



# The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

## **Monica Moseley papers**

1886-2010

(S) \*MGZMD 398

Compiled by Robyn Hjermstad, 2014.

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Moseley, Monica

**Title:** Monica Moseley papers

**Date:** 1886-2010

**Size:** 1.51 linear feet (4 boxes); 5.01 mb (5 computer files)

**Source:** The collection was retrieved from the residence of former Assistant Curator Monica Moseley by staff members of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division upon Moseley's death in 2010.

**Abstract:** Monica Moseley (1942-2010) was an American dancer, dance scholar, and former assistant curator for the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at the New York Public Library. The Monica Moseley papers date from 1886 to 2010 and consist of professional files and family history files. The collection holds correspondence, lectures, notes, promotional material for dance companies and organizations, genealogy notes, and family photographs.

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**Preferred citation:** Monica Moseley papers, (S) \*MGZMD 398. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Robyn Hjermstad, 2014.

### **Creator History**

Monica Moseley (1942-2010) was an American dancer, dance scholar, and former assistant curator for the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at the New York Public Library. After attending Reed College for calligraphy, Moseley moved to New York City where she worked as an assistant editor for *Dance Magazine* from 1964 to 1968. During this time she began studying the techniques of Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and Lester Horton. She was a founding member of Meredith Monk's dance company, *The House*, and performed extensively there from the 1960s until 1980. Her notable performances include those in *Juice*, *Education of the Girlchild*, and *Chacon*. In 1981, Moseley earned her Master's Degree in Library Science from Columbia University. That same year she began working

for the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at the New York Public Library. Moseley later became assistant curator for the Dance Division, and worked there until her retirement in 2005. After her retirement, Moseley continued to consult and collaborate on dance-related projects, including exhibitions at the New York State Theater and the School of American Ballet's 75th Anniversary exhibition in 2009. Moseley worked closely with the filmmaker and director of La Cinémathèque de la Danse, Patrick Bensard, for over twenty years on numerous projects, including the film *Lucinda Childs* (2006).

Monica Moseley died in 2010.

## Scope and Content Note

Upon her death in 2010, Monica Moseley's former colleagues at the Library of Performing Arts visited her residence and retrieved the materials which now comprise this collection. The collection consists of Moseley's professional files, which mainly document her collaborations with other dance organizations and individuals; and family history files that she compiled. The professional files date from 1946 to 2009, and the family files date from 1886 to 2010.

Professional files hold correspondence, writings, articles, research materials, notes, and promotional material, such as pamphlets, announcements, and programs. Correspondence is both personal and professional in nature, as Moseley maintained close friendships with many of her colleagues. Many of the letters thank her for her contributions to projects or books. Correspondents include Ping Chong, Meredith Monk, Deborah Jowitt, and Patrick Bensard. Letters with Bensard are extensive and discuss production planning of the short film, *Lucinda Childs* (2006), and several other projects from 1984 to 2009. Correspondence from Merce Cunningham thanks Moseley for her consistent support of his company and foundation. Writings include performance sequences, notes on Chacon and AM/AM, poetic narratives she wrote while traveling, and a lecture she presented for a course in Twentieth Century Russian arts. Articles in the collection were gathered by Moseley in the course of planning for exhibitions, films, and other projects she helped coordinate. Moseley's notes sometimes accompany the materials, which consist of dancer and company biographies and chronologies, articles written by dance scholars, and dance encyclopedia excerpts. The majority of the promotional material publicizes events at various dance organizations and companies that Moseley was affiliated with, such as La Cinémathèque de la Danse, The New York City Ballet, the School of American Ballet, and the Meredith Monk House Foundation. Files for La Cinémathèque de la Danse contain material in French and English.

Family history files date from 1886 to 2010 and contain correspondence; birth, death, and marriage records; children's drawings and notes; a photograph album; and Moseley's notes gathered during her research. Also present is a memorial guest book from Moseley's memorial service. The materials document the activities of the Moseley, Gregory, and Waters families. After Crowder Bell Moseley married Ada Reagan Moseley in 1890, the couple traveled as missionaries to Kobe, Japan, and had several children there. They returned to the United States in 1915, settling in Washington State. The activities of their son (Monica Moseley's father), merchant marine sailor Crowder Moseley, are particularly well-represented through photographs and correspondence. The photograph album holds photographs taken in the Philippines, Mexico, Peru, the United States, and the Panama Canal, including images of towns, ports, and of the ship deck. The album also contains images of the Moseley family in Japan; the Moseley children in Mercer Island, Washington; and scenic photographs of glaciers, lakes, and waterfalls at Mount Rainer. Some materials in the family history files are copies of the originals, such as photographs and correspondence documenting Crowder Bell Moseley's activities in Japan.

Also included in the family files are letters to Moseley's cousin, Martha (Marte) Meacham Johnson, from C. S. Lewis. The letters date from 1952 to 1957 and are accompanied by a bequest to Monica Moseley from Johnson. The letters briefly touch on several issues surrounding Christianity and scripture, such as teetotalism, the infallibility of the Bible, prayer, and Heaven. Personal matters are also discussed, such as the death of Johnson's mother-in-law and the illness of Lewis's wife, Joy Davidman Gresham.

The collection holds electronic records. They consist of scanned photographs of dancers rehearsing *Education of the Girlchild*. Materials were scanned in 2008.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into two broad categories: Professional Files and Family History Files.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)  
Programs (documents)

### **Subjects**

Dance -- United States -- History

### **Names**

Bensard, Patrick  
Lewis, C. S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963

## Container List

### Professional Files

- b. 1 f. 1-9     1946-2009  
Photographs, writing, articles, research, and promotional material.
- b. 2 f. 1-12     1980-2007  
Correspondence from Ping Chong, Merce Cunningham, and Meredith Monk is here.
- b. 3 f. 1-4     1998, 2005-2008
  - er. 1     2008  
(5 computer files 5.01 Megabytes)  
Rehearsal photographs of *Education of the Girlchild*.
- b. 3 f. 5-23     Family History Files 1886-2010  
Correspondence from C.S. Lewis is here.
- b. 4 f. 1     Photograph Album 1908-1935, 1990s