

**The Nancy M. Ferguson Papers  
1931-1955  
Finding Aid**



***Archives and Special Collections***



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 97-30

Size: 4.0706 cu. ft.

Provenance: Nancy M. Ferguson

Location: Range 5 Section 4 Shelves 19-20

Restrictions: None.

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistants: Ms. Gretchen Opie  
Ms. Faith Williams

Date: June, 1999

Revised: November, 2012

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nancy M. Ferguson received a Bachelor of Arts from Iowa State Teachers College in 1920, and subsequently received a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University in 1931. Ferguson began her career at Hunter College as an Instructor in the Department of Speech and Dramatics in 1930. In addition to teaching drama courses, Ferguson also served as the faculty advisor to the student theatrical group Make-Up Box from 1930 - 1937, and the Hunter College Alumnae Dramatic Association from 1940 - 1942. Ferguson was also involved with the Dramatic Organization of Hunter College, the Theater Workshop, and the Theater Committee.

During her thirty years at Hunter College Ferguson was actively involved in staging and directing many student theatrical plays that were performed by members of Varsity and/or Make-Up Box. Between 1931 and 1948, Ferguson oversaw the production of *Alice in Wonderland* (1931), *Would-Be Gentleman* (1932), *She Passed through Lorraine* (1934), *Five One-Act Plays* (1934), *Another Language* (1937), *Stage Door* (1938), *Girls in Uniform* (1940), *Fashion* (1941), *Ladies in Retirement* (1943), *Brief Music* (1944), *Lonnie's Hope* (1945), *Winning Way* (1945), and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1948). It should be noted that the 1941 production of *Fashion* featured President George N. Shuster and members of the Hunter College faculty.

In addition to her involvement with student dramatic productions, Ferguson was also a participating member of the American Association of University Professors, the National Theatre Conference, the National College Players, and the American Education Theatre. Ferguson also held membership with the Zeta Kappa Psi, the National Debating Fraternity, and was an honorary member of the Iowa Beta Chapter of Theta Alpha Phi.

Ferguson was a committed and conscientious instructor in reading and in the dramatic arts, and a respected colleague of the Department of Speech and Dramatics for over thirty years.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Nancy M. Ferguson Papers provide little information about Ferguson's private life, but do highlight her involvement in the development of the Department of Speech and Dramatics of Hunter College. The bulk of the records document the activities of the aforementioned department and the variety of the plays that Ferguson wrote, directed and/or produced.

The Papers consist of photographs, production records, financial materials, set and costume designs, newspaper clippings, correspondence, publications and scrapbooks. Of particular interest are the photographs and scrapbooks which document dramatic student performances and the history of the Department of Speech and Dramatics. The photographs depict Hunter College students in a variety of productions.

The scrapbooks contain letters, newspaper clippings, broadsides, photographs, and programs of several critically acclaimed productions. One of the scrapbooks documents the Hunter College Playwrights Project, a professional workshop that was founded in 1967 for the production of original plays written by graduate students of Hunter College.

Researchers of college dramatic departments and student productions should find this collection very useful.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

### **Series I - General Files**

Series I consists of Ferguson's classroom notes, correspondence, a vitae, plans for the Little Theatre in the former Bronx Campus of Hunter College and papers written by her former students.

### **Series II – Dramatic Productions**

#### **Subseries 2.1 - Play Scripts**

#### **Subseries 2.2 - Production Books**

Subseries 2.1 consists of play scripts for several productions, some of which were performed by Hunter College students. The play scripts are arranged alphabetically by title. Subseries 2.2 consists of production books for *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1948), *Even the Gods: A Comedy in Three Acts* (1952), and *Girls in Uniform: A Play in Three Acts* (1939). In addition, there are programs for several dramatic productions and materials for teaching speech.

### **Series III - Photographs**

Series III consists of black & white photographs of dramatic productions that were performed at Hunter College. In addition, there are portraits of individuals who were associated with specific productions. The photographs are arranged alphabetically by name of the production and/or individual performer.

### **Series IV - Publications**

This series contains theater-related publications. The publications are arranged alphabetically by title.

### **Series V - Scrapbooks**

Series V consists of scrapbooks that cover dramatic productions that were performed at Hunter College between 1931 and 1960. One scrapbook focuses on the work performed by the Hunter College Playwrights Project while another one highlights Hunter College's Theater Workshop.

## CONTAINER LIST

### SERIES I - GENERAL FILES

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Administrative Plans for the Little Theatre, 1939
	2	Broadsides, n.d.
	3	Constitution of Dramatic Organization of Hunter College, 1940
		Correspondence
	4	Incoming, 1936 - 1951, 1977 Outgoing, 1939, 1948
	5	Financial Documents
	6	Miscellaneous Materials
	7	Notes - Classroom, n.d.
		Papers
8		Bell, Monta. "The Director, His Problems and Qualifications." <i>Theatre Arts Monthly</i> , (September, 1929). Draft.
		Ceough, Richard. "Notes on a Major in Dramatic Art." n.d.
		Levinson, Andre. "The Nature of Cinema." <i>Theatre Arts Monthly</i> , (September, 1929). Draft.
		O'Neil, Mary Ellen. "Theory and Criticism of Theatre." June 6, 1963.
		Williams, Terry. "Highlights of Varsity." November 20, 1944
9		Vitae, 1949, 1951

### SERIES II – DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS

#### Subseries 2.1 Play Scripts

1	10	Berkeley Square Act II Scene I, Anonymous, n.d. Craig's Wife, by Sonia Simon, April 16, 1943 The Delicate Child, by Emma Hula, April 16, 1943  John Brown's Body, by Stephen Vincent Benet, Adaptation by Norman Corwin, February 1945
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## **SERIES II – DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS**

### **Subseries 2.1 Play Scripts**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Contents</u></b>
1	10	One Sunday Afternoon Act II, n.d.  Cutting from Over the Teacups Act I, by Percival Wilde, produced March 12, 1943
	11	Cutting from Pygmalion Act III, by Bernard Shaw, produced April 16, 1943 Cutting from Spinsters of Lushe, by Phillip Johnson, produced April 16, 1943 Trifles, n.d. The Winning Way, n.d. Wisdom Teeth: A Comedy in One Act, n.d.

### **Subseries 2.2 Production Books**

1	12	<i>The Barretts of Wimpole Street: A Comedy in Three Acts</i> , by Rudolf Besier, performed April 15-17, 1948
2	1	Ibid.
	2	<i>Even the Gods.... A Comedy in Three Acts</i> , by M.C. Kuner, 1952
	3	<i>Girls in Uniform: A Play in Three Acts</i> , by Christa Winsloe, produced by Varsity in 1939 and again January 5-7, 1940
	4	Programs
	5	Set Design
	6	Speech Teaching Materials

## **SERIES III - PHOTOGRAPHS**

2	7	Alice in Wonderland, ca. 1931
	8	Another Language, November 19 - 21, 1937
	9	Antigone, December 1- 2, 1950
	10	Arms and the Man, ca. 1959
	11	The Barretts of Wimpole Street, April 14 - 17, 1948
	12	Brief Music, May 12 - 13, 1944
	13	The Cave Dwellers, n.d.



### SERIES III - PHOTOGRAPHS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
2	14	The Curious Savage, April 24 - 26, 1953	
	15	Fashion, ca. 1941	
	16	Ferguson, Nancy M., n.d.	
	17	Gerguoret, Simone, n.d.	
	18	Girls in Uniform, January 5 - 7, 1940	
	19	Hallman, Jerry, n.d.	
	20	Hunter College Playwrights Project, n.d. The Boy Burger Deluxe Cackle I Can't Go on Without You The Dean First Night Free! Free! Free! A Postscript Will the Real Danny Boy Please Stand Up	
	21	Hunter College Symphony, n.d.	
	3	1	Ladies in Retirement, December 10 - 11, 1943
		2	Martha Graham and Her Portrait Puppet, n.d.
		3	Merchant of Venice, n.d.
		4	Orpheas Descending by Tennessee Williams, n.d.
		5	Our Town, n.d.
		6	The Philadelphia Story, April 1- 3, 1954
		7	Porter, Ross, n.d.
		8	Prevore, Sydney, ca. 1948
		9	She Passed Through Lorraine, ca. 1934
		10	Skin of our Teeth, n.d.
		11	Sky Locke, n.d.
		12	Stage Door, November 19 - 20, 1938
		13	The Street of Good Friends, March 26, 1955
14		Symphony in Illusion, n.d.	
15	The Whip Lady, ca. 1971		
16	Would-Be Gentleman, 1932		
17-30	Unidentified Photographs		
4	1-9	Unidentified Photographs	

#### **SERIES IV – PUBLICATIONS**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Contents</u></b>
4	10	Davis, Bette and Gary Merrill. <i>The World of Carl Sandburg</i>
	11	<i>Comedie Francaise</i> (State Theatre – France), 1955
5	1	<i>The Quarterly Journal of Speech</i> , February, 1934
		<i>National Theater Conference Quarterly Bulletin</i>
	2	1939 - 1940
	3	1941 - 1942
		<i>Bulletin National Theatre Conference</i>
	4	1943, 1945
	5	1946 - 1947
	6	1948 - 1950

#### **SERIES IV - SCRAPBOOKS**

6	Unidentified Oversized Photographs, Newspaper Clippings, ca. 1931 and Costume drawings for “She Passed Through Lorraine,” ca. 1934.
7	“My Theater Workshop,” n.d.
8	Hunter College Playwrights Project, n.d.
9	Dramatic Performances, n.d.