



Finding Aid for

EVA TANGUAY PAPERS, 1892-1947

Accession 2005.100

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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2005.100

CREATOR: Tanguay, Eva, 1878-1947

TITLE: Eva Tanguay papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1892 - 1947

QUANTITY: 2.8 cubic ft. and 3 oversize boxes

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: The Eva Tanguay papers document the life of one of vaudeville's most charismatic stars. The collection includes a large amount of sheet music and lyrics, many of which were penned by Tanguay herself.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The papers are open for research.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to the Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Donation, 2005
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 2005.100, Eva Tanguay papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Benson Ford Research Center staff
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Finding aid written by Benson Ford Research Center staff, and published in May, 2013.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Eva Tanguay was a showstopper - one of vaudeville's most charismatic stars. Long before performers like Madonna made their mark, Eva Tanguay was wowing them on the vaudeville stage.

The flamboyant singing comedienne was the highest paid performer for over a decade during the heyday of American vaudeville in the early 1900s. Known as the "I Don't Care Girl" after her most famous song, Eva's bold, self-confident songs symbolized a new, emancipated American woman.

Born in Canada in 1878, Eva Tanguay grew up in Holyoke, Massachusetts. As a child, Eva was already an actress, touring in productions like "Little Lord Fauntleroy." By the turn of the 20th century, Eva turned from stock and Broadway plays to the two-a-day vaudeville circuit, making her New York vaudeville debut at Hammerstein's Victoria Theater in 1904. About this time, she made a huge splash with her performance of the tune, "I Don't Care," which became her signature song. Eva steadily rose from being a \$500 a week performer to earning as much as \$3,500 a week by 1910.

Outrageous, full of energy, and often risqué, the wild-haired blonde defied conventional values as she flaunted her irreverent sense of humor and sensuality. Eva's audiences flocked to her performances - not to hear a lovely voice (which was average and rather brassy), but for her ability to light up the stage with her performances. Eva could really sell a song. People were intrigued by what she was wearing and how she was behaving. Her daring, revealing and, often, flamboyant costumes caused scandal in their day. Eva once quipped, "When I put on tights, my name went up in lights!" Eva toured not only the American circuit, but was a hit in cities like Toronto and London as well. Tanguay also made two movies, "Energetic Eva" (1916) and "The Wild Girl" (1917), though they met with little success.

Eva well understood the value of self-promotion. She would take each city by storm, spending liberally on publicity and advertising. She was often billed as "The Genius of Mirth and Song," and "The Evangelist of Joy."

Eva Tanguay's many fans loved her - her exuberant personality fascinated vaudeville audiences for more than three decades. Late in her career, the show business publication *Variety* wrote, "What Ruth is to baseball, Dempsey to pugilism and Chaplin to pictures, Tanguay is to vaudeville. She embodies the spirit of youth in her work, her personality is elusive and baffling as ever, and she has the color that penetrates beyond the four walls of a theatre and cashes in at the box office."

Yet, as vaudeville began to fade in the late 1920s, so too did Eva's luck. She lost a fortune during the 1929 stock market crash. Cataracts had dramatically affected her vision by the early 1930s, but her sight was restored by an operation paid for by admirer Sophie Tucker. Arthritis slowed Eva in 1937 and she became more and more reclusive. By the time of her death on January 11, 1947 in Hollywood, California, her once vast fortune was reduced to \$500.

- Miller, Jeanine H. (2006, June). Eva Tanguay, Vaudeville's Star. Retrieved from http://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/pic/2006/06_june.asp.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Eva Tanguay papers chronicle the career of the vaudeville legend and “I Don’t Care Girl” Eva Tanguay. The collection is divided into four series, **Personal and Professional Papers, Photographs, Orchestration and Lyrics, and Promotional Material**.

The **Personal and Professional Papers series, 1898-1938**, contain some of Eva’s personal correspondence and documents such as her marriage certificate. Professional papers include business correspondence and contracts, scripts and playbills, performance reviews, and ephemera such as menus from dinners held in her honor and advertisements for products she sponsored.

The **Photographs series, 1880-1939**, consists primarily of professionally produced promotional photographs of Eva (mostly 8 x 10 black and white images and some postcards). There are also a small number of personal photographs of family and friends. The photographs are largely undated and have been arranged by approximate dates and date ranges. Some of the photographs have been signed or otherwise annotated by Eva.

The **Orchestration and Lyrics series** includes sheet music and lyrics for a number of songs, many of which were penned by Eva herself. Included in this series are a number of working and annotated copies of Eva’s major hit, “I Don’t Care”.

The **Promotional Materials series, 1892-1947**, contains newspaper clippings, fliers, posters, scrapbooks, and magazine articles related to Eva and her career. The series includes a serial article that she wrote and published in American Weekly in January of 1947.

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is arranged in four series:

- Personal and Professional Papers series, 1898-1938
- Photographs series, 1880-1939
- Orchestration and Lyrics series
- Promotional Materials series, 1892-1947

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
Tanguay, Eva, 1878-1947.

Subjects
Vaudeville--United States.
Vaudeville songs.
Vaudeville shows.

Genre and Form
Advertisements
Clippings.
Menus.
Photographs.
Postcards.
Promotional material.

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PAPERS, 1898-1938

Personal

Box 1

Correspondence and Writings, 1919 and undated
Correspondence with Henry Ford, clippings, 1934
Marriage Certificate, 1913
Miscellaneous Publications, 1901-1902, 1912
Promissory Note, 1909

Professional

Business Contracts, 1911-1928
Business Correspondence, 1911-1924, and undated
Fan Letters (from audience members, fellow performers, and theater owners),
1910-1938
Menus, 1905, 1910, 1911, undated
Performance Notes and Monologues, undated
Performance Reviews, 1909 and undated
Product Endorsements, 1913
Proof Sheets and Flyers, undated
Scripts, undated
Telegrams, 1905-1924 and undated
Theater Programs
1898
1901
1902-1903
1904-1905
1907-1908
1909
1910

Box 2

1911-1912
1913
1914-1915
1916-1917
1918
1920-1921
1923-1927
Undated
Tour Schedules, 1928 and undated
Tributes, 1908-1911 and undated

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1880-1939 (See Also Box 9)

Personal

Box 3 (Oversize)

Apartment
Childhood, circa 1880
Friends and Family
Localities
Travel, 1911, undated
Young Adulthood, undated

Professional

Headshots
Juvenile Performer
Theater Marquees
Pre-1900
Circa 1900-Circa 1910
Circa 1911-Circa 1920 (2 folders)
Circa 1921-Circa 1939 (2 folders)

Box 4

MUSICAL SCORES

A Good Fellow—music and lyrics
Adam and Eve—music
Aimee and Texas and Me—music
All I Want Is You—music and lyrics
All You Need Is the Nerve and the Smile—music
A Lovin Man—music
Amateur—music
America I Love You—music
And Still They Call Me Crazy—music and lyrics
Angelina—music and lyrics
Are You Prepared for The Summer—music
Art and Genius—music and lyrics
Be a Booster Not a Knocker—music
Because I'm Married Now—music and lyrics
Because I've Got to Be Crazy—music
Be Good That's a Lonesome Job—music and lyrics
Belong to the Navy—music
Big Amazon—lyrics
Billy Sunday—music
Bless You—music
Boys, You've Got to Hand It to the Ladies—music and lyrics
Broadway Girl—music
Buck Dance—music
Business at the Same Old Stand—lyrics
Can't I Be Your Honey Boy—music

Can't Keep a Good Man Down—music and lyrics
Can't Lose Me—lyrics
Care a Little Bit Less—music and lyrics
Careless—music
Caveman—music
Clap Hands—music
Crazier than Me—music
Cross Word Fan—music and lyrics
Cozy Corner—music and lyrics
Cuddle Up—music
Dance Medley—music and lyrics
Dancing Around—music
Daughter of the U.S.A.—music
Days That I Spent With You—music and lyrics
Devil—music and lyrics
Dimes and Nickles—cover only
Diplomacy—music and lyrics
Does It Pay—music and lyrics
Done Before—music
Don't Feel Sorry For Me—music
Don't Forget Me When I'm Gone—music
Dynamic Personality—music and lyrics
Eccentric Dance—music
Efferfescient (sic) Eva—music
Egotistical Eva—music and lyrics
Eighteen Days—music
Entrance—music
Eva's Rosary—music and lyrics
Everybody Must Keep Moving—music
Every Day's Thanksgiving to Me—lyrics

Box 5

Famous—music
Fanny—music
Fanny and Annie—music
Fascinating Game—music
Fish, Fish, Fish—music and lyrics
Flirting—music
For I'm a Bohemian—music
Free and Easy—music and lyrics
Gee I'd Like to Be Mayor—music and lyrics
Get Happy—music
Get Up and Get Out—music
Give an Imitation of Me—music and lyrics
Go As Far As You Like Kid—music
Good Bye (Forever)—music

Good Night—music and lyrics
Gotta Give Me Credit—music
Happy—music
Headlining the Bills—music
Hello Eva—music and lyrics
Hello Everybody—music and lyrics
Here to Stay—music
Hit with Me—music
How Do You Do—music
How Do They Get That Way—music
Hornpipe—music
Hold-up Song—music and lyrics
How I Remember—music
Hotten Tot—music
Hunting the Hun—music
I Can't Help It—music
I Do My Best—lyrics
I Don't Care—lyrics
I Don't Care—music
I Don't Know—music
I Go On Forever—music and lyrics
I Had My Own Life to Live—music and lyrics
I Have Something to Say to You—music
I Love Everybody—music and lyrics
I Love It—music and lyrics
I Love These Kids of Mine—music and lyrics
I Really Care After All—music and lyrics
I'm Satisfied—music and lyrics
I Think It Must Be Love—music
I've Got to Do Some Steppin'—music
I Want to Be Your Peter Pan—music and lyrics
I Was Built for Speed and Not for Comfort—music and lyrics
I Will Play in Your Yard Some More—music and lyrics
I'm Wondering What You're Thinking About Me—music and lyrics
I Wonder What I'll Be When I Come Back—music

Box 6

I'd Like to Be an Animal in the Zoo—music and lyrics
I'd Like to Give You Something—music and lyrics
If I Were a Boy You Bet I'd Belong to the Navy—lyrics
If I Were Mother Eve Instead of Eva—music and lyrics
If They'd Ever Send Eva Tanguay Over There—music
If You're Crazy About the Women You're Not Crazy at All—music and lyrics
I'll Get Famous Yet—music
I'm For You All the Time—music
I'm Glad I'm Here—music and lyrics

Box 6 continued:

I'm Glad I'm Alive—music and lyrics
I'm Happy That's All—music
I'm Here, I'm Here—music
I'm Looking for Him—music
I'm Lonely—music
I'm Lucky to Get By—music
I'm Not a Crossword Fan—music
I'm Not That Kind of a Girl—music
I'm So Forgetful—music and lyrics
I'm the Aimee of Vaudeville—music
In Gratitude—lyrics
In the Studio—music
It—music
It Certainly Costs Too Much to Live—lyrics
It Doesn't Match My Nose—music and lyrics
It Might Be Worse—music and lyrics
It Pays to Advertise—lyrics
It's a Gay Life—music and lyrics
It's All the Same to Me—music
It's Different in the Movies—music
It's Funny What a Suit of Clothes Will Do—music and lyrics
It's My Birthday Everyday—music and lyrics
I've Got Mine—music and lyrics
I've Got My Own Little Life to Live—music
Imitations of Me—music
Indurance Record—music and lyrics (Endurance on music, Indurance on lyrics)
Just a Gentle Touch—music and lyrics
Just Me—lyrics
Keep Moving—music
Kicking Wouldn't Do You Any Good—music
Kidnap Me—music
La Marsellaise—music
Leave It to Eva—music
Little Lady Baby—music
Los Angeles—lyrics
Me and Myself—music
Medley—music
Method in My Madness—music
Miss Tabasco—music and lyrics
Money—music and lyrics
More Than a Million to Me—music
Mother—music and lyrics
Murder Song—music
Murphy—music
My Little Firefly—music and lyrics

My Little Toy Man—music and lyrics
My Mary Jane—music and lyrics
My Sambo—music and lyrics
My Specialty—music and lyrics
My Wild Days Have Only Begun—music
National Patrol—music
Naughty Man—music
Navy Blues—music
New York I'm All for You—music and lyrics
No One Takes Me Seriously—music
Nothing Bothers Me—music and lyrics
Nutty—music
Office Boy—music
Octopus (sic)—music
Oh Eva—music and lyrics
One Hundred Years from Now—lyrics
Opening—music
Outside of That You're All Right—music
Paris Flight—music and lyrics
Pavlova—music
Pays to Advertise—music and lyrics
Peace—music
Personality—music and lyrics
Play Out—music
Please Don't Forget Me When I'm Gone—music
Please Don't Stop Knocking—music and lyrics
Poor Little Eva—music and lyrics
Recitation for Broken Hearts—lyrics
Red Hot Eva—music
Regiment of Tanguays—music and lyrics
Ring-a-Ling—music
Ringtail Blues—music

Box 7

Sailor's Hornpipers—music
Sailor Joe—music
Sally McNally—music
Salome Dance—music
Sambo Girl (musical production)—music and lyrics
Same Old Stand—music and lyrics
Save Your Hammer and Buy a Horn—music
Sensation—music and lyrics
She's Mine, All Mine—music and lyrics
Some More Knocks—lyrics
Some One Happy—music
Someone Left the Cage Open—music

Box 7 continued:

Something for Nothing—music
Song and Dance—music
Songs for East, 1918-1919
Spotlight Man—lyrics
Station E.V.A.—music and lyrics
Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones—music
Still Headlining Bells—music and lyrics
Success—music and lyrics
Suffragette—music
Suppose Nobody Cared—music
Sweet Cookie of Mine—music
Tanguay Blues—lyrics
Eva Tanguay's Love Song—music and lyrics
Tanguay Rag—music
Tanguay Spells Success—music and lyrics
Tattooed Lady—music and lyrics
Texas, Mae West & Me—music and lyrics
Thanks to You—lyrics
Thanksgiving Dary—music and lyrics
That Spanish Rag—music
That Tanguay Girl—music
That Would Never Make a Hit with Me—lyrics
That's My Specialty—lyrics
The Older They Get the Harder They Fall—music
The Thief—music
There Goes Crazy Eva—music and lyrics
There Must Be Someone—music
They'll Remember Me in History a Hundred Years from Now—lyrics
Things Are Not Always As They Seem—music and lyrics
This Explains It—lyrics
Too Much Too (sic) Live—music
Trapping—music and lyrics
Tuck in Eva—music
Tut-Tut-Tut—lyrics
Valse Song—music
Wee-Gee—music and lyrics
Well Here I Am—the Same Old Nut—lyrics
We'll Have a Little House of Our Own—lyrics
We're All Good Fellows—music and lyrics
When I Run My Theater on Broadway—music and lyrics
When Teddy Is a Partner of Mine—lyrics
When the Dog Makes a Monkey Out of Me—music and lyrics
Wild—music
Wild Girl Medley—music
Wine Song—music

“Whistle” Songs—music and lyrics
Who Discovered Love?—music and lyrics
Who Has It?—lyrics
Why Should I Worry?—lyrics
Wish—lyrics
Won’t You Take Me Home With You—music and lyrics
What Will the Old Men Do for Excitement—music and lyrics
What Money Can’t Buy—music
What’s It All About—music
You Can’t Keep a Good Man Down—music
You Can’t Lose Me—music and lyrics
You Have to Be Crazy—music
You Naughty, Naughty Bold, Bad Man—lyrics
You’ve Gotta Give Me Credit—music and lyrics
Unidentified Music and Lyrics (2 folders)

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS, 1892-1947

Box 8 (Oversize)

American Weekly, articles written by Eva Tanguay, 1947
Awards, undated
Copies of Drawing of Eva, 1912
Das Theater, magazine, 1912
Newspaper clippings
 1900-1905
 1906-1910

Box 9 (Oversize)

 1911-1915
 1916-1930
 1931-1947
 Undated
Newspapers, 1892, 1983, 1908
Photographs, undated