

---

## Howard Leeds Papers

Finding aid created by Writers Guild Foundation Archive staff using RecordEXPRESS

Writers Guild Foundation Archive

7000 West Third Street

Los Angeles, California 90048

(323) 782-4680

[hswett@wgfoundation.org](mailto:hswett@wgfoundation.org)

<https://www.wgfoundation.org/wgf-library-archive/about-the-film-and-tv-archive/>

2018

---

**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Howard Leeds Papers

**Dates:** 1945-1989

**Collection Number:** WGF-MS-069

**Creator/Collector:**

**Extent:** 23.5 linear feet

**Repository:** Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Los Angeles, California 90048

**Abstract:** The Howard Leeds Collection consists primarily of produced television scripts and treatments from 1952 through 1989, including Meet Millie, Bachelor Father, The Danny Thomas Show, My Three Sons, Bewitched, Julia, That Girl, My Living Doll, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir, The Brady Bunch, Diff'rent Strokes, and Small Wonder, as well as variety shows and specials starring Bing Crosby, George Gobel, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Rosemary Clooney, and Red Skelton. The collection also includes radio scripts dated from 1947 through 1952 for Suspense, The Phil Silvers Show, The Mel Blanc Show, and The Beulah Show, as well as assorted unproduced scripts and treatments for television series and specials.

**Language of Material:** English

**Access**

Majority of materials stored off site. One week advance notice required for retrieval.

**Publication Rights**

The responsibility to secure copyright and publication permission rests with the researcher.

**Preferred Citation**

Howard Leeds Papers. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

**Acquisition Information**

The collection was donated by Joan Hajny-Leeds on May 19, 2017.

**Biography/Administrative History**

Howard Michael Leeds was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, on June 27, 1919. His family moved to the United States when he was a child and settled in Los Angeles, where Leeds briefly worked as an actor, with credited appearances in Sherlock Holmes (1932), No Greater Glory (1934), and Vanessa, Her Love Story (1935). Following his graduation from Fairfax High School in 1937, Leeds joined the U.S. Army, serving through the end of WWII. He went on to collaborate as a lyricist in the mid-1940s, with two songs appearing in feature films: "It Is Better to Be By Yourself" in Breakfast in Hollywood (1946) (co-written with Nat "King" Cole and Bob Levinson) and "Rip Van Winkle" in Affairs of Geraldine (1947) (co-written with George Handy and Bob Levinson). In 1946, he briefly worked as a messenger/clerk in the production office at MGM before meeting radio producer William Spier, who encouraged his writing and eventually bought a script from him and his writing partner, Arthur Julian, for the radio series Suspense. Leeds and Julian went on to work as writers for the short-lived radio program The Phil Silvers Show in the summer of 1947 before going to work on the radio sitcom The Beulah Show from 1948-1952. Leeds and Julian made the move to television in 1952 as writers for the CBS sitcom Meet Millie, on which they both worked through the end of its run in 1956. Leeds then worked throughout the 1950s and 1960s on shows such as Bachelor Father, The Danny Thomas Show, My Three Sons, Bewitched, Julia, and That Girl, as well as variety shows and specials for Bing Crosby, George Gobel, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Rosemary Clooney, and Red Skelton (the latter again with partner Arthur Julian). He was a story consultant and producer on My Living Doll; executive producer and head writer on The Ghost and Mrs. Muir and The Brady Bunch. From 1976-78, he served as executive producer of drama and comedy for television and motion pictures for Reg Grundy Productions of Australia. While working as head writer for Diff'rent Strokes, he was tasked with developing its spin-off, The Facts of Life. Leeds also co-created Silver Spoons and created Small Wonder (as well as co-writing the lyrics to its theme song). Leeds died on February 11, 2017, at his home in Los Angeles. He was survived by his wife, Joan Hajny-Leeds; son, John Hajny; daughter-in-law, Kim Hajny; and grandchildren, Jenna and Erin Hajny. (Obituary information retrieved from The Hollywood Reporter, March 1, 2017.)

**Scope and Content of Collection**

Series 1: Howard Leeds Papers, Produced Work. This series includes material either written or co-written by Leeds or pertains to shows on which he worked as a head writer, producer, or executive producer. Subseries A: Radio (1947-1952). Contains completed radio plays and treatments, including The Phil Silvers Show, The Mel Blanc Show, Suspense, Beulah, and Meet Millie. Subseries B: Television (1952-1989). Contains completed teleplays and treatments, including Meet Millie, The Lux Show Starring Rosemary Clooney, Bob Cummings Show, Bachelor Father, The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show, My Living Doll, The Danny Thomas Show, My Three Sons, The Bing Crosby Show, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir, The Brady Bunch,

---

Diff'rent Strokes, and Small Wonder. Subseries C: Live events (n.d., includes 1959-1961). Contains completed scripts as well as story ideas and individual sketches for The Thalian Show--a revue held at The Thalias' annual fundraising ball. Subseries D: Music (1945-1947). Contains sheet music, lyrics, and recordings, including "It Is Better to Be By Yourself" and "Rip Van Winkle." Series 2: Howard Leeds Papers, Unproduced Work. This series includes material that was written or co-written by Leeds but was not produced. Subseries A: Radio (n.d.) Subseries B: Television (n.d.) including a 1965 pilot for Li'l Abner by Al Capp and a 1965 pilot School for Scoundrels with drafts by Leeds and Garry Marshall and Jerry Belson. Other works include writers Norman Panama and Susan Harris. Unproduced projects are identified by title and contain notes, outlines, and treatments for story ideas not associated with any other specified programs or productions. Series 3: Work by other writers. This series includes both produced and unproduced material which has either been attributed to other writers or where attribution is unclear but unlikely to have involved any work by Leeds. Writings consists of teleplays, screenplays and manuscripts. Series 4: Realia and artifacts. Contains personal and professional items related to the work and career of Howard Leeds. Items include appointment books, a rolodex and photographs.

**Indexing Terms**

Television writers

Television producers

Radio writers

Teleplays

*Beulah (Television program)*

---