

Wellesley Players' Club Collection
Wellesley Historical Society

Repository Identifier

mawelhs

Local Identifier

2019.01

Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society
229 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
(781) 235-6690
www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

Title

Wellesley Players' Club Collection

Date

1931-2003, bulk 1936-1961

Extent

1 linear foot; 2 document boxes; plus Archives Oversize Materials

Name of Creator

The Village Players of Wellesley [1920s]
The Wellesley Players' Club [1920s-1955]
The Wellesley Players [1955-Present]

Biographical Note

In May 1925 an application appeal was sent out to Wellesley area residents with the object of forming the "Village Players of Wellesley." The goal was to "beget interest in Clean Drama and continue a friendly village spirit." The Club was formed with 110 charter members for the 1925-1926 season, settling on the name The Wellesley Village Players' Club; for the 1926-1927 season, the Club settled on The Wellesley Players' Club designation "since it embodies all the Wellesleys and not the Village alone." By 1926-1927 season membership was at 170; by 1948, it was at 270.

Once established, the Club generally put on three main productions during the course of a season, which ran from opening in October through May: a Fall Play, usually in October; a Winter Play, in January; and a Spring Play, in May. Other smaller performances and events occurred throughout the season.

In the beginning the community Hall of the Village Church was home. Over the years, productions were staged at Alumnae Hall Wellesley College, the Maugus Club, Dana Hall gym, Tenacre, Bardwell Auditorium, Wellesley High School auditorium, and other locations. A search

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for a permanent home has been a perennial focus of the organization; that search continues to this day.

Throughout its history the club has been involved in raising funds for charity, particularly during World War II, when the club's ranks were thinned through residents' serving their country overseas. In a letter dated October 4, 1941, the club board notes that "net proceeds of all three major performances will be donated to some form of organized relief or charity" for the war effort.

While the club has seen decades of success, the search for a permanent home has always been an issue; having recently lost access to their performance space in Watertown, the Wellesley Players are currently on hiatus. According to their website, as of September 2018 the Wellesley Players have "decided to take a few years off from performing as mounting a production was becoming increasingly cost prohibitive." They continue to have social events, and focus on their "work with the Wellesley Arts Alliance to try to bring about the building of some kind of an Arts Space in the town of Wellesley."

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains several decades of Wellesley Players' Club ephemera scrapbooks, spanning production seasons from 1936 through 1950, with a scattering of years following that up to 1961. The scrapbooks were originally in decaying 3-ring binders; materials have been taken out of the binders and organized in folders by production season, which generally ran from October through May the following year. Original order has been maintained.

The scrapbooks contain a variety of materials, including newsletters (*Stage Whispers*), newspaper clippings, scripts, tickets, season production announcements, production photographs, program books, board correspondence, board business, member lists, member cards, and audition/tryout notices. All of the newspaper clippings have been replaced with reproductions for preservation purposes, but retain their original context.

The collection also contains the Roland S. Norcross Papers, a small collection pertaining to his involvement with the Club. He served on the Executive Board for many years, and also acted in the capacity of Production Manager for several productions. These papers primarily are concerned with his 1941 production of "The Old Homestead." The papers include stage plans, production and cast notes, and correspondence, as well as a memorandum/handbook he created to aid in managing future productions.

In addition to the scrapbooks and Norcross papers, the collection contains several production advertisement posters from the 1930s into the 1940s, as well as a few program books separate from the ones in the scrapbooks, mostly dating from the 1930s into the 1940s.

List of Productions 1925-1950 can be found in 1949-1950 season materials; 1950 was the 25th anniversary year, and was celebrated. Proposed Constitution and Bylaws can be found in the 1954-1955 season materials. An appendix listing all of the productions since 1925 has been included with this finding aid.

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System of Arrangement

The collection is organized into four series, each organized chronologically.

- I. Wellesley Players' Club Scrapbooks, 1936-1961
- II. Program Books
- III. Roland S. Norwood Papers on Wellesley Players' Club Productions, 1940-1950
- IV. Production Posters, 1937, 1938, and 1944

Library of Congress Index Terms

Community theater—Massachusetts
Little Theater Movement—United States
Societies and clubs
Theater programs
Wellesley (Mass.)

Conditions Governing Access

The Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.

info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org
(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

Preservation and Conservation Note

All of the newspaper clippings were in a state of decay; the pages that contained them have been reproduced. Additionally, much glue was used in the production of the scrapbooks, and some issues with adhesives have been left unaddressed. The 25th Anniversary photographs in Box 2, Folder 5 were particularly problematic, and they have been left in their original state. Many of the pages have been interleaved with acid-free archival paper to protect surrounding materials.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

English

Immediate Source of Acquisition

N/A

Accruals

The Historical Society may add materials to this collection in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

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Related Materials

Clubs & Organizations: Wellesley Players [a few items. Integrate into this collection?]

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in May 2019 by Alden Ludlow. Processing of this collection was made possible through a grant from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee.

Bibliography

Wellesley Players, URL <https://wellesleyplayers.club>

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Container List

I. Wellesley Players' Club Scrapbooks, 1936-1961

This series contains... The season ran from July through June. The scrapbooks have been disassembled and original order has been maintained; each season has been given its own folder for ease of access. Photographs have been kept with associated materials for context.

Box 1

Folder 1: 1936-1937
Folder 2: 1937-1938
Folder 3: 1938-1939
Folder 4: 1939-1940
Folder 5: 1940-1941
Folder 6: 1941-1942
Folder 7: 1942-1943
Folder 8: 1943-1944
Folder 9: 1944-1945
Folder 10: 1945-1946

Box 2

Folder 1: 1946-1947
Folder 2: 1947-1948
Folder 3: 1948-1949
Folder 4: 1949-1950
Folder 5: 25th Anniversary "Resume" and Photographs, 1950
Folder 6: 1950-1951
Folder 7: 1951-1952
Folder 8: 1952-1953
Folder 9: 1953-1954
Folder 10: 1954-1955 (Bylaws)
Folder 11: 1958-1959
Folder 12: 1959-1960
Folder 13: 1960-1961

II. Program Books

This series contains program books that were not part of the scrapbooks.

Box 2

Folder 14: Program Books: 1931-1937, 1940-1941, 1969-1970, 2003

III. Roland S. Norwood Papers

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This series contains papers collected and produced by Roland Norwood for use in his work with the Wellesley Players' Club. Norwood was on the Executive Committee in the 1940s. He was married to Edith Norwood, who acted in many productions over the years. He also acted as Production Manager for several plays, including the 1941 production of "The Old Homestead," by Denman Thompson.

Box 2

Folder 15: Correspondence, 1940-1941, 1950

Folder 16: "Memorandum of Operations" for Production Managers

Folder 17: Notebook materials on productions

IV. Production Posters; 1937, 1938, and 1944

This series contains five handmade cardboard production posters: "Three Corned Moon" (1937), "The Bad Man" (1937), "The Trial of Mary Dugan" (1937), "A Bill of Divorcement" (1938), and "Fresh Fields" (1944).

Archives Oversize Materials Box 21

Folder 1: Production Posters

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Appendix: Wellesley Players Productions, 1925-2017

This list is based on a list compiled by Wellesley Players historian Marshall Cannell.

1925

Suppressed Desires (Reading for membership)
A Tailor Made Man (Reading for membership)

Spring 1926

The Admirable Crichton (First Public Performance)

1926-1927

The Dover Road

1927-1928

Outward Bound

1928-1929

Tons of Money

1929-1930

The Swan

1930-1931

Yellow Sands

1931-1932

The Fourth Wall

1932-1933

The Queen's Husband

1933-1934

Craig's Wife
The Torchbearers

1934-1935

The Return of Peter Grimm

1935-1936

Skin Deep
Loyalties

1936-1937

(Note: Materials in the Wellesley Players' Club Collection begin with this season.)

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The Trial of Mary Dugan
Petticoat Fever
The Bad Man
There's Always Juliet

1937-1938

Journeys End
A Bill of Divorcement
Three Cornered Moon
On the Third Day

1938-1939

The Youngest
Death Takes A Holiday
Is Zat So?
Street scene
Mother's A Queen

1939-1940

Jane Eyre
The Bat
Our Town

1940-1941

Murray Hill
The Old Homestead
Accent On Youth

1941-1942

No Time for Comedy
Personal Appearance
Murder on the Second Floor

1942-1943

Goodbye Again

1943-1944

Cry Havoc

1944-1945

Fresh Fields
Suspect
Angel Street

1945-1946

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The Philadelphia Story
The Man Who Came To Dinner
Arsenic and Old Lace

1946-1947

The Late George Apley
Laura
Ladies In Retirement

1947-1948

January Thaw
Apple of His Eye
The Barretts of Wimpole Street

1948-1949

The Barker
Miranda
Joan of Lorraine

1949-1950

For Love or Money
The Royal Family

1950-1951

The Ladlow Boy
Double Door
Post Road

1951-1952

Harvey
There's Always a Murder
Present Laughter

1952-1953

Mr. Pim Passes By
Lo And Behold
Mrs. Moon Light

1953-1954

Down In the Valley
Affairs of State
A Phoenix Too Frequent
Jane

1954-1955

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Years Ago
My Three Angels
Sabrina Fair

1955-1956

Our Town
Time Out For Ginger
Goodbye My Fancy

1956-1957

The Solid Gold Cadillac
The Tender Trap
Anastasia

1957-1958

The Mousetrap
Janus
Teahouse of the August Moon

1958-1959

Arsenic and Old Lace
Candida
Dark of the Moon

1959-1960

The Diary of Ann Frank
The Little Foxes
Bell Book and Candle

1960-1961 (Materials in the collection end with this season)

Gigi
You Can't Take It With You
The Matchmaker

1961-1962

All My Sons
The Matchmaker
The Tavern

1962-1963

The Heiress
Send Me no Flowers
Critics Choice

1963-1964

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Romanoff and Juliet
Visit to a Small Planet
Once More With Feeling

1964-1965

A Thurber Carnival
Dark of the Moon
7 Keys to Baldpate
Wake Up

1965-1966

Desk Set
Never Too Late

1966-1967

Third Best Sport
The Gazebo
Blythe Spirit (Festival)

1967-1968

Barefoot in the Park
Come Blow Your Horn
The Petrified Forest

1968-1969

Our Town
Take Her, She's Mine
The Odd Couple

1969-1970

Mame
Don't Drink the Water
Cactus Flower

1970-1971

Any Wednesday
Ah, Wilderness
Funny Girl

1971-1972

Private Lives
Plaza Suite
Star Spangled Girl

1972-1973

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My Three Angels
Bus Stop
Separate Tables

1973-1974

Harvey
Tea and Sympathy
Guys and Dolls

1974-1975

Dracula
Forty Carets
A View From the Bridge

1975-1976

Mousetrap
George Washington Slept Here
The Great Sebastion

1976-1977

How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying
Butterflies Are Free
Butterflies Are Free (Festival)

1977-1978

Play It Again Sam
David and Lisa
6 RMS RIV VU

1978-1979

Brigadoon
Witness For the Prosecution
The Insanity of Mary Girard (Festival)

1979-1980

South Pacific
The Philadelphia Story
The Autograph Hound (Festival)

1980-1981

Carousel
How the Other Half Loves
Wait Until Dark
Birdbath (Festival)

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1981-1982

Li'l Abner
The Man Who Came to Dinner
The Boys In the Band
The Boys In the Band (Festival)

1982-1983

Kismet
The Royal Family

1983-1984

My Fair Lady
A Shot in the Dark

1984-1985

Carnival
Tribute
Why Hanna's Skirt Won't Stay Down (Festival)

1985-1986

Showboat
You Can't Take It With You

1986-1987

Music Man
Everything In the Garden
Lovers and Other Strangers
Lovers and Other Strangers (Festival)

1987-1988

Hello Dolly
Company

1988-1989

The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd
See How They Run
The White Whore and the Bit Player (Festival)

1989-1990

Oliver
A Tribute to Broadway

1990-1991

The Miracle Worker
Guys and Dolls

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Just Off Piccadilly (Festival)

1991-1992

Steel Magnolias

Annie

1992-1993

Rumors

HMS Pinafore

Finding the Sun (Festival)

1993-1994

Rehearsal For Murder

Kiss Me Kate

Working

Working (Festival)

1994-1995

The Diary of Ann Frank

Pippin

The Diary of Ann Frank (Festival)

1995-1996

I Hate Hamlet

The King and I

The Apple Tree (Festival)

1996-1997

Don't Dress For Dinner

Three One Acts

(Marriage Proposal/Crimes of the Heart/One Woman Show)

Bad Habits (Festival)

1997-1998

Secret Garden

Crossing Delancey

Laney's Gift (Festival)

1998-1999

Gypsy

The Children's Hour

The Children's Hour (Festival)

1999-2000

Mame

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How the Other Half Loves
Not enough Rope (Festival)

2000-2001

All My Sons
Bye Bye Birdie

2001-2002

The Quarterly
La Cage aux Folles
The Quarterly (Festival)

2002-2003

The Accomplice
Sweet Charity
The Guys (Festival)

2003-2004

Sylvia
Into the Woods

2004-2005

Lost In Yonkers
Seussical: The Musical

2005-2006

To Kill a Mockingbird
The Wizard of Oz
Graceland (Eastern Mass. Festival winner)

2006-2007

Les Liaisons Dangeruses
Graceland (NE Festival winner)
Phantom

2007-2008

Stepping Out
Princess and the Pirate (Children's Theatre)
The Sound of Music
Varicose Vanities (Festival)

2008-2009

Tribute
Hansel and Gretel (Children's Theatre)
Cabaret

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2009-2010

Steel Magnolias
Fiddler on the Roof

2010-2011

Thank You for the Music – A Tribute to Broadway
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Aladdin and Adora
Annie

2011-2012

Baby
Little Women, the Musical
The Tale of the Allergist's Wife
Oliver!

2012-2013

Children of Eden
On Golden Pond

2013-2014

August: Osage County
Family Theater: Pinocchio

2014-2015

A... My Name is Alice: A Musical Revue
My Fair Lady
Love Letters

2015-2016

Picasso at the Lapin Agile
The Full Monty
The Pied Piper

2016-2017

Shrek the Musical
Love's Labour's Lost