



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Barton Mumaw photographs

1920s-1960s

*MGZEB 21-0019

Processed by Heather Lember in 2021.

Summary

Creator: Mumaw, Barton, 1912-2001

Title: Barton Mumaw photographs

Date: 1920s-1960s

Size: 0.96 linear feet (4 boxes)

Source: The source of acquisition is unknown.

Abstract: Barton Mumaw (1912-2001) was an American dancer and choreographer known for his work in modern dance, musical theatre, and his collaboration with Ted Shawn. The collection contains photographs of dancers and dance performances, as well as a scrapbook of images from Mumaw's life and dance career.

Preferred citation: Barton Mumaw photographs, *MGZEB 21-0019. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Heather Lember in 2021.

Creator History

Barton Mumaw (1912-2001) was an American dancer and choreographer best known for his work with Ted Shawn. Mumaw began studying ballet as a teenager in Florida, and travelled to New York in 1930 for a summer course at the Denishawn School, which was run by Shawn and his wife, Ruth St. Denis. Mumaw returned to Florida after the course, and briefly enrolled in a music program at Rollins College, which he left in 1931 to work full-time for Shawn in exchange for tuition at Denishawn.

When Denishawn, as well as Shawn's relationship with St. Denis dissolved in 1932, Mumaw continued his artistic collaboration with Shawn, joining him on his farm in Becket, Massachusetts, which would ultimately become the site of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Mumaw was both a dancer and choreographer in Shawn's all-male touring group, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers. The dance troupe disbanded with the start of World War II, and Mumaw embarked on a solo recital tour before serving in

the military from 1942 to 1946 as an Entertainment Specialist.

After the war, Mumaw worked in musical theater, where he performed on Broadway and in touring productions of *Annie Get Your Gun* (1947), *Oklahoma* (1950), *The Golden Apple* (1954), and *My Fair Lady* (1956–1962). He also taught at the Jacob's Pillow summer dance camp, and revived a number of Shawn's works, including *Kinetic Molpai* for the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in 1973.

In 1986, Mumaw published his biography, *Barton Mumaw, Dancer: From Denishawn to Jacob's Pillow and Beyond*, in which he revealed his romantic relationship with Shawn. In subsequent years he worked on many revivals of Shawn's work including at the 1991 centennial program entitled *Jacob's Pillow's Men Dancers*. Mumaw moved back to Florida and died in Clearwater on June 18, 2001.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from the 1920s to 1960s and contains photographs of dancers affiliated with Barton Mumaw. Most of the images focus on his collaboration and career with Ted Shawn, and includes photographs from the Jacob's Pillow festival, the Denishawn School, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, and Ruth St. Denis. Many of the photographs have handwritten descriptions on the back, but most do not include a date. There are images of Mumaw present as well, most of which are found in his scrapbook. The photographs in the scrapbook are organized chronologically, but most do not include captions.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Albums (books)
Photographs

Subjects

Ballet dancers -- Photographs
Dance -- Photographs
Male dancers -- United States -- 20th century

Occupations

Dancers.

Names

Mumaw, Barton, 1912-2001
Shawn, Ted, 1891-1972
St. Denis, Ruth, 1880-1968
Denishawn School of Dancing
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival
Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-5 1926-1950s
- b. 3 f. 1-2 Contains unidentified photographs and illustrations. Includes photographs by Fred Mitchell, J.W. Collinge, and a 1926 print from *Dance Magazine*.
- b. 4 f. 1-2
- b. 1 f. 6 Bowen, Dorothea
- b. 1 f. 7 Brooks, Louise
- b. 1 f. 8 Delmar, John; Hearn, Fred; and Coble, Harry 1939
- b. 1 f. 9-10 The Denishawn Dancers
 - b. 3 f. 3 Jacob's Pillow -- Press Photograph
 - b. 4 f. 3
- b. 1 f. 11 Mumaw, Barton 1930s
 - b. 3 f. 4
 - b. 4 f. 4
- b. 1 f. 12-18 Shawn, Ted 1920s-1950s
 - b. 3 f. 5-9
 - b. 4 f. 5-6
- b. 1 f. 19-20 St. Denis, Ruth 1920s-1930s
- b. 3 f. 10-11
 - b. 1 f. 21 Van Der Hof. Sadie
- b. 2 f. 1-14 Scrapbook 1990s-1960s
 - b. 3 f. 12 Thompson, Patricia