



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett papers

1857-1903

*T-Mss 2012-055

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Summary

Creator: Fawcett, George, 1860-1939

Title: George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett papers

Date: 1857-1903

Size: 6.27 linear feet (16 boxes, 1 volume)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: The collection dates from 1857 to 1939 and contains photographs, scrapbooks, programs, articles, correspondence, writings, and other materials pertaining to American actors George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett.

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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Processing note: Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Creator History

George Fawcett (1860-1939) was an American stage and silent film actor. His early acting career began in 1887, when he appeared in a production of Bronson Howard's *Baron Rudolph* at the Fourteenth Street Theatre. Later that year, he performed in Gillette and Henry Rider Haggard's production of *She* at Niblo's Garden in New York City. In 1899, he made his Broadway debut in Peter Stuyvesant. Other well-known productions include *Ghosts* (1903), *The Squaw Man* (1905), and *The*

Great John Ganton (1909). Fawcett joined Universal Studios in 1915, in order to further his career as a silent film actor. He appeared in numerous films from age 55 until his death in 1939. Some of his early films were directed by D.W. Griffith, such as *Intolerance* (1916), *True Heart Susie* (1919), *A Romance of Happy Valley* (1919), and *The Great Question* (1919). Other well-received films include *The Merry Widow* (1925), *Man of the Forest* (1926), *Flesh of the Devil* (1926), and *The Wedding March* (1928).

Percy Haswell was an American actress. She spent six years acting in Augustin Daly's company in New York and London starting in 1893 and appeared and starred in plays such as *The School for Scandal* (1893), *A Night Off* (1894), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1895). She married George Fawcett in 1895. Haswell made her Broadway debut in *A Virginia Courtship* in 1898. Other Broadway productions included *Peter Stuyvesant* (1899), *The Measure of Man* (1906), *The Honor of the Family* (1908), *The Littlest Rebel* (1911), and *Bab* (1920). She formed the Percy Haswell Company in Baltimore, Maryland in 1901. George Fawcett managed the company and in 1903 changed the name to The George Fawcett Stock Company. The company continued to stage shows until 1908. During the 1910s, Haswell spent several years touring with her own stock theater companies in Cleveland, Memphis, Toronto, and New Orleans. She directed *The Complex* in 1925 on Broadway.

Fawcett and Haswell were active until 1932, when they made their final Broadway appearance in the play *Peacock*, which Fawcett directed and staged. The couple settled in Nantucket, Massachusetts. George Fawcett died in 1939 and Percy Haswell Fawcett died in 1945.

Scope and Content Note

The George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett papers date from 1857 to 1939 and document the actors' respective and combined acting careers through photographs, scrapbooks, programs, articles, correspondence, and writings. The collection is arranged into three groups: George Fawcett files, Percy Haswell Fawcett files, and George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett files. Materials within each group are arranged by format.

George Fawcett files contain articles, programs, scrapbooks, photographs, correspondence, and writings. Articles are frequently biographical sketches of Fawcett written in conjunction with the release of a film or play. Fan letters make up the bulk of the correspondence, with a limited amount of letters regarding contracts. Photographs depict Fawcett in films, such as *One Man's Reunion*, *Once a Gentleman*, *His Children's Children*, *The Tempest*, and *Forever*. The scrapbooks contain articles and programs for Fawcett's theater work, namely the 1909, 1912, and 1930 productions of *The Great John Ganton*. Fawcett's writings include his published and unpublished poetry, a script entitled *Shooting at the Moon*, and his unpublished autobiography, *The Marching Years*. The autobiography recounts his experiences in the theater business during the 1880s and 1890s. There is also a file pertaining to his brother, actor and stage manager Allen Fawcett, which contains photographs and some of his unpublished writings.

Percy Haswell Fawcett files primarily contain photographs and scrapbooks, with a limited amount of articles, programs, and correspondence. The photographs chronicle Haswell's entire acting career, from her early performances in Boston during the 1880s until the 1920s. The photographs are mostly portraits of Haswell in costume and character for regional productions such as *As You Like It*, *Fedora*, *The Little Minister*, *The Royal Family*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Favor of the Queen*. There are also photographs of Haswell in costumes for some of her Broadway productions, including *A Virginia Courtship*, *The Littlest Rebel*, and *The Honor of the Family*. Photographs were taken in New York City, Baltimore, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Denver, and Toronto, among other cities. Scrapbooks, articles, and programs that relate to Haswell document her acting with the Augustin Daly

Company, primarily between 1893 and 1895, and her leadership of and acting with stock companies, such as the Lafayette Square Stock Company and the Percy Haswell Company. Haswell's positive reception as an actress in Toronto is particularly well represented; a small run of her publication, *The Percy Haswell Weekly News*, published by the Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, is present. The publication featured theater news in Toronto.

George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett files primarily relate to the Percy Haswell Stock Company, which Fawcett directed, and the subsequent George Fawcett Company. Material consists of scrapbooks and photographs of other actors, primarily those who acted with Fawcett and Haswell. The scrapbooks contain programs and articles, several of which are for Chase's Lyceum Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland. Other scrapbooks contain articles and clippings on other actors and for shows Haswell and Fawcett attended. There is one scrapbook that pertains specifically to actress G.H. (Ann) Gilbert, who acted with Haswell in the Augustin Daly Company during the 1890s. Also present are two theater record books, created by theatergoers who attended shows in Boston, including shows put on by Fawcett's company. The books contain clippings, programs, notes, and criticisms by the books' creators. Several actors are pictured in the photographs, including Frank Gilmore, Otis Skinner, Julia Marlow, William DeWolf Hopper, Bertha Kalich, Florence Nash, and Johnny Mack Brown. There are also two autographed photographs of sculptures by American artist Gutzon Borglum.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged into three groups: George Fawcett, Percy Haswell Fawcett, and George Fawcett and Percy Haswell Fawcett. Materials are arranged by format within each group.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Manuscripts (document genre)

Photographs

Scrapbooks

Scripts (documents)

Subjects

Theater -- United States

Names

Fawcett, Percy Haswell

Container List

Fawcett, George

- b. 1 f. 1-3 Articles 1890-1939
- b. 8 f. 1 Articles 1909-1928
- b. 1 f. 4 Correspondence 1905-1938
- b. 8 f. 2 Drawings of George Fawcett 1921
One of the drawings is by American artist Morgan Dennis.

- b. 1 f. 5 Fawcett, Allen 1910-1915
- b. 1 f. 6-8 *The Great John Ganton Scripts* 1909-1910
- b. 10 f. 3 Miscellaneous 1896, 1906
- b. 2 f. 1-4 Photographs 1878-circa 1938
- b. 8 f. 3-6 Photographs 1903-1920s
- b. 2 f. 5-6 Programs and Publicity 1906-1932

Scrapbooks

- b. 13 f. 2 1908-1912
- b. 10 f. 1 1918-1921
- b. 10 f. 2 1930
Scrapbooks for *The Great John Ganton* at the Vine Street Theatre.

Writings

- b. 2 f. 7-8 The Marching Years 1920s-1930s
- b. 3 f. 1-3 The Marching Years 1920s-1930s
- b. 3 f. 4-6 Poetry and Articles 1917-1939
- b. 3 f. 7 *Shooting at the Moon* 1920s-1930s

Haswell Fawcett, Percy

Articles

- b. 3 f. 8 1896-1930
- b. 10 f. 4 1897-1916
- b. 4 f. 1 Percy Haswell Weekly News
- b. 4 f. 2 Correspondence 1902-1932
- b. 10 f. 5 Drawings of Percy Haswell 1910-1911
Two drawings by American cartoonist, Lou Skuce.

- b. 4 f. 3 Miscellaneous 1894-1903

Photographs

- b. 4 f. 4-9 1887-1902
- b. 8 f. 7-9 1880s-1895
- b. 5 f. 1-7 1902-1930s
- b. 9 f. 1-5 1903-1923
- b. 6 f. 1-2 Programs 1893-1923
- b. 10 f. 6 Programs 1894-1895

Scrapbooks

Haswell Fawcett, Percy (cont.)
Scrapbooks (cont.)

- b. 11 f. 1 1883-1903
- v. 1 1887-1915
- b. 7 f. 3 1887-1915
Loose material removed from scrapbook (1887-1915).
- b. 7 f. 4 1894-1900
- b. 15 f. 1 1902-1919
- b. 10 f. 7 1913

Fawcett, George and Percy Haswell

Photographs of Other Actors

- b. 6 f. 3-7 1887-1920
- b. 7 f. 1 1915-1930
- b. 9 f. 6-7 1897-circa 1926
Some photographs signed by Guzton Borglum.

Scrapbooks

Other Actors

- b. 15 f. 2 1857-1891
This scrapbook pertains specifically to actress G.H. (Ann) Gilbert.
- b. 7 f. 2 1893-1900
- b. 12 f. 1 1880s-1905

Fawcett, George and Percy Haswell

- b. 16 f. 1 1901-1902
- b. 11 f. 2 1901-1903
- b. 10 f. 8 1905
- b. 13 f. 1 Theatre Record Book 1901-1908
- b. 14 f. 1 Theatre Record Book 1902-1908