

**The New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Neighborhood Playhouse Records**  
**1904-1937**  
MssCol 2112

**Valerie Wingfield**  
**2003**

**Revised by Melanie Yolles**  
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## Summary

<b>Main entry:</b>	Neighborhood Playhouse (New York, N.Y.)
<b>Title:</b>	Neighborhood Playhouse records, 1904-1937
<b>Size:</b>	.4 linear feet (1 box)
<b>Source:</b>	Gift of Alice Lewisohn Crowley, 1947
<b>Abstract:</b>	The collection consists chiefly of letters received by Alice and Irene Lewisohn, creators of the Neighborhood Playhouse, a theater and teaching facility for dance and drama that began as part of the Henry Street Settlement on New York City's Lower East Side.
<b>Preferred citation:</b>	Neighborhood Playhouse Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
<b>Special formats</b>	Scripts.

### **Related materials note**

Additional materials concerning the Neighborhood Playhouse can be found in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, Music Division, and Billy Rose Theatre Collection, of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Neighborhood Playhouse Archives  
The Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre.  
340 E 54th St. New York, NY 10022-5017.

## Historical note

Philanthropist sisters Alice (1883-1972) and Irene (1892-1944) Lewisohn founded the Neighborhood Playhouse in 1915 as a home for the Neighborhood Players, an amateur acting troupe for adults and children at the Henry Street Settlement on New York City's Lower East Side. The Players participated in pageants and festivals sponsored by the Settlement and produced plays that highlighted the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood.

In 1914, the Lewisohns bought a lot on the corner of Grand and Pitt Streets and donated it to the Settlement as the site for a new theater that would provide better performance space and teaching facilities. When the Playhouse opened, it presented both motion pictures and theatrical performances. However, by 1920, professional actors had replaced the amateurs and the Playhouse became renowned for its experimental and avant-garde productions, which often incorporated dance, music, and poetry, and for its popular revue, "The Grand Street Follies."

The Playhouse officially closed in 1927. However, under the general management of Helen F. Ingersoll, the company began producing plays on Broadway. In addition, the Lewisohn sisters and Rita Wallach Morgenthau established the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in 1928. The School is still in operation at 340 East 54th Street.

## Scope and content note

The Neighborhood Playhouse Records consists chiefly of letters received by the Lewisohns and Helen Ingersoll from prominent playwrights, actors, and theater critics as well as students and audience members. With the exception of the letters from actresses Yvette Guilbert and Eugenie Leontovich, there are generally no more than one or two letters per correspondent. Some letters are addressed to Playhouse collaborators Elise Lathrop, Gertrude Kingston, and Helen McDowell. Many of the letters express appreciation for Playhouse productions, particularly *The Silver Box* by John Galsworthy (1913), *Salut au Monde*, based on poems by Walt Whitman (1922), and *Bitter Oleander*, a translation of *Bodas de Sangre* by Federico García Lorca (1934-1935). Some letters in the collection have little content and were clearly retained for their autographic value.

In addition to the letters, there are a few carbon copies of the Lewisohns' outgoing correspondence and two holograph playscripts, *The Touch of Pan* by Algernon Blackwood and *The Green Ring* by Zinaida Gippius, which was produced by the Playhouse during the 1921-1922 season.

## Arrangement note

The Neighborhood Playhouse Records are organized in the following series:

Series I. Correspondence, 1904-1937

Series II. Scripts

## Container list

## Series I. Correspondence, 1904-1937

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	1906; 1909
	2	1913 Letters regarding the production of <i>The Silver Box</i> by John Galsworthy
1	3	1917-1919
	4	1921-1922
	5	1922 Letters regarding the production of <i>Salut au Monde</i> , based on poems by Walt Whitman. Includes letters from Hamlin Garland and Anne Traubel.
	6	1926-1927
	7	1933-1935
	8	1934-1935 Letters regarding the production of <i>Bitter Oleander</i> , a translation of <i>Bodas de Sangre</i> by Federico García Lorca
	9	Undated Includes fundraising letter for an international peace festival.
	10	Arlliss, George, 1908, 1918
11	Barrie, J.M., undated	
12	Behrman, S.N., circa 1933	
13	Bennett, Arnold, 1916	
14	Bloch, Ernest, 1928 (typed transcript)	
15	Caruso, Enrico, 1904 and undated	
16	Cisneros, Eleanora de, undated (fragment)	
17	Dunsany, Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, Baron and Lady Dunsany, 1914, 1917, 1919 and undated	
18	Elliot, Laura, undated	
19	Galsworthy, John and Ida, 1921 and undated	
20	Garden, Mary, undated	
21	Granville-Barker, Harley, 1926	
22	Greet, Ben, Sir, undated	
23	Griffes, Charles Tomlinson, 1917	
24	Groth, Catherine D., 1917 (Encloses letter from Georg Brandes, 1916)	
25	Guilbert, Yvette, 1918; 1921 and undated	
26	Hamilton, Clayton, 1935	
27	Hanau, Stella Bloch, circa 1922	
28	Hays, Helen, 1936	
29	Howe, Marie Jenney, 1928	
30	Hurst, Fannie, 1935	
31	Ingersoll, Helen F., 1934-1935 Includes her sketch for an organizational chart of the Neighborhood Playhouse	
32	Leontovich, Eugenie, 1934 (see also folder 8)	
33	Marcial Dorado, Carolina, undated (see also folder 8)	
34	Masefield, John, undated	
35	Monkhouse, Allan, 1916	
36	Olivier, Laurence, 1934	
37	Pearn, Violet, undated	
38	Phelps, William Lyon, 1916	
39	Pinkert, Regina, undated	
40	Renaud, Maurice, 1909	
41	Rice, Elmer, 1928	
42	Simonson, Lee, 1921	
43	Tempest, Marie, undated	

- 44 Thayer, Beatrice, 1919
- 45 Torrence, Ridgely, undated
- 46 Wald, Lillian, 1920 (typed transcript)
- 47 Young, Stark, 1922

**Series II. Scripts**

- 1 48 Blackwood, Algernon. *The Touch of Pan*, undated
- 49 Gippius, Z.N. *The Green Ring*