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Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Maureen Needham-Aldrich papers**

1946-2003

(S) \*MGZMD 400

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014.

## Summary

**Creator:** Needham, Maureen

**Title:** Maureen Needham-Aldrich papers

**Date:** 1946-2003

**Size:** 3.78 linear feet (9 boxes); 12.47 mb (1 computer files)

**Source:** Donated by Maureen Needham-Aldrich, 2001 and 2010.

**Abstract:** Maureen Needham-Aldrich is an American dance historian. She began her career as a professional ballet dancer in New Orleans. Her contributions to dance scholarship include extensive research on dance therapy, dance education, European and American ballet history, and the dance traditions of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pueblo tribes in New Mexico. The collection (1946-2003) documents her career as a dancer and dance historian through essays, articles, encyclopedia and dictionary entries, notes, programs, photographs, and other material she gathered for her research.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:  
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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**Preferred citation:** Maureen Needham-Aldrich papers, (S) \*MGZMD 400. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014. The compact disc that comprises the electronic record was forensically imaged for preservation.

## Creator History

Maureen Needham-Aldrich (née D'Arlan-Needham, previously Costonis) is an American dance historian. Aldrich began her career as a professional ballet dancer with the New Orleans Opera under the auspices of Lelia Haller. Between 1955 and 1960, she danced in numerous regional productions in New Orleans, Chicago, Boston, Harvard, and at Radcliffe College, which she attended. Her undergraduate thesis, *Yeats's Use of Dance as an Image and Agent of Perfection's Climax* (1960), marked the beginning of her career as a dance scholar. After graduating from Radcliffe in 1960, she earned her Master's degree from the University of Illinois, and her Ph.D. in Dance Education from New York University in 1989.

Aldrich has made significant contributions to dance scholarship throughout her career. Her areas of research have included dance education, dance therapy, French and Italian ballet, early theatrical dance in the United States, the development of dance as a career, and the dance traditions of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pueblo tribes in New Mexico. Throughout the 1970s she wrote several articles on movement therapy, many of which were later integrated into a compilation she edited entitled *Therapy in Motion* (1978). Aldrich's other publications include: *Ballet Comes to America, 1792-1842: French Contributions to the Establishment of Theatrical Dance in New Orleans and Philadelphia*; *I See America Dancing: Selected Readings, 1685-2000*; and several articles in *Ballet Review*, *American Music*, *Dance Research Journal*, and *Dance Chronicle*. She has written several biographies for the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, the *International Dictionary of Ballet*, the *American National Biography*, and the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. Aldrich was associate professor of dance history at Vanderbilt University for over twenty years.

Maureen Needham-Aldrich currently resides in Sarasota, Florida.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Maureen Needham-Aldrich papers date from 1946 to 2003 and document her career as a dancer and dance historian through research files and dance and education files. Research files reflect her scholarly concentrations from her study of dance therapy in the 1970s, to her more specific historical analyses in the 1980s and 1990s, including the dissemination of French ballet to the Americas, and the dance traditions of the Pueblo people in New Mexico. Dance and education files concern her early career as a ballet dancer and as a student at Radcliffe College.

Research files comprise the bulk of the collection. They date from 1946 to 2003 and document Aldrich's research and writing processes for articles, book reviews, encyclopedia and dictionary entries, speeches, and research guides. The files are arranged by subject or publication title and contain annotated articles, research notes, bibliographies, correspondence, photographs, and drafts of her work. Correspondence generally relates to the revision and publication of her articles and books. Correspondents consist of the editors of journals, magazines, and newspapers, such as *Ballet Review*, *American Music*, *Dance Research Journal*, *Dance Chronicle*, and the *Nashville Scene*. Subjects represented in the files include dance therapy, Native American ritual, traditional Pueblo dances, the global dissemination of French ballet, 19th century American ballet, dances of the Caribbean, and dancers, including Augusta Maywood, Royes Fernandez, Fanny Elssler, and Isadora Duncan.

Aldrich's study of dance therapy from 1960 to 1978 is documented through articles, notes, bibliographies, and other research materials. Articles consist of those written by Aldrich, as well as articles she used for her research, including works by and about dance therapist Marian Chase. Titles of Aldrich's articles here include "Therapeutic Dance with Visually Handicapped Children," "Expanding Stereotyped Object Manipulation into Expressive Dance," and "Measuring Synchronous Movement in Dance Therapy Sessions." A limited amount of Aldrich's choreographic and dance exercise notes are

present. Material relating to the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) consists of conference pamphlets and drafts of a speech she gave at the 1974 ADTA Midwestern Regional Conference.

Aldrich's research on dancer Fanny Elssler is extensive and examines Elssler's success in the United States and her performances in Havana, Cuba during the 1840s. Files for her research on Native American rituals and Pueblo dance traditions contain copies of journal articles from the 1890s to the 1940s, notes, and photographs of Pueblo dances she took during a research trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1990. Material relating to her book, *I See America Dancing: Selected Readings, 1685-2000*, consists of permission requests for images, illustration lists, photograph reproduction agreements, notes, and printing invoices. August Maywood files hold articles, notes, drafts, correspondence, and the final version of her article "'The Wild Doe': Augusta Maywood in Philadelphia and Paris, 1837-1840" (*Dance Chronicle*, 1994). Correspondence with *Dance Chronicle* editor George Dorris concerns Aldrich's revision process.

Many of Aldrich's encyclopedia and dictionary entries are present. Drafts, final versions, annotated journal articles, and correspondence are included for biographies in *The International Dictionary of Ballet*, the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, and the *American National Biography*. Correspondence with Stanley Sadie, editor of the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, details Aldrich's research, articles, entry suggestions, and proposed guidelines for dancers' biographies. Entries that Aldrich wrote for the *American National Biography* are accompanied by contracts, subject questionnaires, and guidelines and information on manuscript entries.

Dance and education files document Aldrich's activities as a dancer and student between 1955 and 1968 through essays, notes, lecture outlines, resumes, performance reviews, programs, and articles. A file for *An American in Paris* holds synopses, ballet verse drafts, notes, clippings, costume sketches, and a program for the Crescent City Concerts Association 1955 production of the ballet. Aldrich performed in the production and her father, Maurice D'Arlan-Needham, wrote the book. Articles, programs, resumes, and performance lists document her early dance career, up to the age of twenty. Essays, lecture notes, and annotated reading assignments from her studies at Radcliffe College are present, including her thesis, *Yeats's Use of Dance as an Image and Agent of Perfection's Climax* (1960).

The collection contains one compact disc consisting of a scanned professional headshot of Aldrich from 2001.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into two categories: Research Files and Dance and Education Files. Research Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or publication.

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Articles  
Biographies (documents)  
Photographs  
Research (document genres)

### Subjects

Ballet -- History  
Dance -- United States -- History

Dance therapy  
Pueblo dance

## Container List

### Research Files

- b. 1 f. 1 Aesthetics in Dance 1984-1985
- b. 1 f. 2 African American Dance 1999-2000  
Aldrich Publicity Headshot 2001  
er.1 (1 computer file 12.47 MB)
- b. 1 f. 3-6 American Dance -- Nineteenth Century 1990-2000
- b. 1 f. 7 American Music Correspondence 1989-1992
- b. 1 f. 8-10 American National Biography 1992-1998
  - b. 6 f. 1 "Arnould-Mussot, Author of Early American Ballet-Pantomimes" 1983-1984
- b. 1 f. 11 Astier, Regine 1996
- b. 1 f. 12 Balinese Dances circa 1975
- b. 1 f. 13 "Ballet as Cold War Propaganda: Imagery in Yuri Grigorovich's Spartacus, 1968" 1992
- b. 1 f. 14 "Coppelia: The Sources of Comedy" 1980s
  - b. 2 f. 1 Cuba 1990s
  - b. 2 f. 2 Dafora, Asadata 1990s
  - b. 2 f. 3 Dance Chronicle 1990-1997
  - b. 2 f. 4 Dance Education 1985-1986
  - b. 2 f. 5 Dance Research Journal 1985-1986
- b. 2 f. 6-13 Dance Therapy 1960-1978
- b. 3 f. 1-10 Dance Therapy 1972-1975
- b. 3 f. 11-18 Elssler, Fanny 1989-1991
  - b. 4 f. 1 Establishment of the Royal Academy of Dance in Paris 1989-1992
- b. 4 f. 2-3 Fernandez, Royes 1972, 1980
- b. 4 f. 4 French Ballet in Eighteenth Century San Domingue 1982-1983
- b. 4 f. 5-6 "The French Invasion of Philadelphia" 1981-1993
- b. 4 f. 7 Haitian Voodoo Dances -- Photographs 1946
- b. 4 f. 8 Hawaiian Dance 1975
- b. 4 f. 9-10 I See America Dancing: Selected Readings, 1685-2000 -- Correspondence and Book Illustrations 2000-2001
- b. 4 f. 11-12 Indonesian and Thai Dances -- Photographs 1990
- b. 4 f. 13-14 International Dictionary of Ballet 1983, 1990
  - b. 5 f. 1 International Dictionary of Ballet 1990-1992
  - b. 5 f. 2-5 International Encyclopedia of Dance 1989-1996
  - b. 5 f. 6 Lee, Mary Ann 1990s
  - b. 5 f. 7-8 Lorin, André 1992-1999
  - b. 5 f. 9 "Louis Horst, A Bundle of Contradictions" 1995
- b. 5 f. 10-15 Maywood, Augusta 1990-1994
  - b. 5 f. 16 Miscellaneous 1984-2000
- b. 6 f. 2-14 Nashville Scene 1996-2000

Research Files (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 15-20 The New Grove Dictionary of Opera 1989-1999
- b. 6 f. 21-22 New Orleans International Ballet Conference 2002-2003
  - b. 6 f. 23 Opera Stars and Equestrians 1984-1985
  - b. 6 f. 24 "The Pre-Romantic Ballet: A Reappraisal" 1986
  - b. 7 f. 1 Prinsler, Katti 1991
- Pueblo Indians and Native American Ritual
  - b. 7 f. 2-25 Articles 1990s
- b. 7 f. 26-27 Photographs -- Taos Pueblo 1996
  - b. 8 f. 1-6 Photographs -- San Juan Pueblo Festival 1996
  - b. 9 f. 1 Photographs -- San Juan Pueblo Festival 1996
  - b. 9 f. 2 Research Guide to Latin American and Caribbean Dance 1989
  - b. 9 f. 3 Salem Press 1992
  - b. 9 f. 4 The United States Repertoire Internationale des Sources Musicales Project 1991
  - b. 9 f. 5 "The War of the Quadrilles: Creoles vs. Americans, 1804" 1985-1987
  - b. 9 f. 6-7 "Who is Isadora? What is She?" 1995-1996
- b. 9 f. 8-12 Dance and Education Files 1955-1968