

EDNA WELLS LUETZ PAPERS
1916 - 1961
Finding Aid



Archives and Special Collections



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Portrait of Edna Wells Luetz, ca. 1950

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 02-06

Size: 1.7316 cu. ft.

Provenance: Edna Wells Luetz

Location: Range 5 Section 8 Shelves 43 - 44

Restrictions: None.

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistant: Ms. Maria de Graaf Enaboifo

Date: May 2008

Revised: November 2014



Edna Wells Luetz
posing by one of her paintings



Edna Wells Luetz
behind the camera,
1958

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edna M. Wells was born in Germany in 1894, and was the daughter of an English father and German mother. Existing records provide scant information about Edna's parents, her sister and her formative years in Germany and in New York City.

The Wells family probably arrived in New York City around the turn of the 20th Century. Edna attended and graduated from Hunter High School in 1912, and subsequently received a Bachelor of Arts from Hunter College in 1916. Edna excelled as an undergraduate and exhibited an affinity for Mathematics, English and other languages. Edna's facility with German was acknowledged when she was awarded the prize in German at commencement. Edna subsequently went on to obtain a Masters of Arts from Columbia University and a Teacher of Fine Arts diploma from Teachers College in 1919. It should be noted that Edna continued her education and learned stage and costume design under the tutelage of Robert Edmund Jones and Norman Bel Geddes and at the Reinhardt Theatre in Germany.

Edna M. Wells began her professional career at Hunter College as a Temporary Instructor in the Department of Art in 1917. She taught a variety of art courses and seemed to have had an affinity for theatrical productions. Edna was acquainted with the intricacies of stage and costume design, architecture and lighting. This served her well when she later designed production sets in the Hunter College Auditorium, the Hunter College Playhouse and the Little Theatre.

Edna served as Chair of the Department of Art from 1948 to 1963. During her tenure, she was instrumental in bringing Robert Motherwell, William Baziotis, Richard Lippold, Ad Reinhardt, Fritz Bultman, George Sugarman, Gabor Peterdi, and Ray Parker to Hunter College. The outstanding abstract painters and sculptors, along with her innovative, substantive curriculum design changes brought legitimacy and national prestige to the Art Department.

The Edna Wells Luetz/Frederick P. Riedel Endowment appropriately memorializes a woman of multiple talents, rigorous intellect, and uncompromising artistic standards.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Edna Wells Luetz Papers highlight Luetz's association with Hunter College from 1920 to 1961. There are very few documents that attest to her role as an instructor and as an administrator in the Department of Art. In addition, there is insufficient information on Luetz's interest and creativity as a painter and as a stained glass artist. However, despite the limitations of this collection, researchers can still appreciate the significant contributions that Luetz made as the Chair of the aforementioned department.

The collection consists of awards and certificates, dossier and vitae, articles, reports, correspondence, publications, photographs, etchings, drawings, and woodblock prints that were created by Luetz. Key folders in this collection include: 1) Sketch of the Seal of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 1926; 2) Plans for New York World's Fair Board of Higher Education Hunter College, 1938; 3) Exhibition of the Board of Higher Education for the Golden Anniversary of New York City, August 21, 1948; 4) Goethe Bicentennial Convocation, October 15-29, 1949; and 5) Hunter College Motion Pictures: "695 Park Avenue" (1956) and "Mihi Cura Futuri" (1961).

The papers should appeal to researchers seeking to learn about college administrators of art departments in the 20th Century. Edna Wells Luetz is a case in point, as she molded Hunter College's art department into a unit of national recognition.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I – Personal and Biographical Information

Series I consists of Luetz's dossier and vitae, awards and certificates, newspaper articles and clippings, and candid photographs. In addition, there is a folder on Edna's husband, Alfred Luetz, who taught briefly at Hunter College.

Series II – Correspondence

Series II consists of Luetz's incoming and outgoing letters and are arranged chronologically from 1916-1962.

Series III – Hunter College

Series III consists of plans and reports from the Department of Art, 1949 - 1950, the New York World's Fair Board of Higher Education, ca. 1938, the Mayor's Committee for the Commemoration of the Golden Anniversary of the City of New York, ca. 1948, the Goethe Bicentennial Convocation, October 15 - 29, 1949 and the Hunter College Motion Picture Project, 1950 - 1951. In addition, there are folders on two motion pictures "695 Park Avenue" (1956) and "Mihi Cura Futuri" (1961) that were produced by Professor Luetz.

Series IV – Art Works

Series IV consists of several unidentified pencil sketches, etchings and woodblock prints that were created by Professor Luetz. One prominent sketch in the series is the Seal of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, date 1926.

Series V – Photographs

Series V consists of black & white and color prints of Professor Luetz and her art work, Varsity productions of "Alice in Wonderland" and "The Ivory Don"; the presentation of the Hunter College film "Mihi Cura Futuri"; and the exhibition of the Board of Higher Education for the Golden Anniversary of New York City, on August 21, 1948.

Series VI – Publications

This series consists of a number of brochures, reports, issues of Theatre Arts Monthly, and a sketch book by Kappa Pi, ca. 1955.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I – PERSONAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Articles 1938, 1939 - 1940, 1945, 1948 - 1950, 1952, 1962, 1986, 1994 - 1995
	2	Awards and Certificates Golden Anniversary of the City of New York, 1948 Aerial Course Certificate TWA, June 23, 1953 Beta Nu Chapter of Kappa Pi Fraternity, February 25, 1954 The German Society of City of New York, March 23, 1966
	3	Dossier and Vitae, 1939, 1949
	4	Luetz, Alfred, n.d.
	5	Photographs of Edna Wells Luetz, n.d.

SERIES II – CORRESPONDENCE

1	6	Incoming, 1924 - 1962
	7	Outgoing, 1926 - 1956
	8	General, 1916 - 1961

SERIES III – HUNTER COLLEGE

1	9	Annual Report, 1949 - 1950
	10	Drama “A Masque of Light & Color,” May 9 - 10, 1938
	11	Plans for New York World’s Fair Board of Higher Education Hunter College by Edna Wells Luetz, ca. 1938
	12	The Exhibition of the Board of Higher Education For the Golden Anniversary of New York City, August 21, 1948 The Board of Higher Education’s Participation in the World’s Fair: The Records of Plans, of Procedures, and the Results, May 26, 1938 - May 22, 1939 (Box 2) Oversized Photographs of The Exhibition of the Board of Higher Education for The Golden Anniversary of New York City, August 21, 1948 (Box 3)

SERIES III – HUNTER COLLEGE

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	12	“Design for Learning 50 Years of Progress in the Educational and Cultural Activities of New York City: A Report by the Mayor’s Committee for the Commemoration of the Golden Anniversary of the City of New York,” ca. 1948 (Box 3)
	13	Goethe Bicentennial Convocation, October 15 - 29, 1949
	14	Hunter College Motion Picture Project, 1950 - 1951
		Hunter College Motion Pictures
	15	“695 Park Avenue,” 1956
	16	“Mihi Cura Futuri,” May 19, 1961
	17	Recommendation for Promotion, 1939, 1940
	18	Staff Personnel Record, 1939, 1942
	19	<i>Who’s Who in America</i> , 1960
	20	Miscellaneous Materials

SERIES IV – ART WORKS

4	1	Drawings for Stained Glass Windows, n.d.
	2	Etchings, n.d.
	3	Pencil Sketches, n.d.
	4	Woodblock Prints, n.d.
	5	Sketch of the Seal of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 1926

SERIES V – PHOTOGRAPHS

		Art Works
4	6	Unidentified Black & White Prints, n.d.
	7	Unidentified Color Prints, n.d.
	8	Candid Photographs of Edna Wells Luetz, n.d.
	9	Dramatic Productions (unidentified)
	10	Hunter College Building, ca. 1940 - 1982
	11	Individuals (unidentified)

SERIES V – PHOTOGRAPHS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
4	12	Prints belonging to the Hunter College Journalism Office
	13	Presentation of the Hunter College Film “Mihi Cura Futuri”
	14	President George N. Shuster, n.d.
		Varsity Productions
	15	“Alice in Wonderland”
	16	“The Ivory Don”
	17	The Exhibition of the Board of Higher Education For the Golden Anniversary of New York City, August 21, 1948

SERIES VI – PUBLICATIONS

4	18	Brochures on Art Scholarships from the Department of Art, n.d.
	19	“Report of the Chairman of the Board of Higher Education,” 1946 - 1948
	20	<i>The Sketch Book</i> , by Kappa Pi, Spring 1955
		<i>Theatre Arts Monthly</i>
	21	September 1924 and October 1927
	22	<i>A Token of Remembrance from the Faculty of Hunter College</i> , May 25, 1956

SERIES VII – MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS

5		Album of Letters and Photographs, n.d.
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