



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Carroll McComas papers

1914-1962

*T-Mss 1996-043

Processed by Susan MacArthur.

Summary

Creator: McComas, Carroll, d. 1962

Title: Carroll McComas papers

Date: 1914-1962

Source: Gift, Virginia Mattis, 10/30/1996

Abstract: The Carroll McComas papers span the years 1914-1962 and document aspects of her life and career from the early days of vaudeville until her death in 1962. Included is correspondence about her ANTA guest artist appearance in THE GLASS MENAGERIE. The bulk of the collection however, is photographs that represent many productions in which McComas appeared including THE JOLLY ROGER, NIGHT HAWK and the motion picture JAMAICA RUN.

Conditions Governing Access:

Photocopying prohibited.

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Preferred citation: Carroll McComas Papers, *T-Mss 1996-043, The Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Processing note: Processed by Susan MacArthur.

Creator History

Actress Carroll McComas was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the daughter of Judge Charles Carroll McComas, a direct descendent of Charles Carroll, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Alice Moore McComas, a writer, actress and suffragist. McComas began her career as a whistler in vaudeville when she was thirteen.

Her first "regular production", as she called it, was in Charles Frohman's *The Dollar Princess*. For the

next few years she played in both drama and musical comedy and was a success in the title role of *Miss Lulu Bett*. Her association with Walter Hampden brought other successful roles in *The Jolly Roger*, *Cyrano De Bergerac* and *The Ring of Truth*.

In 1930, Ms. McComas left the theater to marry Selskar Gunn, vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation. After her husband's death in 1944, she returned to the stage appearing in the USO tour of *Our Town* with Raymond Massey. Other roles were in *Arms and the Man*, *Design for a Stained Glass Window* and as an ANTA guest artist in *The Glass Menagerie*. Her last New York appearance was in 1959 in *The Innocents*. McComas also appeared on television playing the Nurse opposite Susan Strasberg in *Romeo and Juliet* and in numerous motion pictures, including *Jamaica Run* and *The Miracle Worker*. Carroll McComas died in 1962 of a heart attack.

Custodial History

The Carroll McComas papers were given to the Billy Rose Theatre Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts by Virginia Mattis in 1996.

Scope and Content Note

The Carroll McComas Papers are predominately photographs. Childhood, vaudeville years and other stage appearances including *The Jolly Roger* and *Night Hawk* are represented by portraits and publicity photographs, ca. 1891-1930. Motion picture stills are from *Jamaica Run* and a few snapshots are from 1952. Collection also contains a small amount of correspondence including correspondence about her ANTA guest artist appearance in *The Glass Menagerie*, as well as clippings and her passport.

Arrangement: Series I: Personal papers Series II: Photographs

Key Terms

Subjects

Actors and actresses -- United States
Theater -- United States
Vaudeville

Titles

Jamaica Run (Motion picture)

Names

McComas, Carroll, d. 1962
Foster, Lewis R., d. 1974
Oliver, Roland Anthony
Thomas, A. E. (Albert Ellsworth), 1872-1947
Williams, Tennessee, 1911-1983

Container List

Series I. Personal Papers 1914-1962, n.d (3 folders)

This series consists of correspondence, clippings and McComas' passport (1931). Correspondence includes letters about McComas as an ANTA guest artist in the Augustana College production of *The Glass Menagerie* and a note from *Jamaica Run* director Lewis Foster. The clippings include biographical articles and McComas' obituary.

By type

- b. 1 f. 1 **Miscellaneous correspondence,**. 1914-1952 (1 folder)
McComas, Carroll
Correspondence to actress Carroll McComas.
- b. 1 f. 2 **Passport / Carroll McComas,**. 1931 (1 folder)
Actress Carroll McComas' passport.
- b. 1 f. 3 **Clippings / Carroll McComas,**. 1923-1962 (1 folder)
Clippings about the career of actress Carroll McComas. Includes her obituary.

Series II. Photographs 1920-1952, n.d (1 box and 4 folders)

Includes baby pictures and early photos of McComas' vaudeville days. Productions represented are *The Jolly Roger*, *Night Hawk* and the motion picture *Jamaica Run*. Theatrical portraits and publicity shots are arranged by photographer. A few snapshots, unidentified production shots and photos of friends complete the series.

Chronological and alphabetical by photographer

- b. 1 f. 4-7 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (4 folders)
Four folders of early photographs of actress Carroll McComas including baby, childhood and vaudeville years.
- b. 2 f. 1 **The Jolly Roger / A. E. (Albert Ellsworth) Thomas,**. 1923 (1 folder)
McComas, Carroll
Publicity photographs of Carroll McComas for *The Jolly Roger*.
- b. 2 f. 2 **Night hawk / Roland Oliver,**. 1926 (1 folder)
McComas, Carroll
Production photographs of Carroll McComas in *Night Hawk*.
- b. 2 f. 3 **Jamaica run (Motion picture),**. 1952 (1 folder)
Movie stills from *Jamaica Run*.
- b. 2 f. 4 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Connelly, James Hargis, photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by James Hargis Connelly.
- b. 2 f. 5 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by C. Curtis.
- b. 2 f. 6 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Evans Studio (Los Angeles, Calif.), photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Evans Studio (Los Angeles, Calif.).
- b. 2 f. 7 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Goldberg, Maurice, photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Maurice Goldberg.
- b. 2 f. 8 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Hall's Studio (New York, N.Y.), photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Hall's Studio (New York, N.Y.).

Series II. Photographs (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 9 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Hartsook, photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Hartsook.
- b. 2 f. 10 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Lewis-Smith (Chicago, Ill.), photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Lewis-Smith.
- b. 2 f. 11 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Moffett (Chicago, Ill.), photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Moffett.
- b. 2 f. 12 **Photographs / Carroll McComas, . 1920** (1 folder)
Nickolas Muray (New York, N.Y.), photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Nickolas Muray.
- b. 2 f. 13 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Otto Sarony Co., photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Otto Sarony.
- b. 2 f. 14 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Sarony (New York, N.Y.), photographer
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by Sarony.
- b. 2 f. 15 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
White Studio
Actress Carroll McComas photographed by White Studio.
- b. 2 f. 16 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Miscellaneous photographs of actress Carroll McComas and friends.
- b. 2 f. 17 **Photographs / Carroll McComas.** (1 folder)
Photographs of unidentified productions in which Carroll McComas appeared.