
Summary Information

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Repository: Princeton University Library. Special Collections. Manuscripts Division
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Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Blanche Pauli (born Virginia C. Taney) was an American singer, actress, and vaudeville performer who worked mainly in stock companies touring the northeastern United States and Canada from the late 1890s through 1904. The collection consists of personal and family correspondence and documents, photographs, play scripts and actor's sides, sheet music, playbills, clippings, and other materials related to her professional career. Some materials also relate to Pauli's husband, Herman Utley Boardman; her performance partner, Robson Dalton; and other members of her family.
Location: This collection is stored offsite at the ReCAP facility.
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Blanche Pauli, as she was known professionally, was a singer (billed as "The Female Baritone"), actress, and vaudevillian, active in the northeastern United States and Canada from the late 1890s through 1904. Pauli was born around 1870 in Brooklyn, New York, and christened Virginia C. Taney. Early in her theatrical career, she was a member of a chorus known as The Criterion Girls. While Pauli found occasional work in New York as a supporting actress, she found her leading roles primarily with stock companies, including a company called The Dominion Stock, that toured from Pennsylvania to Quebec. She played in melodramas, operettas, and vaudeville acts that were stock fare at the time. During those years she joined up with performer Robson Dalton to form the vaudeville team of "Robson and Pauli." Pauli stopped performing regularly in 1904 and married Herman Utley Boardman, the grandson of the owner of the house in New York City where she lived. She was afterward known as Mrs. Virginia Boardman.

This collection consists of Blanche Pauli's professional and family correspondence, photographs, play scripts and actor's sides, sheet music for vaudeville and minstrel show songs, playbills, personal and family memorabilia, and clippings. Some materials also relate to Pauli's husband, Herman Utley Boardman, and her performance partner, Robson Dalton. Headshots and photographs of Blanche Pauli and Robson Dalton in costume, datebooks documenting Pauli's travels, performance announcements and reviews, and other materials provide a glimpse into the life of a regional vaudeville performer at the turn of the century. Scripts, playbills, sheet music, and libretti also provide documentation of the songs and plays common among vaudeville and minstrel performers in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Access

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Provenance and Acquisition

Additions were a gift of Reverend Daniel J. Gatti, S.J., in 2017 (AM 2018-38). No acquisition information is currently available for earlier accessions, though materials were likely acquired from multiple sources.

Appraisal

No materials were separated during 2017 processing.

Processing and Other Information

Encoding

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2017-11-13T13:50-0500

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings

• Boardman, Herman Utley.
• Dalton, Robson.
• Pauli, Blanche, 1870?-  
• Actresses -- United States -- Sources.
• Entertainers -- United States -- Sources.
• Minstrel music -- United States -- Sources.
• Revues -- United States -- Sources.
• Singers -- United States -- Sources.
• Vaudeville -- United States -- Sources.
• Clippings.
• Correspondence.
• Photographs.
• Playbills.
• Scripts (documents).
• Sheet music.
• American history/Gilded Age, Populism, Progressivism
• Theater/Film
Correspondence, 1866-1932

Arrangement: Correspondence of Blanche Pauli is arranged alphabetically by correspondent, followed by a group of family correspondence that is arranged by family member.

Description: Consists of correspondence of Blanche Pauli with family members, professional contacts, and admirers, along with a group of family correspondence, including correspondence of Herman Utley Boardman, Claudia Pauli, and other members of the Taney family. Blanche Pauli is also often referred to in correspondence as "Jean," "Dee," or "Deede."

Baker, Sam J., Dr., 1899 November 15  Box: 1 Folder: 1
Boardman, Herman Utley, 1904  Box: 1 Folder: 2
Boardman, Herman Utley, 1914  Box: 1 Folder: 3
Coleman, Halbert A., 1902-1903  Box: 1 Folder: 4
Dalton, Robson, 1902-1922  Box: 1 Folder: 5
Diller, Mr., undated  Box: 1 Folder: 6
Hartman, M.S., 1899  Box: 1 Folder: 7
Huff, William Morton, 1899 August 5  Box: 1 Folder: 8
Smith, Ira F., 1914 October 7  Box: 1 Folder: 9
Taney, Francis J. (Brother), 1914-1917  Box: 1 Folder: 10
Description: Outgoing letters were written by Herman Utley Boardman on behalf of Blanche Pauli.
Taney, Harriette (Sister), 1904-1915  Box: 1 Folder: 11
Unidentified Admirers, 1895-1899  Box: 1 Folder: 12
Invitations and Party Favors, 1883  Box: 1 Folder: 13
Family Correspondence, 1866-1932
Herman Utley Boardman Correspondence with Mrs. John Boardman (Mother), 1904-1932  Box: 1 Folder: 14
Herman Utley Boardman Letters to Robson Dalton, 1914-1916  Box: 1 Folder: 15
Letters to Claudia Pauli from "Harry" and "Thomas", 1883-1884  Box: 1 Folder: 16
Estella Taney Correspondence, 1866-1889  Box: 1 Folder: 17
Description: Includes a group of love letters from Isidore Paoletti (1866-1867), as well as one letter to Dr. W.W. Winthrope (1889).
Francis J. Taney Letters to Harriette Taney, 1912-1914  
John Taney Letter to E. Olivera, 1884 November 29  
Thomas P. Kenny Letter to J.S. Stohl, 1902 October 6

Photographs, circa 1897-1904  
Description: Consists of headshots and photographs of Blanche Pauli in costume, along with one negative and print depicting a performance.

Datebook and Address Book, 1898-1990

Visiting and Business Cards, circa 1897-1904  
Description: Consists of visiting cards and business cards of Blanche Pauli and her professional associates, as well as a metal card holder inscribed with her name.

Bills, Invoices, and Receipts, 1890-1925  
Description: Materials relate to Blanche Pauli and her family members; they include funeral bills for Francis Taney and Agnes M. Baker, a bill for Pauli’s rent in the building of Lucie M. Boardman, a mortgage bill for H. Utley Boardman, and other receipts.

Personal and Family Memorabilia, 1887-1899  
Description: Includes clippings, religious cards and devotionals belonging to Francis J. Taney, a "Catechism of the History of the United States," blank postcards, a ship joiner's log for John Taney, and an advertisement for "Mlle. Taney's Institute" in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

Système Jay Gloves, 1890s  
Description: Also includes a photocopy of a patent for the glove design.

Newspaper Clippings, 1898-1917  
Description: Consists of a group of clippings collected and occasionally annotated by Blanche Pauli. There are clippings about Pauli, including reviews of her work ("Hello Bill" and other performances) and an 1898 article documenting Pauli's receipt of a medal from the New York Fire Department after she saved the lives of several people by helping them escape from a burning building. There are also clippings about theater, politics, and current events, including articles about suffragists, Lillian Clayton Jewett, President William McKinley, and obituaries of public figures.

Newspapers and Magazines, 1883-1904

Robson Dalton Materials, 1898-1902  
Description: Consists of materials related to Pauli's vaudeville partner Robson Dalton, including photographs, advertisements and printed materials related to Dalton's performance in the Strange Adventures of Amos Skeeter, and a cartoon drawn by Dalton about the sinking of the USS Maine.
The Dominion Stock Company Announcements, undated

Miscellaneous Theater Materials, 1891-1898

Description: Includes printed ballads of H. Antoine D'Arcy; an "International Descriptive Catalog of Plays and Dramatic Works" (1905-1906), which includes information about vaudeville and minstrel shows; an advertisement for performer Inez Shannon; and travel-related materials (hotel list, railroad schedule).

Opera Libretti, undated

Description: Includes libretti for The Mikado and Olivette.

Scripts and Actor's Sides, circa 1890-1910

Description: Includes typescript and manuscript play scripts and actor's sides for parts in popular vaudeville and other stage acts. Many are heavily annotated.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by play title.

The Deemster, undated

The Devil's Mine, undated

Fireman's Ward, undated

A Great Game, undated

Mama's New Husband, undated

My Neighbor's Wife, undated

My Old New Hampshire Home, undated

The Mystic Mountain, undated

Rip Van Winkle, undated

The Secret Enemy, undated

The Smugglers, undated

Strange Adventures of Amos Skeeter, undated

Tangled Hearts, undated

A Trip to the City, undated

Under Two Flags, undated

A Woman of Society, undated

Vaudeville Acts Sides, undated

Untitled Sides, circa 1900-1910

Playbills, 1899-1907
Description: Consists of playbills for plays in which Blanche Pauli appeared, as well as some playbills for similar plays.

Arrangement: Playbills for plays in which Blanche Pauli appeared are arranged alphabetically, followed by playbills for other plays in which she did not appear.

- Playbills: A-H, 1899-1902
- Playbills: I-O, 1901-1904
- Playbills: P-Z, 1900-1903
- Playbills: Other, 1900-1907

Sheet Music, 1872-1919

Description: Consists of manuscript and printed professional copies of sheet music for popular vaudeville and minstrel songs.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by song title.

- "Annie Laurie", undated
- "As I'd Nothing Else to Do", undated
- "Come Back to Erin's The Song I Love Best", 1919
- "Down on the Old Suanee", 1900
- "Dreaming of You", 1902
- "Forever, Dear!", 1900
- "Gayest Manhattan", undated
- "The Happy Pair", undated
- "I Know in Mem'ry You'll Recall Me", 1902
- "If All the World Were Mine Today", 1902
- "In Old Virginia Among the Waving Pines", 1902
- "In the House of Too Much Trouble", 1900
- "Life's Dream is O'er", undated
- "Ma Rainbow Coon", undated
- "Mid the Green Fields of Virginia", 1899
- "My Downtown Girl", 1902
- "My Heart's Tonight in Texas", 1900
- "Please Mr. Conductor", 1902
- "One Little Word", 1899
- "Roses Underneath the Snow", 1872
- "Say You Won't Forget Me Darling!", 1872
"Shall We Never Meet Again?", 1896  
"Speak to Me, Speak", undated  
"That's All", undated  
"There Are Two Sides to a Story", 1900  
"'Tis the Song That Fills My Mem'ry", 1902  
"Under the Bamboo Tree", 1902  
"When the Birds Go North Again", 1900  
"Why Don't You Love Me in the Same Old Way", 1897