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## Interactive Diary of Hollywood Lyricist Ray Evans

John Anderies

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## Interactive Diary of Hollywood Lyricist Ray Evans

### Abstract

Essay about digitized version of Ray Evans' diary for 1939-1945

### Keywords

Music, Diaries

### Disciplines

Film and Media Studies | Library and Information Science | Music

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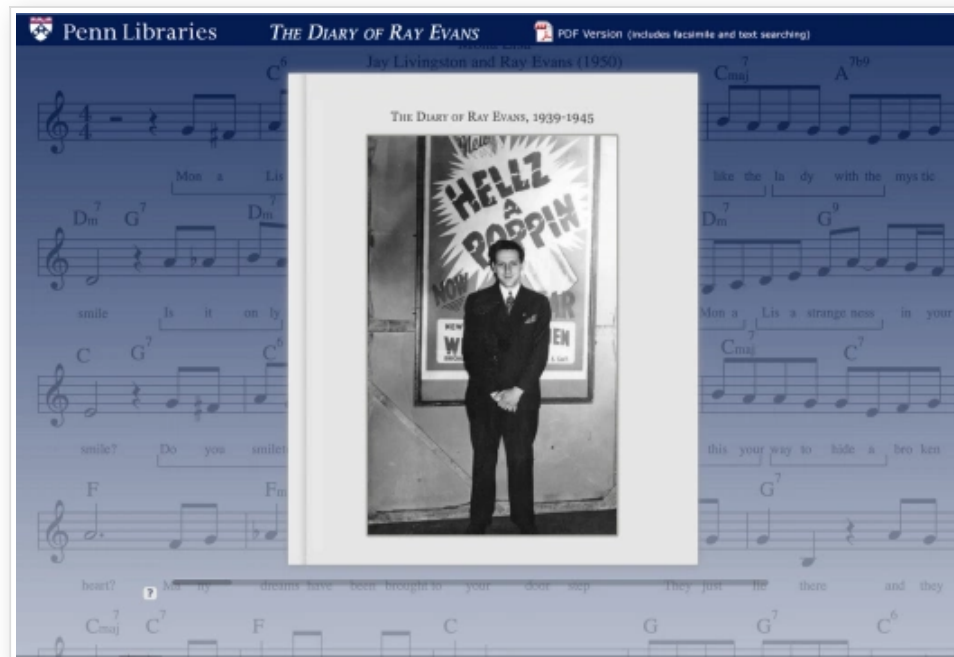
*Nothing can more effectually contribute to the Cultivation & Improvement of a Country, the Wisdom, Riches, & Strength, Virtue and Piety, the Welfare & Happiness of a People, than a proper Education of Youth, by forming their Manners, imbuing*

**03**  
Wednesday  
JUN 2015

## *Interactive Diary of Hollywood Lyricist Ray Evans*

POSTED BY JOHN F. ANDERIES IN POSTS

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– The Diary of Ray Evans, 1939-1945, has been digitized and transcribed, and is presented in the form of an online flip book.

### ♣ WELCOME

Welcome to Unique at Penn, part of the family of University of Pennsylvania Libraries blogs. Every week this space will feature descriptions and contextualization of items from the collections of the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. The site focuses on those materials held by Penn which are in some sense “unique” - drawn from both our special and circulating collections, whether a one-of-a-kind medieval manuscript or a twentieth-century popular novel with generations of student notes penciled inside. See the About page for more on the blog and to contact the editor.

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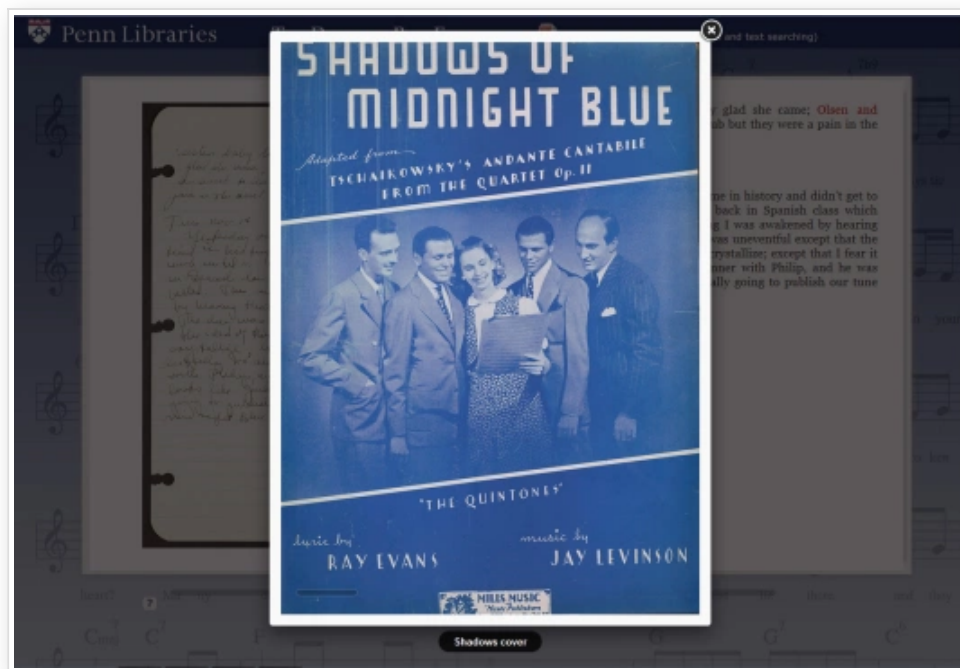
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The [papers](#) of Hollywood lyricist and University of Pennsylvania alumnus Ray Evans (Wharton class of 1936) were donated to the [Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts](#) in 2011 by the [Ray and Wyn Ritchie Evans Foundation](#). Among the treasures in the collection is the songster's **diary**, kept during the war years of 1939-1945. Written in pen on looseleaf notebook paper and bound by a small three ring binder, it may have been one of several diaries kept by Evans, but today it is the only one that survives.

Ray Evans is best known for producing with his songwriting partner Jay Livingston (Penn class of 1937) hit songs such as "Mona Lisa" (famously sung by Nat King Cole), "Que Sera Sera" (Doris Day), and the holiday favorite "Silver Bells" (made famous by Bing Crosby). These tunes were featured in movies of their day, winning Academy Awards for "Mona Lisa" and "Que Sera Sera" as well as their earlier song "Buttons and Bows." How Ray Evans got to this point may be traced back to his years as a struggling songwriter, first in New York and then in Hollywood.



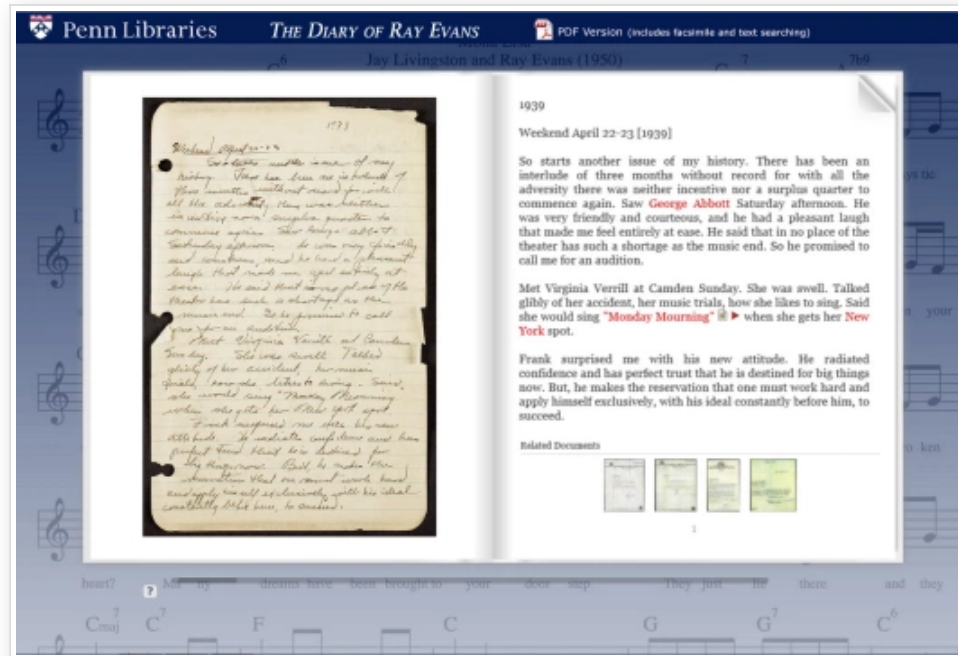
– Documents from the Ray Evans papers, such as the sheet music for the Livingston and Evans song "Shadows of Midnight Blue" are linked at

- August 2018
- December 2017
- November 2017
- July 2017
- October 2016
- July 2016
- June 2016
- May 2016
- March 2016
- December 2015
- November 2015
- October 2015
- September 2015
- August 2015
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- March 2015
- February 2015
- January 2015
- October 2014
- September 2014
- July 2014
- June 2014
- May 2014
- April 2014
- February 2014
- January 2014
- December 2013
- November 2013

appropriate places within the online diary.

As a means to encourage exploration of these formative years, Evans' lyrics and music in general, and his collection of personal and professional papers here at Penn we have transcribed and digitized the diary, presenting it as an online flip book. Images of the diary pages and a transcription for easier reading are presented side by side. And supplemental material from the papers has been scanned and linked to the diary pages for further exploration.

Simply trying to make ends meet, the young Ray Evans is often conflicted about his future. Should he continue to pursue a dream of "making it" in show business or should he buckle down and put his college degree in business to work? For a time, neither course seems to offer much hope, and Ray is revealed through the early pages of the diary to be dejected and feeling blue. Ray also has poor luck with women and his friendship and working relationship with Jay Livingston is often strained.



– In the online flip book, names and places link to entries in Wikipedia. Online audio and sheet music of Evans' songs are linked when available too.

- October 2013
- September 2013
- August 2013
- July 2013
- June 2013
- May 2013
- April 2013
- March 2013
- February 2013
- January 2013
- December 2012
- October 2012
- September 2012
- August 2012
- July 2012
- June 2012
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The song-writing team put forth a good bit of energy to make connections in the New York music scene. In the fall of 1939 they met the producers Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson, who starred in their own Broadway review, *Hellzapoppin'*, at the Winter Garden Theater. Jay and Ray auditioned for the pair and eventually received several commissions for songs that appeared in the show and in other productions. One of their first commercial successes was the song "G'Bye Now," which made the Hit Parade in 1941.

In 1944 Jay and Ray moved to Hollywood with the hope of participating in a new Olsen & Johnson show on the west coast. While Ray experiences the loneliness of having few friends in a new locale, his musical life picks up significantly. The chance to make it in Hollywood invigorates Ray. He describes the frequent meetings, phone calls, auditions, rehearsals and recordings necessary for the song-writing partners to get their foot in the door.



- Among the material linked from the online diary are photographs, correspondence, sheet music, lyrics, newspaper clippings, and scripts. Here, Ray Evans and actress Betty Hutton are pictured on set.

**Michael P. Williams**

**Molly Des Jardin**

**Richard Griscom**

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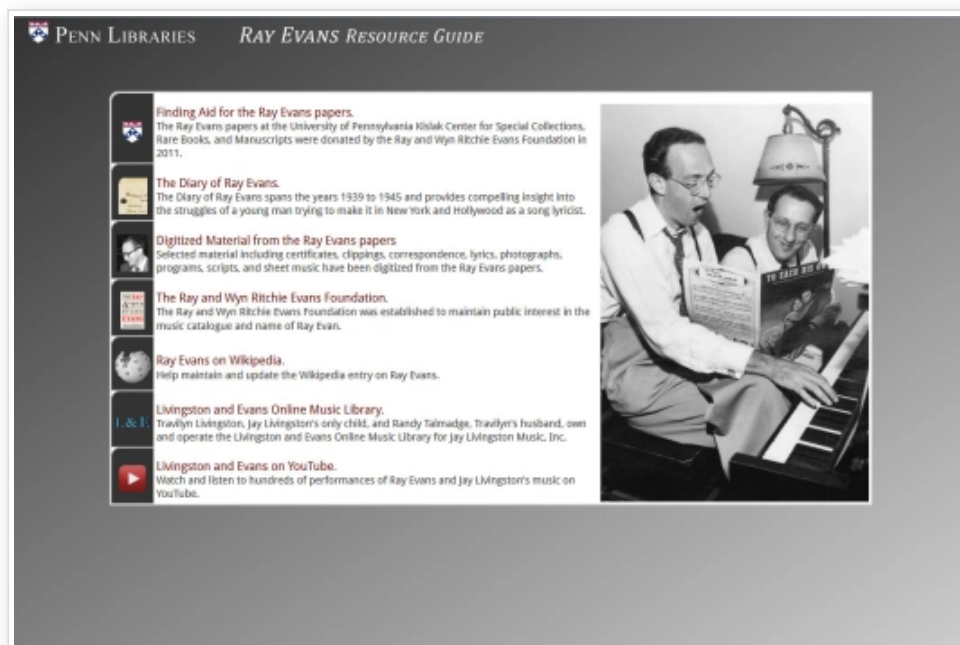
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As the diary closes out in February 1945, the team is on the verge of great success. In 1946 they were signed to an exclusive contract with Paramount Pictures. And in 1948 they won the first of their three Academy Awards for Best Original Song. Ray's poor luck with women would change too that year, marrying actress, writer, and playwright Wyn Ritchie, who would be his life partner for nearly 56 years ([The Wyn Ritchie Evans papers](#) are also available here at Penn).

Included in the diary transcription are links to selected names and places found on Wikipedia — theaters and clubs, producers and agents, songwriters and singers — as well as links to digitized sheet music, lyrics and audio recordings from the Ray Evans papers. Scattered throughout the diary and linked from the bottom of selected diary pages, are images of supplemental material from the papers, including letters, scripts, newspaper clippings, and photographs.



– The Ray Evans Resource Guide brings together several resources at Penn and beyond for the study and enjoyment of the music and life of Ray Evans.

This digitized diary and the supplemental images form part of a larger site of [Ray Evans Resources](#), from here at Penn and beyond: Here you may peruse the finding aid for the Ray Evans papers; read heartbreaking letters from Ray's



mother; listen to songs from film clips on YouTube. We invite you to explore this site to discover the rich legacy of Ray Evans' music, lyrics, and life.

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**About John F. Anderies**

John Anderies is an archivist at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania.

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