

# Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall



**Music Division, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
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Prepared by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Libby Smigel, May 2024

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall

**Inclusive Dates:** 1959-2015

**Bulk Dates:** 1959-1983

**Call No.:** ML31.M86

**Creator:** Murphy, Ann, 1941-

**Extent:** approximately 200 items

**Extent:** 3 containers

**Extent:** 1 mapcase folder

**Extent:** 1.25 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020570190>

**Summary:** Ann Murphy was a member of the Rockettes dance company at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. She began her career with a Rockettes-sponsored touring company in 1959. The collection chiefly contains photographs and performance programs, as well as a small number of schedules, stage management documents, and event invitations. Murphy's descriptive key to photograph subjects is also included.

## Acquisition Information

Gift, Ann Murphy, 2022

## Accruals

Further accruals are possible.

## Processing History

Libby Smigel processed the Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall and created the finding aid in 2024.

## Other Repositories

The Radio City Music Hall Collection in the Browne Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green State University includes correspondence, magazine and newspaper articles, programs from decades of shows, photographs of the theater and performers, and other printed materials about Radio City Music Hall and the Rockettes. The Billy Rose Theatre Division of the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts has the papers and designs of James Stewart Morcom and John William Keck in collections on Radio City Music Hall. The Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts has the papers of dancer-choreographer Violet Holmes, who joined the Rockettes in 1945.

## Related Material

The Music Division holds a number of related collections that contain documentation of Broadway-style tap dance. Critic Alan Kriegsman's collection of background material on the history of the Rockettes is accessible in the [Alan M. and Sali Ann Kriegsman Collection](#).

The Prints and Photographs Division houses collections of individuals (such as photographers Bernard Gotfryd, Carol Highsmith, and Samuel Herman Gottscho) or publications (such as the *Look* magazine photographic archive) that include the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall. Additionally, Kenneth Russell Chamberlain's [sketch](#) (circa 1935) of the Rockettes

performing onstage is available, as is George Telo's [poster](#) of the Peter Gennaro show *Lucky Lindy* that commemorated the Charles Lindburgh transatlantic flight.

## Materials Cataloged Separately

Ann Murphy's autobiography [How I Got My Kicks](#), which accompanied this collection, is shelved with the reference collection in the Performing Arts Reading Room.

## Copyright Status

Materials from the Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

## Access and Restrictions

The Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division before visiting to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions on using or copying materials may apply.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Ann Murphy was born on August 31, 1941, in Lynn, Massachusetts, to William Joseph Murphy and Eleanor Beth (née Stevens) Murphy. At age 16, Murphy's successful audition as a tap dancer for a three-month touring show produced by Russell Markert, founder of the Rockettes troupe, prepared her for becoming a Rockette after high school graduation. Murphy performed with the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall (RCMH) for 20 years. Her spouse, Tom St. John (birth name: John Thomas St. John Jr., 1913-1989), also employed by RCMH, operated the Radio City Music Hall control board. After St. John retired, they moved to southern California where Murphy had opportunities to perform with the Palm Spring Follies and the Welk Theatre Resort. St. John died in 1989 following a long illness. Murphy returned to her show business career in New York City where she met actor Lou Ruggiero in a show titled *One More Time*, whom she credits with encouraging her to complete her autobiography. She resides in Beverley, Massachusetts.

## Administrative Histories

### The Rockettes

The organization that became the Rockettes precision tap-dancing troupe in residence at New York City's Radio City Music Hall was envisioned in 1925 by Russell Markert (1899-1990) when he founded the Missouri Rockets with 16 tap dancers in St. Louis. In 1928, impresario Samuel "Roxy" Rothafel brought Markert and the troupe to New York City for his newly opened Roxy Theatre movie palace, renamed them the Roxyettes, and increased the number of dancers to 36. Intended to attract a mass audience to the 5,200-seat auditorium, the Roxy Theatre programming included a recent feature film augmented by variety acts, including the Roxyettes. When Rothafel left the Roxy to accept the opportunity to lead the Radio City Music Hall at Rockefeller Center, he brought Markert and the Rockettes along with him.

## Radio City Music Hall

Radio City Music Hall was part of John D. Rockefeller's revised vision for his property in midtown Manhattan, which he had initially intended for an opera house. With the economic devastation in New York City after the stock market crash of 1929, a center of popular culture seemed more viable. Radio City Music Hall (RCMH) became the largest indoor theater in the world, featuring Donald Deskey's Modernist interior design and a marquee spanning an entire city block. Under Rothafel's entrepreneurship, and with the Rockettes in residence in what became their permanent home, RCMH imitated the Roxy's successful programming. RCMH's exclusive bookings for blockbuster films and the variety-format live programming made it a popular destination for tourists as well as locals. The decline of tourism in New York in the 1970s and changes in entertainment preferences caused audience numbers to decline, and the Music Hall was further troubled by several labor disputes. The traditional film-and-variety formula was limited so that other kinds of entertainments and events could potentially increase operating revenue. The Rockettes continue to be the resident company at RCMH, but their appearances have been limited since the COVID-19 pandemic to the Christmas Spectacular show performed for three months during the winter holidays.

## Scope and Content Note

The Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall provides a selection of programs, photographs, and production documents generated from the film-and-variety entertainment programming featured at Radio City Music Hall. Most of the items document the live variety acts, particularly the Rockettes' routines and precision drills. Key figures of the Radio City Music Hall management and creative team also appear in the photographs. As Murphy's spouse operated the control board, the collection includes instructions for the technical machinery, such as the stage turntable and the hydraulic lifts. For a few shows and a television filming, rehearsal and performance schedules are included. Murphy also saved the event invitations and programs of the Rockette Alumnae Association, which actively preserves and celebrates the history of this troupe.

## Organization of the Ann Murphy Collection on the Rockettes and Radio City Music Hall

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Production Files, 1959-2014](#)
- [Subject Files, 1960-2015](#)

## 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

Gennaro, Peter, 1919-2000.  
Gould, James, -1988.  
Markert, Russell, 1899-1990.  
Murphy, Ann, 1941-  
Murphy, Ann, 1941- --Archives.  
Platt, Marc, 1913-2014.  
St. John, Tom, 1913-1989.

### Organizations

Radio City Music Hall (New York, N.Y.)--History.  
Rockettes (Dance company)--History.  
Roxyettes (Dance company)--History.

### Subjects

Tap dancers--United States.  
Tap dancing--United States.  
Women tap dancers--United States.

**Form/Genre**

Dance programs.  
Photographs.

## Description of Series

### Container

BOX 1 MAPCASE  
FOLDER 1

### Series

#### Production Files, 1959-2014

This series includes photographs and performance programs collected by Rockette dancer Ann Murphy, with the bulk of the materials representing shows in which she appeared. The performance programs include a listing of all of the music and dance numbers, along with the credits of the feature film. Until the 1980s, the individual names of the Rockettes or the Music Hall ballet dancers were not included in the program credits unless the performer had a specific solo or other featured part. Some of the production photographs show celebrity visitors, such as Walt Disney and Lassie.

Titles given for the Radio City Music Hall productions listed here are for the live-performance variety shows, not the feature films.

Arranged chronologically.

BOX 1-3

#### Subject Files, 1960-2015

An assortment of materials connected to Radio City Music Hall, notable figures associated with the Music Hall or Rockettes, the Rockette Alumnae Association, and other items that relate to Ann Murphy's life.

Arranged alphabetically.

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1 MAPCASE FOLDER 1	<p><b>Production Files, 1959-2014</b></p> <p>This series includes photographs and performance programs collected by Rockette dancer Ann Murphy, with the bulk of the materials representing shows in which she appeared. The performance programs include a listing of all of the music and dance numbers, along with the credits of the feature film. Until the 1980s, the individual names of the Rockettes or the Music Hall ballet dancers were not included in the program credits unless the performer had a specific solo or other featured part. Some of the production photographs show celebrity visitors, such as Walt Disney and Lassie.</p> <p>Titles given for the Radio City Music Hall productions listed here are for the live-performance variety shows, not the feature films.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX-FOLDER 1/1	Happy Land Salute to Israel, 1959 September 3 photographs <i>Includes:</i> Lassie, co-star Jon Provost ("Timmy"), and the Rockettes kickline
BOX-FOLDER 1/2	Fall Frolic, 1959 October 2 photographs; 1 program <i>Note:</i> Halloween theme
BOX-FOLDER 1/3	Contrasts in Rhythm, 1959 November 2 photographs
BOX-FOLDER 1/4	Far East to Far West, 1960 February 1 photograph <i>Includes:</i> Prairie Town USA set with cowboy theme
BOX-FOLDER 1/5	Tulip Time in Holland, 1960 March 2 photographs
BOX-FOLDER 1/6	Follies of 1960, 1960 May 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Rockettes costumed as bridesmaids
BOX-FOLDER 1/7	Hawai'i USA, 1960 June 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Rockettes costumed as sailors
BOX-FOLDER 1/8	Town and Country, 1960 November 1 program
BOX-FOLDER 1/9	Holiday Wishes, 1960 December 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Wooden soldier Rockettes dance with ballet girls attired in tutus adorned like ribbon candy
BOX-FOLDER 1/10	Viva Italia, 1961 January 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Rockettes costumed resembling Roman antiquity
BOX-FOLDER 1/11	To the Arts, 1962 February <b>Choreographer:</b> Marc Platt 2 photographs <i>Note:</i> Tribute to President John F. Kennedy

## Production Files, 1959-2014

Container	Contents
	<i>Note:</i> Production used three stage elevators
BOX-FOLDER 1/12	Disneyland USA, 1962 April <b>Choreographer:</b> Emilia Sherman for the Fantasyland bird dance 4 photographs <i>Includes:</i> Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse with the Rockettes
BOX-FOLDER 1/13	General Motors advertisement, 1962 <b>Producer:</b> Marc Platt <b>Location:</b> Flint, Michigan 1 photograph
BOX-FOLDER 1/14	High Spirits, 1963 November 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Program honoring Puerto Rico, with set made like a cigar box <i>Note:</i> Rockettes dance titled "Have a Cigar"
BOX-FOLDER 1/15	Living Nativity Christmas Spectacular, circa 1963 December <b>Photographer:</b> Possibly MSG Entertainment 1 photograph
BOX-FOLDER 1/16	Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, 1966 November 2 photographs <i>Note:</i> Ann Murphy, far left
BOX-FOLDER 1/17	Space Cadets and Christmas Show, 1966 December? 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Commemoration of United States space program with dance titled "Destination Moon"
BOX-FOLDER 1/18	Unidentified Rockettes show, 1968 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Rockette costume and tap shoes were hot pink and bright yellow
BOX-FOLDER 1/19	Words and Music by Irving Berlin, 1968 May 1 photograph; 1 publicity blurb
BOX-FOLDER 1/20	Salute to the Marines, 1960s 3 photographs <i>Includes:</i> Iwo Jima finale
BOX-FOLDER 1/21-28	Unidentified productions, 1960s 8 photographs <i>Note:</i> Shows with various themes, such as underwater ballet, secretary dance, and pastoral tunics
BOX-FOLDER 1/29	Potpourri '70, 1970 March 1 program
BOX-FOLDER 1/30	Autumn in New York, 1970 October 1 program
BOX-FOLDER 1/31	Living Nativity and Cheers!, 1970 November <b>Choreographers:</b> Russell Markert and Emilia Sherman for "The Perfect Thirty-Six" dance 3 photographs; 1 program <i>Note:</i> Trio of Ann Murphy, Klaus Ansoe, and Dino Rogers featured in "I'm Late! I'm Late ... " episode
BOX-FOLDER 1/32	Unidentified production by Peter Gennaro, 1972 June 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> Peter Gennaro onstage with costumed Rockettes
BOX-FOLDER 1/33	In One Era, Out the Other, 1972 November <b>Choreographer:</b> Peter Gennaro for Rockettes; Bettina Rosay for RCMH ballet



## Production Files, 1959-2014

Container	Contents
	1 program <i>Note:</i> Ann Murphy featured as The Canary role in "The Swing Era" episode
BOX-FOLDER 1/34	The King, 1973 February 1 photograph; 1 program <i>Note:</i> Tribute to Nat King Cole
BOX-FOLDER 1/35	Black Tie, 1973 February <b>Producer/director/choreographer:</b> Peter Gennaro
BOX-FOLDER 1/36	1 program Autumn in New York, 1973 September 1 photograph <i>Note:</i> West Point march
BOX-FOLDER 1/37	Radio City Music Hall Salutes America, 1975 June-1976 3 photographs <i>Note:</i> Bicentennial celebration
BOX-FOLDER 1/38	Living Nativity and Glittering Garlands, 1977 December 1 performance schedule
BOX-FOLDER 1/39	Springtime Carousel, 1978 March-April 2 programs <i>Includes:</i> Program with announcement of Radio City Music Hall closure
BOX-FOLDER 1/40	I Love New York mini-tour, 1979 August-September 2 schedule and information packets; 1 contract <i>Note:</i> Promotional tour on reopening of Radio City Music Hall
BOX-FOLDER 1/41	Opening for Liberace, 1979 November <b>Location:</b> Las Vegas Hilton, Nevada 1 photograph; 1 newspaper advertisement <i>Note:</i> Rockettes with Liberace and headliners, with Ann Murphy on knee, far left
BOX-FOLDER 1/42	Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1979 November 1 souvenir program <i>Note:</i> Reopening of Radio City Music Hall
BOX-FOLDER 1/43	Statue of Liberty tribute, 1970s 1 photograph
BOX-FOLDER 1/44	Unidentified show, 1970s <b>Photographer:</b> Agence France-Presse 2 photographs <i>Note:</i> Rockettes kickline costumed for unidentified dance captured from "prompt side" (stage right) and "other side" (stage left)
MAPCASE FOLDER 1	Unidentified show, 1970s <b>Photographer:</b> Agence France-Presse 2 photographs <i>Note:</i> Rockettes kickline costumed for unidentified dance captured from "prompt side" (stage right) and "other side" (stage left)
BOX-FOLDER 1/45-46	Unidentified productions, 1970s? 3 photographs
BOX-FOLDER 1/47	It's Spring: The Holiday Spectacular, and The Glory of Easter, 1980 March-April 1 souvenir program <i>Note:</i> Published as "The Great Stage" (March-April 1980), Vol. 1, no. 4
BOX-FOLDER 1/48	A Rockette Spectacular with Ginger Rogers, 1980 May Photograph; May show schedule; television taping schedule

## Production Files, 1959-2014

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 1/49	America, 1981 February-March Program; letter with envelope; information page <i>Note:</i> Ann Murphy's final show with the Rockettes in New York City
BOX-FOLDER 1/50	Encore: 50 Golden Years of Showstoppers, 1982 March 1 program <i>Note:</i> Radio City Music Hall Golden Jubilee
BOX-FOLDER 1/51	Christmas Spectacular, [1982 December-1983] <b>Location:</b> Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, California 2 photographs with press blurb attached; 2 programs <i>Note:</i> Ann Murphy St. John listed among Rockette credits
BOX-FOLDER 1/51	Christmas Spectacular, 1990 November-December Program
BOX-FOLDER 1/52	Christmas Spectacular, 1999 November-December Program
BOX-FOLDER 1/53	Christmas Spectacular, 2014 November-December Program <i>Laid in:</i> Flyer for 2015 Spring Spectacular
BOX-FOLDER 1/54	Wooden soldiers episode, undated Color digital print
BOX-FOLDER 1/55	Unidentified production, undated Color photograph
BOX 1-3	<b>Subject Files, 1960-2015</b> An assortment of materials connected to Radio City Music Hall, notable figures associated with the Music Hall or Rockettes, the Rockette Alumnae Association, and other items that relate to Ann Murphy's life. Arranged alphabetically.
BOX-FOLDER 2/1	Autobiography dust jacket, 2014
BOX-FOLDER 2/2	Gould, James, 1973 Photograph <i>Note:</i> Gould's retirement as president of Radio City Music Hall, with presentation by Ann Murphy on behalf of the Rockettes
BOX-FOLDER 1/56	Key to collection photographs, undated 73 3x5 cards with printed or handwritten identifications <i>Note:</i> Murphy's personal key to photographs included in her collection
BOX-FOLDER 2/3	Markert, Russell, 1971 and undated 4 photographs; 1 print of artwork <i>Includes:</i> Markert with choreographer Emilia Sherman and dance captain Muriel Kilduff Hake ("Duffey")
BOX-FOLDER 2/4	Murphy, Ann, undated <b>Photographer:</b> W. Pannebaker and unknown <b>Locations:</b> Pre-show dressing room; onstage 2 photographs
BOX-FOLDER 2/5-9	Radio City Music Hall, circa 1972-1979 and undated 4 photographs; invitation <i>Note:</i> Images show interior and exterior spaces
BOX-FOLDER 2/10	Rockette Alumnae Association, 1973, 2012-2015 Souvenir program; event programs; invitation

## Subject Files, 1960-2015

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 2/11	St. John, Tom, undated <b>Photographer:</b> Impact Photo, Inc. and unknown 3 photographs <i>Includes:</i> Stage manager George Cort and control board operator Frank Hawkins
BOX-FOLDER 2/12-19	Stage management, 1962, 1970-1981 7 documents <i>Includes:</i> Instructions, cues, and timings for control board, contour curtain, steam curtain, turntable, and hydraulic lifts, and control board position description
BOX 3	Tap shoes, undated Pair of Broadway-style women's silver tap shoes
BOX-FOLDER 2/20	Volmer, Ginny [Virginia Volmer, Mrs. Earl Lippy], circa 1960 2 photographs <i>Note:</i> Retirement party celebrating 27 years