

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

**Tobé-Coburn School For Fashion Careers
Records 1937-1996**

**Processed by Valerie Wingfield
with the assistance of Marilyn Byrne
May 1997; revised 2007**

Summary

Main Entry: Tobé-Coburn School for Fashion Careers

Title: Records 1937-1996

Size: 9 linear ft. (14 archival boxes, 11 albums)

Source: Gift of the Bradford Schools, Inc. 1997;
Fashion Group International, Inc. 2004

Description: The collection contains the records of the Tobé-Coburn School, a vocational training school for the fashion and beauty industries

Organizational History

The Tobé-Coburn School for Fashion Careers was established in New York City by Tobé, (néé Tobé Collier Davis) an internationally known fashion authority, and Julia Coburn, former fashion editor of the *Ladies Home Journal* and president of the Fashion Group (later the Fashion Group International, Inc.). The school opened on September 13, 1937. The Tobé-Coburn School developed into a national fashion education institution attracting young people, mainly women, from around the country. The Tobé-Coburn School prepared individuals with high school or college education for careers in the fashion field. Those students with high school education enrolled in a two-year program while the college-educated took the one-year program. Training was intensive. Students were expected to carry a full course load along with extensive on-the-job training. Schooling included one's appearance, elocution and experience meeting with executives in the field. Students typically studied 8-10 subjects per semester. The founders' objective was to expand the opportunities then available to young women entering the fashion field. After many years of preparing women and men for careers in the fashion industry, the school was sold by Mr. Avon Lees to both Mr. Joseph L. Calihan, in his individual capacity, and to Bradford Schools, Inc. on December 12, 1980. Mr. Calihan and The Bradford Schools, Inc. jointly owned the school until June, 1992. In June 1992, Mr. Calihan sold his individual interest in the school to the Bradford Schools, Inc. Bradford Schools, which owned the Wood School, then merged The Tobé-Coburn School into the Wood School. The change of the name from Tobé-Coburn School to the Wood/Coburn School occurred in June, 1993.

Scope and Content Note

The records consist of albums containing many photographic prints of students in on-the-job training, in classrooms, and in other school activities as well as photographs taken in 1948 during a class trip to the Paris Couture Showings including students with Christian Dior, Pierre Balmain and Jacques Fath; samples of instructional materials; recruitment letters from Julia Coburn to prospective students; a set of Employment Clinic notes recorded in a class taught by Julia Coburn along with Coburn's notes as instructor; promotional brochures; students' term projects; and an example of one student's curriculum. The remainder of the material consists of congratulatory letters to Tobé for receiving the Legion of Honor from the French government, press clippings covering the Tobé-Coburn School, Tobé Coller Davis and Julia Coburn.

The Additions, 1947-2007, consists of a mix of correspondence, minutes, notes and reports. The correspondence includes a few letters of one of the founders Julia Coburn; other material is school reports regarding the world of fashion from the students, and alumni information. The current material, 1980's-1990's, focuses on school business and activities. The remaining material is photographs both historical and current; slides.

Related collection in the NYPL: The Fashion Group International, Inc., Records

Container List

ASSIGNMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- | | | |
|-------|--------|--|
| Box 1 | f. 1 | How the school was taught |
| | f. 2 | How fashion ideas reached the consumer |
| | f. 3 | Role of the Buyer 1959 |
| | f. 4-5 | Assignments for the students 1975 |
| | f. 6 | Employment Clinic 1941 |
| | f. 7 | Fabric Charts 1973 |
| | f. 8 | Biographies of European Designers |
| | f. 9 | Fashion History |
| | f. 10 | Fashion home furnishings |
| | f. 11 | Fashion Promotion |
| | f. 12 | Fashion Trends 1970's |
| | f. 13 | Merchandise Information 1950's |
| | f. 14 | Personal Appearance Guide |
| | f. 15 | Speech Therapy |
| | f. 16 | Retail Management |
| | f. 17 | Salesmanship |
| Box 2 | f. 1-2 | Julia Coburn's notes for her Employment Clinic course. |
| | f. 3-4 | Tobé lecture series at Harvard Business School 1957
(Advanced Retail Management) |
| | f. 5-6 | Tobé-Coburn Manual 1969-1970; 1972-1973 |
| | f. 7 | Fashion Creators in Paris. The important London Houses,
edited by Alice C. Perkins. 1946. |

STUDENTS' COMPLETED ASSIGNMENTS

- | | | |
|-------|--------|---|
| | f. 8 | Fashion Trends. Ruth Leininger, 1947. |
| | f. 9 | Robert Pigué and Jacques Fath. Ruth Leininger, 1947 |
| | f. 10 | Day by Day at Macy's. Ruth Leininger, 1947. |
| Box 3 | | Fashion History Assignment. Term Project. Eleanor Snow, 1944 |
| Box 4 | f. 1 | Report on Medieval Shoes. Lois Katz, 1950. |
| | f. 2 | Fashion promotion. Lois Katz, 1951. |
| | f. 3 | The short coat story. Lois Katz, 1951. |
| | f. 4-7 | Notes taken in Employment Clinic by C. Affens, Spring 1955. |
| | f. 8 | Papers by Carol Schlipphack, 1956.
These cover four subjects which were part of one month's
assignment. |
| | f. 9 | Fashion fundamentals workbook 1957-1958. Frances Tompkins. |

- Box 5 f. 1 How to Do. Frances R. Fish, 1957-1958.
 f. 2 Fashion promotions. Frances R. Fish, 1957-1958.
 f. 3 Fashion promotions. Lori Dean, 1959.

JOAN WATKINS SCHOOL YEAR, 1964

- f. 4-6 Fabrics
 f. 7-8 Assignments
 f. 9-11 Store work, examinations, and application
 f. 12 Activities handbook
 f. 13 Manual
 f. 14 Miscellaneous

- Box 6 Class notes

MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS

- Box 7 f. 1 Evolution of fashion. Kent Brasloff, 1984.
 f. 2 Product Development
 f. 3-20 Items removed from the albums
 f. 21-22 Tobé-Coburn promotional materials 1937-1943

- Box 8 Tobé-Coburn promotional material 1949-1981
 Tobé Lectures in Retail. 1957-1958

- Box 9 Certificates
 Fashion Group *Fashion Foolery.* 1959

- Box 10 *The Mode in Costume.* R. Turner Wilcox. 1947

PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| No. | |
| 1 | 1937-1940 |
| 2 | 1941-1947 |
| 3 | 1948-1950 |
| 4 | 1951-1953 |
| 5 | 1954-1956 |
| 6 | 1957-1959 |
| 7 | 1960-1964 |
| 8 | 1965-1970 |
| 9 | 1971-1980 |
| 10 | 1981-1982 |
| 11 | Legion of Honor award to Tobé Coller Davis |

ADDITIONS, 1947-1996

Box 11	f. 1-4 f. 5-8	Correspondence, 1947-1996 Leininger, Ruth E. Fashion History; school papers c1946
Box 12	f. 1 f. 2 f. 3-6 f. 7 f. 8-9	Perkins, Alice K. Fashion creations in Paris c1946 Retailing 1946-1947 Tobé-Coburn. Alumni News 1970-1991 Tobé-Coburn. School brochures 1975-1981 Photographs c1985
Box 13		Classes of 1956-1985
Box 14		Photographs of Tobé-Coburn students; events; slides