



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Doris Humphrey letters

1898-1941

(S) *MGZMD 25

Processed by Nancy M. Shawcross.

Summary

Creator: Humphrey, Doris, 1895-1958

Title: Doris Humphrey letters

Date: 1898-1941

Size: ca. 549 items in 102 folders

Source: Purchase, through a gift of Christena L. Schlundt. Al Pischl. Received: 1966.

Abstract: The vast majority of the collection consists of letters written to Doris Humphrey from relatives, friends, and professional associates. As such, the correspondent or correspondents are simply listed alphabetically within each year in the folder list. Also included are a few letters written by Miss Humphrey; these letters are integrated with the ones that she received and can be identified by the notation "DH/____." Any other letters (i.e., ones neither written to nor by Miss Humphrey) follow the main list of correspondents within each year. An alphabetical list of correspondents of letters with no date (n.d.) follows the year 1941. Miscellany includes Denishawn weekly schedules for Doris Humphrey from July 9-August 18, 1917; a contract between Ruth St. Denis & Ted Shawn and Pauline Lawrence, 1923; and a stock certificate and brochure for the Dance Repertory Theatre, 1929.

Preferred citation: Humphrey, Doris, 1895-1958. Letters, (S) *MGZMD 25, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Nancy M. Shawcross.

Creator History

Doris Humphrey, born October 17, 1895 in Oak Park, Illinois, was one of the most important personalities in the American modern dance movement during the first half of the 20th century. Her initial dance training was at the Francis W. Parker School in Chicago. Graduating in 1913, she organized her own dancing school in Oak Park and the surrounding communities. In 1917, she travelled to Los Angeles to enroll at Denishawn and was accepted into the company. At Denishawn she met and worked with not only Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis, but also Pauline Lawrence and Charles Weidman.

In 1920 she choreographed four works, *Valse Caprice*, *Bourée*, *Soaring*, and *Sonata Pathétique* (the latter two choreographed with Ruth St. Denis). With Weidman she formed a performing group in 1928, for which she created *Color Harmony*, *Air on a G String*, and *Dance of the Chosen* (later called *The Shakers*). On a boat trip to the West Indies, she met Charles Francis Woodford. They married in 1932 and their son, Charles Humphrey Woodford was born in 1933. In 1934, she joined the faculty of the Bennington School of the Dance, Bennington College in Vermont. Her choreographies from this period include the trilogy *New Dance*, *Theatre Piece*, and *With my Red Fires*, *Passacaglia in C Minor*, *El Salon Mexico*, and *Inquest*. In 1940, the Humphrey-Weidman Studio Theatre opened in New York City. Owing to a hip ailment, she was forced to retire as a dancer in 1944 but continued as a teacher and choreographer. As artistic director of the José Limón Company, she created *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*, *Day on Earth*, *Deep Rhythm*, *Ruins and Visions*, and *Theatre Piece No. 2*. In 1948, she joined the faculty of Connecticut College School of the Dance, New London, Connecticut. She wrote *The Art of Making Dances* (published 1959) and *New Dance* (published in *Dance Perspectives* 25). She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for her book on choreography and the Dance Magazine Award in 1958. That same year she began writing her reminiscences but they remained unfinished at her death December 29, 1959, in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The vast majority of the collection consists of letters written to Doris Humphrey from relatives, friends, and professional associates. As such, the correspondent or correspondents are simply listed alphabetically within each year in the folder list. Also included are a few letters written by Miss Humphrey; these letters are integrated with the ones that she received and can be identified by the notation "DH/_____." Any other letters (i.e., ones neither written to nor by Miss Humphrey) follow the main list of correspondents within each year. An alphabetical list of correspondents of letters with no date (n.d.) follows the year 1941. Miscellany includes Denishawn weekly schedules for Doris Humphrey from July 9-August 18, 1917; a contract between Ruth St. Denis & Ted Shawn and Pauline Lawrence, 1923; and a stock certificate and brochure for the Dance Repertory Theatre, 1929. ||| This collection should be used in conjunction with the larger, more comprehensive Doris Humphrey Collection [(S) *MGZMC-Res. 3]. For a biography and list of dances choreographed by Miss Humphrey, consult "The Doris Humphrey Collection: An Introduction and Guide" by Andrew Mark Wentink in *The Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, Volume 77, Autumn 1973, No. 1, pp. 80-142.

Arrangement: I. Letters II. Miscellany

Key Terms

Titles

Gift of Christena L. Schlundt

Subjects

Manuscripts (Letters)

Names

Humphrey, Doris, 1895-1958

Container List

- I. Letters 1898-1941 & n.d.
 - f. 1 Miller, Mary 1898 (1 item)
 - f. 2 "Aunt Lizzie" 1899 (1 item)
 - "Aunt Susan" (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Mira & Herbert (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Rev. & Mrs. Simon James (1 item)
 - Miller, Mary (2 Items)
 - Moses, Leon (1 item)
 - Standish, Barbara (1 item)
 - Wells, Annie M. (1 item)
 - f. 3 "Aunt Sarah" and "Uncle Charles" 1900 (1 item)
 - Davis, Mrs. William R. (1 item)
 - Miller, Mary (2 Items)
 - Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
 - f. 4 "Aunt Sarah" and "Uncle Charles" 1901 (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Simon James (1 item)
 - Kromer, W. (1 item)
 - Taylor, Katharine (1 item)
 - Wells, Annie M. (4 Items)
 - f. 5 "Aunt Sarah" 1902 (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Rev. & Mrs. Simon James (2 Items)
 - Miller, Mary (1 item)
 - Spencer, Hattie (1 item)
 - Wells, Annie M. (3 Items)
 - f. 6 Emerson, Helen B. 1903 (1 item)
 - Sauter, Elizabeth & Carl (1 item)
 - Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
 - f. 7 Humphrey, Mrs. Simon James 1904 (1 item)
 - Miller, Mary (1 item)
 - Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
 - Whitham, M. (1 item)
 - f. 8 "Aunt Sarah" and "Uncle Charles" 1905 (1 item)
 - Emerson, Helen B. (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Horace B. (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Mira (1 item)
 - Humphrey, Rev. & Mrs. Simon James (4 Items)
 - Miller, Mrs. H. Harry (1 item)
 - f. 9 Ross, Mrs. (1 item)
 - Walker, Alex (1 item)

I. Letters (cont.)

Wells, Annie M. (3 Items)

Lists by Doris Humphrey of Christmas presents given and received in 1905
(3 Items)

- f. 10 Humphrey, Julia E. 1906 (1 item)
Humphrey, Mrs. Simon James (2 Items)
Miller, Mrs. H. Harry (1 item)
Palmer, Josephine L. (1 item)
Ross, Mrs. (1 item)
Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)
Webster, Grace H. (1 item)
Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
Williams, Amelia (1 item)
- f. 11 "Aunt Sarah" and "Uncle Charles" 1907 (2 Items)
Baker, Doris (1 item)
Dryer, Mabel E. (1 item)
Emerson, Helen B. (2 Items)
Humphrey, Mrs. Simon James (1 item)
- f. 12 Lewis, Harriet E. (1 item)
Maddox, Dick (1 item)
Maynard, Frieda B. (2 Items)
Rogers, Marylou (1 item)
Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
- f. 13 Browne, Ada M. 1908 (1 item)
Cooper, Fannie Fox (1 item)
Davis, William R., Jr. (2 Items)
Emerson, Helen B. (2 Items)
Humphrey, Mrs. Simon James (1 item)
Lewis, Nell (1 item)
- f. 14 Maynard, Frieda B. (1 item)
Packard, Mrs. (1 item)
Standish (?), Barbara (1 item)
Stevens, M.T. (1 item)
Stow, Sarah D. (1 item)
- f. 15 Walker, Mary Miller (3 Items)
Wells, Annie M. (4 Items)
Wilder, Hattie (1 item)
- f. 16 "Auntie Lill" 1909 (1 item)
"Aunt Sarah" and "Uncle Charles" (2 Items)
Baer, Adolph (1 item)
Bevan, Mary (2 Items)
Cleaves, Irene I. (1 item)
Cooper, Fannie Fox (2 Items)

- I. Letters (cont.)
- f. 17 Davis, Mrs. William R. (3 Items)
Emerson, Helen B. (1 item)
Hatch, Frances E. (1 item)
Knapp, Susie L. (1 item)
Laughton, Alice (1 item)
Lewis, Nellie C. (2 Items)
- f. 18 Maynard, Frieda B. (3 Items)
Maynard, Mrs. M.A.B. (1 item)
Miller, Mrs. H. Harry (1 item)
R., L.M. (1 item)
Ross, Mrs. (1 item)
Seavey, Louise (1 item)
Sherman, Elsie (1 item)
Sherman, "Grandma" (1 item)
- f. 19 Smallwood, Ida (1 item)
Spoonier, Elizabeth (1 item)
Standish, Albert H. (1 item)
Stern, Hattie (1 item)
Stow, Sarah D. (1 item)
Taylor, Edwin (2 Items)
Taylor, Henry (1 item)
Walker, Mary Miller (7 Items)
- f. 20 Warren, Susie (1 item)
Wells, Annie M. (4 Items)
Wheeler, Stella (1 item)
Wood, Miriam S. (3 Items)
- f. 21 "Auntie Lil" 1910 (1 item)
Baer, Adolph (2 Items)
Bevan, Mary (4 Items)
Clark, E.A. (1 item)
Collings, Laura W. (1 item)
- f. 22 Hatch, Frances E. (4 Items)
Humphrey, Mira (2 Items)
McSwan, Alex (2 Items)
- f. 23 Maynard, Frieda B. (4 Items)
- f. 24 Montgomery, Frances (3 Items)
- f. 25 Morris, Sophie (1 item)
Munro, Caroline (6 Items)
Sauter, Dorothy (1 item)
- f. 26 Smith, Lucy (2 Items)
Standish, Albert H. (1 item)

- I. Letters (cont.)
- Stern, Hattie (2 Items)
- Taylor, Edwin (3 Items)
- f. 27 Walker, Mary Miller (8 Items)
- Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
- Wheeler, Stella (1 item)
- Williams, Mrs. D. (1 item)
- Winston, Caroline Taylor (1 item)
- f. 28 Bevan, Mary 1911 (1 item)
- Cook, Jennie (1 item)
- Hatch, Frances E. (1 item)
- Humphrey, Mira (1 item)
- Maynard, Frieda B. (1 item)
- Merrill, Louis (1 item)
- Montgomery, Frances (2 Items)
- f. 29 Munro, Caroline (8 Items)
- O'Shea (?), Harriet (1 item)
- Parsons, M.A. (1 item)
- f. 30 Proehl, Elsa (1 item)
- Shepherd, Louise F. (1 item)
- Taylor, Edwin (1 item)
- Tonning (?), Anna (1 item)
- Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)
- Wells, Annie M. (3 Items)
- f. 31 Davis, Mrs. William R. 1912 (1 item)
- Munro, Caroline (1 item)
- Standish, Albert H. (2 Items)
- Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)
- Wells, Annie M. (1 item)
- f. 32 unidentified 1913 (1 item)
- Gates, Arthur D. 1914 (1 item)
- King Amusement Bureau (1 item)
- f. 33 "Darlene" and "Helen" 1915 (1 item)
- Hatlanet (?), Josephine (1 item)
- Isham, Mrs. George S. (1 item)
- Lewis, Mabel (1 item)
- Stearns, Paulina (1 item)
- f. 34 Taylor, Edwin H. (1 item)
- Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)
- Williams, Billy (2 Items)
- f. 35 "Alice" 1916 (1 item)
- Campbell, Ruth (1 item)

I. Letters (cont.)

- Morgan, Marion (1 item)
- Parker, Frank (1 item)
- Pavley, Andreas (1 item)
- R., F. (1 item)
- Shearer, Sara (1 item)
- f. 36 Stearns, Paulina (1 item)
- Walker, Mary Miller (3 Items)
- Williams, Billy (3 Items)
- f. 37 Andrews, Florence 1917 (1 item)
- Bagley, Carrie (6 Items)
- f. 38 C., Charles (1 item)
- Campbell, Ruth (1 item)
- Davis, Mrs. William R. (1 item)
- Denishawn (1 item)
- Dwyer, Winsor (1 item)
- Francis, Carolyn (1 item)
- f. 39 Hinman, Mary Wood (1 item)
- Hinman Studio (1 item)
- Humphrey, Julia E. (3 Items)
- f. 40 "Margaret" (2 Items)
- Marmein Studio (1 item)
- Powers, Mildred (2 Items)
- f. 41 Quick, Cora (1 item)
- Stearns, Paulina (1 item)
- Suhr, Margaret H. (1 item)
- Walker, Mary Miller (4 Items)
- f. 42 Wolfe, Ian M. (2 Items)
- Worthington, Lymar (2 Items)
- Wright, A.M. (1 item)
- f. 43 Campbell, Ruth 1918 (1 item)
- Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)
- Wolfe, Ian M. (2 Items)
- f. 44 Wiland, C.M. 1919 (2 Items)
- f. 45 Sargent, S.H. 1921 (1 item)
- Shawn, Ted (1 item)
- f. 46-47 Wolfe, Ian M. 1922 (7 Items)
- f. 47 unidentified/Pauline Lawrence (1 item)
- f. 48 Cornejo, Francisco 1923 (1 item)
- Lawrence, Pauline (1 item)
- Misuraca, Merlo (3 Items)
- f. 49 Wolfe, Ian M. (3 Items)

I. Letters (cont.)

- f. 50 Horst, Louis 1924 (1 item)
- f. 51-52 Lawrence, Pauline (6 Items)
- f. 53 DH/Pauline Lawrence (3 Items)
- f. 54 Nova (?), Marion (1 item)
Nugent, Dick (4 Items)
- f. 55 Summers, Lane (1 item)
Weeks, John O. (2 Items)
- f. 56 Carroll, Albert 1925 (1 item)
Conner, Elizabeth (1 item)
Dwan, Johann (1 item)
Glenn, John (2 Items)
Humphrey, Julia E. (1 item)
- f. 57 Lawrence, Pauline (1 item)
Wolfe, Ian M. (3 Items)
- f. 58 Browning, Charles C. 1926 (1 item)
Glenn, John (2 Items)
- f. 59 Humphrey, Horace B. (1 item)
"Teddy" (1 item)
Warren, W.H. (1 item)
- f. 60 "Wesley" (3 Items)
- f. 61 Glenn, John 1927 (1 item)
Lawrence, Pauline (2 Items)
- f. 62 DH/"prospective member of the dance group" 1929 (1 item)
H.W. Hicks/Charles Weidman (1 item)
- f. 63 "Ethel" 1930 (1 item)
Hinman, Mary Wood (1 item)
- f. 63-64 Humphrey, Horace B. & Julia E. (7 Items)
- f. 65 Kingstend, Helen (1 item)
Philadelphia Theatre Association (1 item)
Pickering, Ruth (1 item)
Prokosch (?), Gertrude (1 item)
"Shibley" (1 item)
Standish, Mary (1 item)
Warrington, Neely (1 item)
- f. 66 Chellis, Pauline 1931 (1 item)
Fagg, Juanita (1 item)
- f. 67-68 Humphrey, Horace B. & Julia E. (8 Items)
- f. 69 Marris, Mary (1 item)
Misuraca, Merlo (1 item)
Potter, Russell (1 item)
Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)

- I. Letters (cont.)
- Wolfe, Ian M. (1 item)
Pauline Lawrence/Ian Wolfe (1 item)
- f. 70 Engel, A. Lehman 1936 (1 item)
McKinstry, Sue Robertson (1 item)
- f. 71 Redfield, Louise (1 item)
- f. 72 Sauter, Dorothy (1 item)
Starrett, Therese (1 item)
"Sybil" (1 item)
Walker, Mary Miller (1 item)
- f. 73 Woodford, Charles Francis (5 Items)
- f. 74 Rudhyar, Dane 1937 (1 item)
Woodford, Charles Francis (1 item)
- f. 75 Robinson, Helen Mary 1940 (1 item)
Woodford, Mrs. (1 item)
- f. 76 Code, Grant 1941 (1 item)
Humphrey, Julia E. (1 item)
Robinson, Helen Mary (1 item)
- f. 77 "Adaline" n.d. (1 item)
"Adolphe" (1 item)
"Aunt Lizzie" (1 item)
B., C.F. (1 item)
Browne, Ada M. (1 item)
Burke, Tom (1 item)
- f. 78 Carroll, Albert (1 item)
"Claire" (1 item)
Considine, Margaret (1 item)
Davis, William R., Jr. (1 item)
Davis, Mrs. William R. (1 item)
Dwyer, Winsor (1 item)
- f. 79 Edwards, Mabel Lincoln (1 item)
"Elsie" (1 item)
Emerson, Clara E. (3 Items)
Goodrich, Harriet (1 item)
Gronau, Ilse (1 item)
- f. 80 Hall, J. (2 Items)
Hatch, Frances (1 item)
Hinman, Mary Wood (5 Items)
- f. 81 Humphrey, Julia E. (1 item)
Humphrey, Mira (8 Items)
- f. 82 Humphrey, Simon James (1 item)
Humphrey, Mrs. Simon James (3 Items)

I. Letters (cont.)

- f. 83 Lawrence, Pauline (4 Items)
- f. 84 Lemar, Louise (1 item)
Leofbourrow (?), Edith (1 item)
Leonard, Mrs. Alex (1 item)
Lonn, Will (1 item)
- f. 85 "Margaret" (1 item)
Mateer (?), Ada (1 item)
Maynard, Frieda B. (10 Items)
Maynard, Mrs. M.A.B. (1 item)
Munro, Caroline (1 item)
- f. 86 Pollack, Miss (1 item)
Reeder, Charlotte (1 item)
St. Denis, Ruth (1 item)
Sammond, Effie (2 Items)
- f. 87 Sauter, Dorothy (1 item)
Souter, Elizabeth (3 Items)
Savage, S. (1 item)
Smith, Lucy (1 item)
Spencer, Lenore (1 item)
Standish, Barbara (1 item)
Standish, Lora (1 item)
Stern, Hattie (2 Items)
Stough, Helen (1 item)
- f. 88 "Uncle Carl" (1 item)
"Uncle Charles" (1 item)
- f. 89 Walker, Mary Miller (13 Items)
- f. 90 Weidman, Charles (1 item)
Wells, Annie M. (2 Items)
Williams, Billy (1 item)
- f. 91 Wolfe, Ian M. (3 Items)
- f. 92 unidentified (1 item)
DH/Mr. Lewis (1 item)
"Mary"/"Mama" (1 item)
Fragments and Empty Envelopes (7 Items)

II. Miscellany

- f. 93-94 Holograph notebook with photographs by DH Chicago dated 1906 Sept. 3
"Doris and her father started for a trip down Lake Michigan...."
- f. 95 Fortune-telling key
Paper Dolls
- f. 96 Denishawn weekly schedules for DH 1917 July 9 - Aug. 18
- f. 97 Contract between Ruth St. Denis & Ted Shawn and Pauline Lawrence 1923

II. Miscellany (cont.)

- f. 98 Dance Repertory Theatre: Stock certificate and brochure 1929
- f. 99 Lease for furnished house for DH 1931 July 1 - Oct. 15
Autographed menu for farewell dinner on R.M.S. "Dominica," 1931 July 1
- f. 100 Miscellaneous holograph notes
- f. 101 Song lyrics (typescripts with holograph notes)
- f. 102 Photographs (8 items)