, undated  
(7 folders)  
Benny, Jack and Mary, 1969-1974  
Berlin, Irving, 1970  
Bloomgarden, Kermit, 1955  
(6 folders)  
BOX 3     | Bolger, Ray and Gwendolyn, 1950, 1987, undated  
*Born Yesterday*, cast of, undated  
Brisson, Frederick *See Container 13, Russell, Rosalind*  
Brynner, Doris (Mrs. Yul), 1966  
Burke, Billie, 1957, 1970, undated  
Calder, King, 1943  
Carlisle, Kitty *See Container 9, Hurt, Moss*  
Champion, Gower, 1965  
Chatterson, Ruth, 1946-1951, 1960, undated  
Chevalier, Maurice  
Correspondence, 1948-1969, undated  
Claire, Ina, undated  
Coca Cola Co. *See Container 7, Farley, James*  
Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers  6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
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<td>BOX 7</td>
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*Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers*
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<td>BOX 8</td>
<td>1941-1969</td>
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<td>1977, 1982-1985, undated</td>
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<td>Fry, Christopher, 1955</td>
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<td>Gernreich, Rudi, undated</td>
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<td>Gershwin, Ira, 1968</td>
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<td>Gibbs, Wolcott, 1947</td>
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<td>Gilson, Joanna, 1954-1956, undated</td>
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<td>Gish, Dorothy, 1941-1942, 1948, 1960-1964, undated</td>
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<td>Gish, Lillian, 1940-1964, 1977-1980, undated</td>
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<td>Goddard, Paulette, 1966-1969</td>
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<td>Golden, John, undated</td>
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<td>Grant, Cary, undated</td>
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<td>Guthrie, Tyrone</td>
<td>1936-1963</td>
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<td>BOX 9</td>
<td>1964-1971, undated</td>
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<td>H. M. Tennant, Ltd.</td>
<td>See Containers 1 and 2, Beaumont, Hugh</td>
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<td>Halliday, Richard</td>
<td>See Container 11, Martin, Mary</td>
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<td>Hammerstein, Oscar (1895-1960), 1946-1951</td>
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<td>Hammett, Dashiell, 1947, 1965</td>
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<td>Harris, Jed, 1926-1931, 1962, 1980, undated</td>
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<td>Harrison, Rex, 1950-1954, 1966, undated</td>
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<td>Hart, Moss, and Kitty Carlisle, 1947-1960, undated</td>
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<td>Hayes, Helen, 1931-1985, undated</td>
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<td>Hayward, Leland, 1943, 1949-1968, undated</td>
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<td>Head, Edith, 1969</td>
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<td>Helpman, Robert, 1946-1950, 1962, undated</td>
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<td>Hobson, Laura Z., 1971-1975</td>
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<td>Holliday, Judy, undated</td>
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<td>Hurlock, Madeline</td>
<td>See Container 14, Sherwood, Robert</td>
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<td>Hurok, Sol, 1969</td>
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<td>Kasha, Lawrence, 1964</td>
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<td>Kaufman, George S. and Leueen, 1942-1960, undated</td>
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<td>Keller, Helen, 1956-1958, 1969</td>
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<td>Korda, Alexander, 1956</td>
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<td>Krasna, Norman, 1941-1970, undated</td>
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<td>Container</td>
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| BOX 11    | Leigh, Vivien, 1961-1967, undated See also Containers 11 and 12, Olivier, Laurence  
Leighton, Margaret, 1956, 1962-1963, undated  
Lillie, Bea, 1954-1955  
Lindsay, Howard, 1943-1950, 1956-1959, 1966-1968, undated See also Container 3, Crouse, Russel  
Loesser, Frank, 1953-1961, undated  
Luce, Claire Booth, 1966-1969  
Lunt, Alfred See Container 7, Fontanne, Lynn  
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March, Fredric and Florence, 1947-1952, undated  
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McClintic, Guthrie, 1931, 1939-1960, undated See also Container 3, Cornell, Katharine  
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Mielziner, Jo, 1950, 1956-1965  
Miller, Arthur, 1955  
Miscellaneous, 1938-1951, 1963, undated  
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Murphy, George, 1969  
Murphy, Gerald, 1943  
Nathan, George Jean, 1930, 1946  
Nesbitt, Cathleen, 1964-1965, undated  
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1946  
Feb.-Aug.  
Sept.-Nov.  
1947-1988, undated (12 folders) |
| BOX 12    | O'Neill, Carlotta Monterey (Mrs. Eugene), 1956  
Osborn, Paul, 1949, undated  
Palmer, Lilli, 1950, undated  
Papp, Joseph, 1975-1988 |
| BOX 13    |  |
Peekskill Declaration signers, 1949
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Porter, Cole, 1949-1951, 1960
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Richardson, Tony, 1955
Ritter, Thelma, 1956
Roberts, Rachel, 1970, undated
Robson, Flora, undated
Rosenthal, Jean, 1957
Rubinstein, Arthur, 1954, 1961, undated
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   (2 folders)
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Schary, Dore
   1942-1951
   
   BOX 14
      1952-1980, undated
      (3 folders)
Schildkraut, Joseph, 1954-1964, undated
   (2 folders)
Schneider, Alan, 1936, 1947-1948, 1963
Seberg, Jean, 1961-1967
Severeid, Eric, 1970-1978
Shaw, Irwin, 1970
Shawn, Ted, 1956
Sheldon, Edward, 1940-1949, undated
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Sturges, Howard, 1949, undated
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   (2 folders)
Taylor, Laurette, 1941-1947, 1967, undated
Todman, William (“Bill”), 1963
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<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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| BOX 16    | Tracy, Spencer, 1941-1969, undated (4 folders)  
Truman, Bess Wallace, 1947  
Ulric, Lenore, 1943-1950, 1956, undated (3 folders)  
Van Druten, John, 1950  
Vidor, Doris (Mrs. Charles), 1956, 1974  
Vidor, King, 1956, undated  
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Wallis, Hal B., 1977  
Waring, Fred, 1977-1978  
Warren, Robert Penn, 1986  
Webb, Clifton, 1951-1953  
Webster, Margaret, undated  
Widmark, Richard, 1968  
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Wood, Natalie, 1962-1974, undated  
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| BOX 17    | Addition  
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| BOX 18    | “He-Hu” miscellaneous, 1949-1983, undated (4 folders)  
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Investments, 1946-1947  
Marriage certificate, 1942  
Mielziner, Jo, set designs for *Violence* (play), undated  
Miscellany, 1943, undated  
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Research material, 1944-1945 |