

Reader's Collection of Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

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assistance of Chanté Wilson Flowers
Revised by Alice L. Birney



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Collection Summary

Title: Reader's Collection, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits

Span Dates: 1863-1928

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1880-1900)

ID No.: MSS85226

Creator: Library of Congress. Copyright Office

Extent: 600 items; 39 containers; 15.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Typewritten or handwritten play scripts deposited with the United States Copyright Office as unpublished and subsequently transferred to the Manuscript Division.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Organizations

Library of Congress. Copyright Office.

Subjects

American drama--Foreign influences.

City and town life.

Drama--Stories, plots, etc.

Ethnic groups.

Farce.

Immigrants.

Inventions.

Melodrama.

Musicals.

Poor.

Rich people.

Satire.

Vaudeville.

Places

America--Discovery and exploration.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Reader's Collection of Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits was transferred to the Manuscript Division from the general collections of the Library of Congress in 1992, where its scripts had gathered between 1870 and 1940 after readers requested them from the Copyright Office. They were all classed PS635.Z99 (unpublished American plays) and were often bound, being cataloged as books. Some of the transferred plays were then integrated into cartons of similar scripts awaiting microfilming. The remainder, arriving in the Manuscript Division too late for microfilming in sequence, are here preserved. Approximately thirty other early Copyright Deposit unpublished plays were found in storage by summer interns, 2005-2010. These were added to the Reader's Collection because their registration years were outside of the parameters of the ongoing microfilm project.

Processing History

The Reader's Collection was processed in 2004. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Related Material

This collection precedes or comprises a small part of the major group of Copyright Deposit Dramas (some 250,000 scripts) registered from 1901 to 1977, which are preserved in the Manuscript Division primarily in microfilm format. Of the larger collection, some are retained in paper form in a Selected Copyright Deposit Dramas Collection and listed in registration order.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Reader's Collection of Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Reader's Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Reader's Collection of Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The Reader's Collection of Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits spans the years 1863-1928, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1880-1900. The collection represents one of the largest extant groups of Copyright Deposit Dramas for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century plays. Additional early Copyright plays deposited as unpublished were selected for the Rare Book and Special Collections Division's Manuscript Plays Collection, Hebraic Section's Yiddish Dramas, and Music Division's Libretto Collection.

The Reader's Collection is eclectic in coverage and unselected for quality, reflecting only the interests of early researchers and the desire of later curators to preserve rare samples of early drama. Its dramatists are largely forgotten, except for Edward "Ned" Harrigan, whose late nineteenth-century comedies remain famous. Genres include melodrama, vaudeville, farce, musicals, and satire. Subjects reflect the interests of their times: ethnic and immigrant groups, city life, exploration, inventions, foreign influences, theater, the style of the wealthy, and the plight of the poor.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is organized alphabetically by author and therein by title of drama, with year of registration noted.

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