



The New York Public Library Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Elsa Shelley notes and scripts

1950-1971

*T-Mss 2014-137

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015

Summary

Creator: Shelley, Elsa

Title: Elsa Shelley notes and scripts

Date: 1950-1971

Size: 3.2 linear feet (8 boxes)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: Elsa Shelley (c.1903-1971?) was a playwright. The collection, dated 1950 to 1971, holds scripts, notes and notebooks.

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Creator History

Elsa Shelley (c. 1903-1971?) was a playwright. During her childhood, she emigrated with her parents from Russia to the United States. From the 1920s to the 1930s, Shelley was an actor before focusing on her career as a playwright. In 1944, her first successful production, *Pick-Up Girl*, reflected her concerns about the growing juvenile delinquency among girls (televised in 1960 as *Too Young to Love*). Her other noted work includes *With a Silk Thread*.

She occasionally co-wrote productions with her husband Irving Kaye Davis (1900-1965), such as *The Game of Conquer*. Shelley died in New York City around 1971.

Scope and Content Note

The collection, dated 1950 to 1971, holds scripts, notebooks and notes by the playwright Elsa Shelley.

Shelley is represented by several titles including *The Game of Conquer* with scripts, multiple draft pages and notes that reflect the development process. These notes were received batched in groups, without a clear order.

Other scripts in the collection include *With a Silk Thread* and *We're Young, We Don't Know Any Better*. The latter script may be preparation for her autobiography.

The files contain assorted notes (some were originally integrated with the scripts), and notes on homosexuality, possibly generated for a future production.

Two notebooks contain brief notes for an unpublished autobiography by Shelley.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by format.

Key Terms

Occupations

Playwrights

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scripts

Subjects

Theater

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Container List

Scripts

- b. 1 f. 1 *Background for the Defense* 1960
 - b. 1 f. 2 *Female and Nest*
 - b. 1 f. 3 *Frightened Money*
The Game of Conquer
 - b. 1 f. 3-9 1963, 1965
 - b. 2 f. 1-7 1966-1967
 - b. 3 f. 1-8 Pages Not Used for Script
 - b. 3 f. 9-10 Notes
 - b. 4 f. 1-2 *Lost in the Backstretch* 1961
 - b. 4 f. 3 *A Sweet Guy*
 - b. 4 f. 4-7 *(The) Two Birthday Cards*
We' re Young, We Don' t Know Any Better
 - b. 5 f. 1-7 1970
 - b. 6 f. 1-5 1970
Third version/draft.
Pages Not Used for Script
 - b. 6 f. 6-10 c. 1960
 - b. 7 f. 1-3 c. 1960
 - b. 7 f. 4 *With a Silk Thread* 1950
 - b. 7 f. 5-8 *With a Tongue of Wood*
 - b. 7 f. 9 Unidentified Scripts Pages
- ### Notes and Notebooks
- b. 7 f. 10-11 Unsorted Notes for Scripts
 - b. 8 f. 1 Assorted Notes
 - b. 8 f. 2 Notes on Homosexuality c. 1962
 - b. 8 f. 3 Notebooks