



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Paul Draper papers**

1909-1991

(S) \*MGZMD 250

Compiled by Lea Jordan.

## Summary

**Creator:** Draper, Paul, 1909-1996

**Title:** Paul Draper papers

**Date:** 1909-1991

**Size:** 2.94 linear feet (7 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Katie and Susan Draper, 2009

**Abstract:** Paul Draper (1909-1996) was a dancer, choreographer, writer, and educator best known for his innovative combination of ballet and tap. The Paul Draper papers (1909-1991) contain correspondence, memorabilia, and clippings spanning both his youth and his 60 year career.

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**Preferred citation:** Paul Draper papers, (S) \*MGZMD 250. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

**Processing note:** Compiled by Lea Jordan. Users should note that in some instances, original letters or documents were removed by the family and replaced with facsimiles. Collection rehoused into archival boxes, original order and folders maintained. Compiled by Lea Jordan.

## Creator History

Paul Draper (1909-1996) was a dancer and choreographer, best known for his innovative combination of ballet and tap. Draper was born to a prominent New York family and was encouraged as a student to become an engineer. After only 6 tap dance lessons in the 1930s, he set off for London to find work as a dancer, where he spent a year perfecting his tap routines. When he returned to the United States, he

enrolled in the School of American Ballet and from that experience developed his Ballet-Tap•routines in 1932. This trademark style integrated ballet technique and vocabulary into tap dance routines. Draper often performed tap to classical music.

Draper not only toured the country in a very popular routine with harmonicist Larry Adler, but also choreographed for Broadway, the American Dance Festival, and Goodspeed Opera House. In 1941 he married Balanchine dancer Heidi Vossler.

Draper's act with Adler ended in 1949 when they were blacklisted as Communist sympathizers. He fought the accusations, filing a libel lawsuit against the Connecticut housewife who had accused him of communist leanings, but still had to leave the country briefly. Draper did not resume performing until 1955. Upon returning to the stage, Draper worked on several Broadway shows and also appeared at the New York City Center. He also wrote articles for *Dance Magazine* during the years 1954-1963. In 1967 he became a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, where he taught in the theater department until 1978. He retired in Woodstock, NY.

## Scope and Content Note

The Paul Draper papers (1909-1991) contain correspondence, memorabilia, and clippings spanning both his youth and his 60 year career.

Series I includes personal and business correspondence, clippings regarding Draper's dance engagements, photographs, programs, certificates, and invitations. These general files are arranged by year, however specific items can be located by looking both in the subject files as well as under the files by year. For example, looking under the year a specific Broadway production occurred would yield that material if any existed, but the clippings section of the subject files should also be consulted. Even though there is a trial and blacklist section within the subject files, additional materials relating to Draper's blacklist and its subsequent effect on his career can be seen by looking under the years 1950-1954. Most materials focus on his performance career, but there are also teaching materials from Carnegie Mellon, personal birthday cards, and notes.

Draper's subject files contain clippings not integrated into the yearly files, his writings for *Dance Magazine*, a transcript of an interview he gave in the 1940s discussing his childhood and early career, and materials relating to his blacklist and trial in the 1950s. The interview material is roughly 120 pages of an extremely detailed discussion about Draper's childhood, training, and early work.

Series II consists of documents relating to various members of Draper's immediate family. Files may contain letters, certificates, and photographs with the exception of Muriel Draper, his mother. These files contain bound reproductions of some of her family correspondence and her obituary.

**Arrangement:** The Paul Draper papers are organized in the following series: Series I: Paul Draper, 1909-1991 Series II: Family Papers, undated

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Blacklisting of entertainers -- United States  
Communism -- United States

Dance -- History -- 20th century  
Tap dancers  
Tap dancing

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings  
Correspondence  
Photographs

**Names**

Draper, Paul, 1909-1996

## Container List

### Series I: Paul Draper 1909-1991

#### General Files

b. 1 f. 1	1909-1932
b. 1 f. 2	1933-1935
b. 1 f. 3	1936-1937
b. 1 f. 4	1938
b. 1 f. 5	1939
b. 1 f. 6	1940
b. 1 f. 7	1941
b. 1 f. 8	1942
b. 1 f. 9	1943
b. 1 f. 10	1944
b. 1 f. 11	1945
b. 1 f. 12	1946
b. 1 f. 13	1947
b. 1 f. 14	1948
b. 1 f. 15	1949
b. 1 f. 16	1950
b. 1 f. 17	1951
b. 1 f. 18	1952
b. 1 f. 19	1953
b. 1 f. 20	1954
b. 2 f. 1	1955
b. 2 f. 2	1956
b. 2 f. 3	1957
b. 2 f. 4	1958
b. 2 f. 5	1959
b. 2 f. 6	1960
b. 2 f. 7	1961
b. 2 f. 8	1962
b. 2 f. 9	1963
b. 2 f. 10	1964
b. 2 f. 11	1965
b. 3 f. 1	1966
b. 3 f. 2	1967
b. 3 f. 3	1968
b. 3 f. 4	1969
b. 3 f. 5	1970
b. 3 f. 6	1971

Series I: Paul Draper (cont.)  
General Files (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 7 1972
- b. 3 f. 8 1973
- b. 3 f. 9 1974
- b. 4 f. 1 1975
- b. 4 f. 2 1975-1976
- b. 4 f. 3 1976
- b. 4 f. 4 1977
- b. 4 f. 5 1978
- b. 4 f. 6 1979
- b. 4 f. 7 1980
- b. 4 f. 8 1981
- b. 4 f. 9 1982
- b. 4 f. 10 1983
- b. 4 f. 11 1984
- b. 5 f. 1 1985
- b. 5 f. 2 1986
- b. 5 f. 3 1987
- b. 5 f. 4 1988
- b. 5 f. 5 1989
- b. 5 f. 6 1990
- b. 5 f. 7 1991

Subject Files

Clippings

- b. 5 f. 8 1943-1948
- b. 5 f. 9 1954-1978
- b. 5 f. 10 Dance Magazine 1954-1963
- b. 5 f. 11 Interview undated  
Led by Greg Tuck, concerns Draper's early training and career.

Trial and Blacklisting

- b. 6 f. 1-2 Clippings 1950
- b. 6 f. 3-4 General 1950
- b. 6 f. 5 Larry Adler's Deposition 1950

Series II: Family Papers undated

- b. 7 f. 1 Carter, Alice Draper  
Aunt
- b. 7 f. 2 Dana, Charles Anderson  
Great-grandfather
- b. 7 f. 3 Draper, Anne  
Neice
- b. 7 f. 4 Draper, Charles  
Uncle
- b. 7 f. 5 Draper, George  
Uncle

Series II: Family Papers (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 6     **Draper, Heidi**  
              Wife
- b. 7 f. 7     **Draper, Martha**  
              Half-sister
- b. 7 f. 8-9   **Draper, Muriel**  
              Mother
- b. 7 f. 10    **Draper, Paul Sr**  
              Father
- b. 7 f. 11    **Draper, Raymond Sanders**  
              Brother
- b. 7 f. 12    **Draper, Ruth**  
              Aunt
- b. 7 f. 13    **Draper, William**  
              Grandfather
- b. 7 f. 14    **James, Dorothea Draper**  
              Aunt