

Inventory of the Hallie Flanagan Papers, ca. 1923-1963

*T-Mss 1964-002

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Billy Rose Theatre Division

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Hallie Flanagan Papers, ca. 1923-1963

Classmark: *T-Mss 1964-002

Provenance: Flanagan, Hallie

Extent: 17 linear feet (46 boxes)

Repository: Billy Rose Theatre Division, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, N.Y.
10023-7498

Administrative Information

Access: : Collection open to the public

Preferred Citation: : Hallie Flanagan Papers, *T-Mss 1964-002, Billy Rose Theatre Division,
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Biographical Note:

Hallie Flanagan was born Hallie Ferguson August 27, 1889 in Redfield, South Dakota. She grew up in Grinnell, Iowa, attended Grinnell College, and studied with George Pierce Baker at Harvard's 47 Workshop. She returned to Grinnell where she initiated her idea for an experimental theater. The following year she accepted a job at Vassar College. In 1926 she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to study theater in Europe, the first woman to receive this honor. She traveled extensively and met with John Galsworthy, Constantine Stanislavsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Karel Capek, Edward Gordon Craig, and Lady Gregory, among others. From 1927 to 1935 she taught and directed at Vassar where she established the Vassar Experimental Theatre.

In 1935 Flanagan was appointed national director of the Federal Theatre Project, an offshoot of the Works Progress Administration. Flanagan envisioned the project not only as a source of employment for American artists but as a way to bring theater to people across the country, many of whom had never seen a play. The project lasted for four turbulent yet creative years and was ultimately abolished by Congress. Flanagan returned to Vassar where, with the aid of a Rockefeller grant, she organized the Federal Theatre records [Theatre Research Project] and wrote *Arena*, the story of the Federal Theatre Project.

On leave of absence from Vassar in 1942, Flanagan accepted a position at Smith College as head of the theater department and Dean of the school. She remained at Smith until her retirement in 1952.

Besides Arena, Flanagan was the author of numerous articles and two other books: *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre*, based on her 1926-1927 travels, and *Dynamo*, a chronicle of her work at Vassar. She was also a playwright.

Flanagan married twice: to Murray Flanagan who died in 1918 and to Philip Davis who died in 1940. Flanagan lived with Parkinson's disease for many years and died on July 23, 1969. Her two sons predeceased her. She was survived by her three stepchildren and her grandchildren.

Scope and Content Note:

The Hallie Flanagan papers span the years 1923 -1963 and reflect many aspects of her career: teaching and directing, writing and speech-giving, and her leadership of the Federal Theatre Project. Correspondence makes up a large part of the collection. It has been arranged in three series, general, Federal Theatre Project, and Vassar/Smith. There is some overlap, however, and correspondence may be found in other parts of the collection as well. For example, the closing of the Federal Theatre Project and Theatre Research Project files are almost entirely made up of correspondence. The strength of the collection lies in two areas: the Federal Theatre Project and college theater.

The Federal Theatre materials touch on almost every aspect of the project from beginning to end through memos, reports, production files, correspondence, speeches, articles, scripts, and scrapbooks. [The personal papers series contains a folder of excerpts from letters written by Flanagan to her husband Philip Davis while she headed the project.] The Vassar and Smith materials consist of notes used for her classes, articles and speeches, production files of photographs and clippings, and, of course, correspondence.

Organization

The Hallie Flanagan papers are arranged in the following series:

- Series I. General Files
 - Sub-series 1 - Correspondence
 - Sub-series 2 - Personal Papers
- Series II. Federal Theatre Project
 - Sub-series 1 - Correspondence
 - Sub-series 2 - Administrative Files
 - Sub-series 3 - Production Files
 - Sub-series 4 - Closing
 - Sub-series 5 - Ephemera [and oversize photos]

- Series III. Vassar and Smith Files
 - Sub-series 1 - Correspondence
 - Sub-series 2 - Teaching Materials
 - Sub-series 3 - Production Files
 - Sub-series 4 - Theatre Research Project
- Series IV. Articles and Speeches
 - Sub-series 1 - Early Writings and Vassar and Smith
 - Sub-series 2 - Federal Theatre Project
- Series V. Scrapbooks
 - Sub-series 1 - Early Years and Vassar and Smith
 - Sub-series 2 - Federal Theatre Project
- Series VI. Federal Theatre Scripts

Series Description:

Series I - General Files

[5 boxes, 2 linear feet]

[BOX 1-3]

Sub-series 1: Correspondence, [1923-1963]

(3 boxes)

Arranged alphabetically.

This sub-series contains letters from a wide spectrum of Flanagan's colleagues and friends. It is arranged alphabetically and includes letters and carbons of letters written by Flanagan. The many correspondents include Edward Gordon Craig, Brooks Atkinson, T. S. Eliot, and Muriel Rukeyser, to name only a few. Among Craig's letters is his edited version of Flanagan's chapter about him for *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre*.

[BOX 4-5]

Sub-series 2: Personal Papers

2 boxes)

Among the items in this sub-series are biographical materials, 47 Workshop notes, notes for *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre*, travel notes from Flanagan's 1934 trip to Europe and her 1943 trip to Mexico, a few guidebooks and theater programs from her first trip to Europe in 1926, honorary degrees, an inventory of her personal library, excerpts from letters she wrote to Philip Davis between 1936 and 1939, postcards written while in Europe to her mother and son, a folder of book project ideas, Philip Davis' theater notebook and his *The Delian Building Contracts*, a 25th anniversary edition of *The Carolina Play-Book* autographed by Frederick H. Koch, an annotated copy of *The Poetics* of Aristotle, a copy of *The Dance of Death* with a letter from W. H. Auden glued to the inside cover, notes to Shirley Rich Krohn regarding the collection, one folder of miscellaneous photographs from European trips, and clippings.

Series II - Federal Theatre Project

9 boxes, 5 lin. ft.

[BOX 6-7]

Sub-series 1: Correspondence, [ca. 1935-1958]

(2 boxes)

Included are letters from writers, directors, actors, and other colleagues and friends. Harry Hopkins, Gareth Hughes, Emmet Lavery, Elmer Rice, and Eleanor Roosevelt are among the correspondents.

[BOX 8-9]

Sub-series 2: Administrative Files, [1935-1939]
2 boxes

These files include regional reports, memos, newsletters, monthly bulletins, Flanagan's personal notes, and a folder of proposals for a permanent federal theater.

[BOX 10-12]

Sub-series 3: Production Files [1935-1939]
3 boxes

The productions represented are filed alphabetically and may contain photographs, correspondence, programs, or clippings. Included in this series are play lists and synopses and information about the Caravan Theatre, the Suitcase Theatre, and the Radio Division.

[BOX 13]

Sub-series 4: Closing[1938-1940]
(1 box)

The end of the Federal Theatre Project is documented by correspondence, reports and memos, articles and refutations, and information about the radio campaigns to keep the project alive.

[BOX 14]

Sub-series 5: Ephemera
1 box

Included are hand-made cards from two Federal Theatre groups, copies of Don Freeman cartoons which appeared in Federal Theatre Bulletins, and a signed drawing by J. Blanding Sloane. Miscellaneous and oversize photograph subjects include Flanagan, Harry Hopkins [autographed], productions of *Chalk Dust* and *Pinocchio*, the national bulletin board from San Francisco, and a folder of unidentified production photos.

Series III - Vassar and Smith
6 boxes, 2.3 lin. ft.

[BOX 15]

Sub-series 1: Correspondence [ca. 1926-1961]
(1 box)

This sub-series consists of letters from colleagues, students, and former students as well as originals and carbons of Flanagan's letters. Included are folders devoted to Flanagan's war work, her leave of absence from Vassar, and her appointment to Smith.

[BOX 16-18]

Sub-series 2: Teaching Materials
3 boxes

Flanagan's notes and lectures for her classes at Vassar and Smith.

[BOX 19]

Sub-series 3: Productions

1 box)

Arranged alphabetically, these files may include photographs, correspondence, clippings, or programs. The Acting Version of Greek Mimes and plans for proposed theaters at both Vassar and Smith are included.

[BOX 20]

Sub-series 4: Theatre Research Project, [1939-1952]

1 box

The correspondence documenting the creation of the Theatre Research Project at Vassar is from the Library of Congress and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others. Included is the inventory of the Federal Theatre Loan Collection, a list of Federal Theatre productions, and some financial records.

Series IV - Articles and Speeches

(6 boxes, 2.1 lin. ft.)

[BOX 21-
23]

Sub-series 1: Early Writings and Vassar and Smith

(3 boxes

This sub-series includes early writings as well as articles and speeches from the Vassar/Smith periods. They are arranged chronologically and may include rough drafts or typescripts and published versions. There are two volumes of material on Russian theater, one volume about Greek theater, and a volume labeled general theater. Three folders are devoted to articles and speeches by colleagues and students. Box 21, folder 1 contains lists of many of Flanagan's writings and speeches including the Federal Theatre period.

[BOX 24-
26]

Sub-series 2: Federal Theatre Project

(3 boxes

This sub-series includes seven notebooks of Hallie Flanagan's speeches and articles. Box 26 also contains folders of individual articles and speeches, either published versions or typescripts.

Series V - Scrapbooks

(19 boxes, 4.7 lin. ft.

[Box 27-

Sub-series 1: Early Years and Vassar and Smith [1923-1943]

31] (5 scrapbooks)

Scrapbooks in this series document Hallie Flanagan's professional career at Vassar and Smith, including the early years with George Pierce Baker, her trip to Europe in 1926-1927 and the Vassar Experimental Theatre. Included as well is a scrapbook of articles about the Russian theater from 1927-1931 and one on theatrical productions in Smith college in 1943.

[32-45] **Sub-series 2: Federal Theatre Project[1935-1939]**
(14 scrapbooks)

The scrapbooks in this sub-series consist mainly of clippings. A few contain photographs and original art work.

[BOX 46] **Series VI - Federal Theatre Scripts**
(1 box, 2.3 lin. ft.)

This series consists of a range of scripts including marionette and puppet theater.

Container Listing

Series I: General Files

Sub-series 1 - Correspondence

- b. 1 Correspondence: Apstein, Theodore - Dynamo
- b. 2 Correspondence: Eliot, T. S. - M-G-M Apprentice Writers' Project
- b. 3
 - Correspondence: The Middle of the Air - War Savings Program Playwriting Contest
 - Miscellaneous A-W

Sub-series 2 - Personal Papers

- b. 4
 - Biographical materials
 - 47 Workshop notes
 - *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre* notes
 - Programs and guidebooks [Europe, 1926-1927]
 - Travel notes [1934]
 - Travel notes [Mexico, 1943]
 - Excerpts from Flanagan's letters [1935-1939]
 - Postcards from Flanagan to her mother and son
 - Honorary degrees and citations

- Book projects
 - Inventory of Flanagan's personal library
 - Notes to Shirley Rich Krohn re: the collection
 - Clippings about Flanagan
 - Miscellaneous clippings and photographs
- b. 5
- Philip Davis' theater notebook
 - The Delian Building Contracts by Philip Davis
 - *The Poetics* of Aristotle [annotated]
 - *The Carolina Play-Book*
 - *The Dance of Death* [including Auden's letter]

Series II: Federal Theatre Project

Sub-series 1 - Correspondence

- b. 6
- Correspondence: miscellaneous A-Z
 - Cooke, Alistair Lavery, Emmet
- b. 7
- - Living Newspaper - Sayler, Oliver
 - "unique" letter file

Sub-series 2 - Administrative Files

- b. 8
- Supervisors' Council
 - Policy Board
 - Memos
 - Regional project reports and notes
 - National Service Bureau
 - Summer theatre report
 - Educational aspects report
 - Semi-monthly newsletters
- b. 9
- Monthly bulletins
 - WPA appraisal
 - National Educational Assoc. [WPA brochure]
 - Flanagan's notes
 - Proposals for a permanent federal theatre
 - Miscellaneous unidentified pages

Sub-series 3 - Production Files

- b. 10
- Opening of Alexander Graham Bell - photos of theater exterior
 - *America Sings* - correspondence, souvenir program
 - *Androcles and the Lion* - press book
 - *Another Language* - Christmas handbill
 - *Barbara Frietchie* - program
 - *The Dance of Death* - contract
 - *Death Takes the Wheel* - [marionettes] photo
 - *The Dog Beneath the Skin* - correspondence, production plan
 - *The Emperor's New Clothes* - photo
 - *Inheritors*- set plans
 - *Injunction Granted* - published copy, photo
 - *Iolanthe* - audience survey report
 - *It Can't Happen Here* - correspondence
 - *Life and Death of an American* - photos
 - *The Lost Colony* - photos
 - *Mac Beth* - photos
 - *No More Peace* - photo
 - *Noah* - photo
 - *O Say Can You Sing?* - program
 - *On the Rocks* - program
 - *One-Third of a Nation* - photos
 - *Pinocchio* - photo, letters from children, clippings, February 1939 issue of TAC Magazine
 - *Power* - photos
 - *Prologue to Glory* - photo
 - *Run Little Chillun* - photo of theater exterior
 - *Sing For Your Supper* - program, correspondence, financial
 - *Trojan Incident* - notes
 - Oklahoma marionettes - photos
 - Staff productions - programs
 - Unidentified photos

b. 11 Performance schedules

- b. 12
- Caravan Theatre
 - Suitcase Theatre
 - Radio Division
 - National Service Bureau - bound volume contains 2 scripts and information re: reorganization of the Play Bureau

- Play lists and synopses
- Miscellaneous materials - bound volume:
- Big Blow publicity booklet
- FTP instruction booklet
- Radio Division - Elizabethan dramas; Gilbert & Sullivan
- FTP manual
- Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company poster
- The Story of the Drama Unit

Sub-series 4 -Closing

b. 13 Closing files

Sub-series 5 - Ephemera

- b. 14
- NYC marionette New Year card
 - Washington FTP Christmas card
 - J. Blanding Sloane drawing
 - Don Freeman cartoons
 - Harry Hopkins autographed photo
 - Photos of Hallie Flanagan
 - Oversize production photos: *Chalk Dust* and *Pinocchio*
 - Oversize photo: national bulletin board - San Francisco

Series III: Vassar and Smith Files

Sub-series 1 - Correspondence

- b. 15
- Correspondence A-W
 - Letters re: Vassar leave of absence and Smith appointment
 - Clippings re: former students
 - Miscellany

Sub-series 2 - Teaching materials

b. 16 Teaching materials

b. 17 Teaching materials

b. 18 Teaching materials

Sub-series 3 - Productions

b. 19

Vassar Experimental Theatre production files:

- *Acting Versions of Greek Mimes* - script
- *American Plan* - photos
- *Anthony and Cleopatra* - photos, program, clippings, costume designs, research postcard/photos
- *Can You Hear Their Voices?* - photos
- *Come Out Into the Sun* - photos
- *Each in His Own Way* - photos
- *Fear* - photos
- *Hamlet* - photo
- *Hippolytus* - photos
- *La Muse S'Amuse* - program
- *Ladies Are Made* - photo
- *L'Orseida* - photo
- *Man and the Masses* - photo
- *The Man With the Flower in His Mouth* - photo
- *The Mummers' Play* - photo
- *Murder in the Cathedral* - photos, clipping
- *No More Peace* - photo
- *Now I Know Love* - photos, program, clipping
- *Our Town* - photos
- *Phoenix* - photos, clipping
- *Question Before the House* - photo
- *Santos Vega* - program, clipping
- *See America First* - photo
- *The Singing Girl of Copan* - photos
- *Svapnavasavadatta* - photos, clipping
- *The Three Sisters* - photo
- *To Damascus* - photos, program
- *Tonight We Improvise* - photo
- *Varieta Furturista* - photos
- *Vassar's Folly* - photos
- *Water and Wine* - photo

Smith College Department of Theatre production files

- *The Bacchae* - photo
- *E=mc²* - correspondence, clippings, royalty statements
- *Furlough* - photos
- *Heritage* - photos
- *Shore Leave* - photos

Sub-series 4 - Theatre Research Project

- b. 20 Theatre Research Project, 1939-1952

Series IV: Articles and Speeches

Sub-series 1 - Early writings and Vassar/Smith

- b. 21 Early writings and Vassar/Smith
- b. 22 Early writings and Vassar/Smith
- b. 23 Early writings and Vassar/Smith

Sub-series 2 - Federal Theatre Project

- b. 24 Notebooks of Hallie Flanagan articles and speeches
- b. 25 Notebooks of Hallie Flanagan articles and speeches
- b. 26 Hallie Flanagan articles and speeches

Series V: Scrapbooks

Sub-series 1: Early Years and Vassar and Smith, 1923-1943

- b. 27 This scrapbook documents Flanagan's theater experiences at Grinnell and her work with George Pierce Baker's 47 Workshop at Harvard. Included are programs, clippings, photographs, and correspondence.
- b. 28 This scrapbook was taken apart for preservation purposes. It mainly documents, through correspondence, clippings, and programs, Flanagan's Guggenheim Fellowship trip to Europe in 1926 - 1927. Included are clippings and correspondence regarding *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre*, and *Theatre Guild Magazine* articles.
- b. 29 Also rehoused for preservation, this scrapbook includes articles about Russian theater [1927-1931], clippings about *Arena* [1940], and correspondence and clippings about *Dynamo* [1943].
- b. 30 This scrapbook is a portfolio of Vassar Experimental Theatre production photographs.
- b. 31 Clippings and programs documenting Smith College productions in 1943 are included in this scrapbook.

Sub-series 2 - Federal Theatre Project, 1935-1939

- b. 32 New York City scrapbook, 1936
- b. 33 New York City scrapbook, July - October 1936
- b. 34 New York City scrapbook, October - December 1936
- b. 35 Federal Theatre in the South scrapbook, 1936-1937
- b. 36 Federal Theatre in the South scrapbook, 1937
- b. 37 Scrapbook, 1937
- b. 38 Scrapbook, February - May 1937
- b. 39 Scrapbook, May - July 1937
- b. 40 Scrapbook, July 1937 - January 1938
- b. 41 Scrapbook, January - April 1938
- b. 42 Scrapbook, April - June 1938
- b. 43 Scrapbook, 1936-1939
- b. 44 Scrapbook, 1936-1939
- b. 45 Scrapbook of photographs, 1935-1939

Series VI: Federal Theatre Scripts

- b. 46
 - *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* (Marionette)
 - *Cap'n Noah's Ark* (Puppet)
 - *Chisbaohoyo, The Sweetheart of the Corn*
 - *Covered Wagon Kate*
 - *Crime Prevention* (Marionette)
 - *Dr. Faustus* (Marionette)
 - *Doggy Days* (Marionette)
 - *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (Marionette)
 - *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (Marionette)
 - *Genesis* (Marionette)
 - *The Housing Question* (Marionette)
 - *How the Indians Got Their Corn* (Puppet)
 - *Jack and the Bean Stalk*
 - *Little Black Sambo*
 - *The Mighty Mikko*
 - *The Mikado*
 - *Peter Pumpkin Eater*
 - *Picket Parade* (Marionette)

- *Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Marionette)
- *Plague*
- *Puss in Boots* (Marionette)
- *Rip Van Winkle* (Marionette)
- *Robin Hood*
- *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Marionette)
- *Toby Tyler's Circus*
- *The Towneley Play*
- *Two a Day*
- *The Wisemen*
- Plays for marionettes