

Harriet Hoctor Collection

Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress



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Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Music Division, 2010
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Collection Summary

Title: Harriet Hoctor Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1868-1977

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1923-1937)

Call No.: ML31.H58

Creator: Hoctor, Harriet

Extent: 1,700 items

Extent: 8 containers

Extent: 4.5 linear feet

Language: Material in English

Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2006568178>

Summary: American dancer and choreographer Harriet Hoctor (1905-1977) began performing on the vaudeville stage in the early 1920s. By the mid-1930s, she was a featured dancer on Broadway and in motion pictures. The collection documents Hoctor's professional life including items related to her early dance training at the Louis H. Chalif Normal School of Dancing in New York and her later career leading the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet in Boston. Materials include choreographic notes, clippings, costume sketches, music, photographs, personal papers, programs, and correspondence from family members, former students, and notables such as Mary Pickford, Walter Winchell, and Florenz Ziegfeld.

Provenance

The collection was donated to the Library in 2000 by Hoctor's niece, Harriet Hoctor Groeschel.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

Elizabeth Aldrich initially processed the Harriet Hoctor Collection in 2007, and Janet McKinney coded the finding aid in 2010. Morgen Stevens-Garmon reorganized the collection and revised the finding aid in August 2020.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Harriet Hoctor Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Harriet Hoctor Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Harriet Hoctor Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1905 September 25	Born in Hoosick Falls, New York, to Timothy and Elizabeth Kearny Hocter
1917	Studied dance at the Louis H. Chalif Normal School of Dance in New York City under the care of her aunt, Annie Kearney.
1918	Appeared in minstrel shows in Hoosick Falls
1920	Made Broadway debut in the chorus of <i>Sally</i> , New Amsterdam Theatre
1922	Began performing on the Keith and Orpheum Vaudeville Circuits Studied with dancer, teacher, and choreographer Merriel Abbot, who choreographed many of her specialty acts
1923	Toured United States with Vivian and Rosetta Duncan (known as the Duncan Sisters) dancing in <i>Topsy and Eva</i> , a musical comedy adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
1924	Choreographed first show, Chicago Junior League production of <i>Wizard of Oz</i> Performed three solos with the Chicago Theatre's "Mighty Twin Organ" concerts <i>Topsy and Eva</i> opened in New York City, Sam H. Harris Theatre
1925	Toured <i>Topsy and Eva</i> to Boston and Chicago
1926	Returned to San Francisco; performed vaudeville on the Orpheum Circuit Began a life-long dance partnership with William Holbrook
1927	Featured in Broadway musical revue <i>A La Carte</i> , Martin Beck Theatre
1928	Starred in <i>The Three Musketeers</i> , opened in New York City, Lyric Theatre Presented a series of dance recitals including "The Raven," an original dance based on Edgar Allen Poe's poem Danced in a series of Sunday night entertainments, Selwyn Theatre
1929	Opened in <i>Show Girl</i> , Ziegfeld Theatre
1930	Performed in the Broadway musical, <i>Simple Simon</i> , Ziegfeld Theatre
1932	Starred in the musical revue, <i>Bow Bells</i> , London, England Featured in <i>Earl Carroll's Vanities</i> on Broadway
1933	Choreographed and performed "The Nightingale and the Rose" at New York City's RKO Music Hall Stage Appeared in <i>Hold Your Horses</i> , Winter Garden Theatre
1934	Toured Chicago and Washington, D.C. in a revamped and pared down <i>Hold Your Horses</i> <i>Harriet Hocter Ballet Revue</i> opened at the Belasco Theatre in Los Angeles; included six new ballets choreographed by Hocter
1936	Danced in <i>Ziegfeld Follies of 1936</i> with Josephine Baker and Fanny Brice Appeared as herself in the Hollywood film, <i>The Great Ziegfeld</i> Performed in musical adaptation of Mark Twain's <i>A Connecticut Yankee</i> , St. Louis
1937	Starred in in Billy Rose's musical revue, <i>Casa Manaña</i> , Fort Worth, Texas Appeared in the musical revue <i>Chez Paree Revue</i> with orchestra leader Vincent Lopez Featured dancer with Fred Astaire in the motion picture <i>Shall We Dance</i>
1941	Billed as "Favorite Ziegfeld Ballerina" at the Latin Quarter in Boston
1942	Appeared in Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe revue, <i>Mrs. Astor's Pet Horse</i> , New York City
1943	Performed in <i>All American Revue</i> in Beverly Hills
1945	Choreographed and performed in Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe revue, <i>Toast of the Town</i> Opened ballet school in Boston and became full-time teacher
1974	Retired from teaching and moved to Lorton, Virginia
1977 June 9	Died in Arlington, Virginia

Scope and Content Note

The Harriet Hoctor Collection documents the life and career of dancer, choreographer, and teacher Harriet Hoctor (1905-1977). The collection spans from 1868 to 1977, but the bulk of the material is from 1923 to 1937, the height of her dance career. She toured the United States and England performing on the vaudeville stage and in full-length musical revues. After retiring from the stage, she founded the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet in the Boston area and spent decades as a dance instructor.

The collection is organized into five series according to subject. [Biographical Files](#) contains clippings, personal papers, family history, materials collected by Hoctor, and information on the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet and her hometown, Hoosick Falls, New York. [Correspondence](#) consists of letters and notes sent to Hoctor from family members, friends, and admirers, and [Photographs](#) presents a pictorial history of Hoctor from her earliest dancing days.

Clippings, photographs, and correspondence related to specific theatrical productions or motion pictures are found in the [Production Files](#). This series holds material on Hoctor's major stage productions and also includes her work with Fred Astaire in the 1937 film *Shall We Dance* featuring her signature back bend, and her portrayal of herself in *The Great Ziegfeld*, a cinematic celebration of her frequent producer Flo Ziegfeld.

The smallest series, [Music](#), contains 12 works owned by Hoctor and likely connected either to her performance career or her later work as a choreographer and dance instructor.

Organization of the Harriet Hoctor Collection

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Biographical Files, 1868-1977](#)
- [Correspondence, 1928-1977](#)
- [Photographs, circa 1910-1972](#)
- [Production Files, 1922-1965](#)
- [Music, 1900-1949](#)

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Berle, Milton--Correspondence.
Hoctor, Harriet--Archives.
Hoctor, Harriet--Correspondence.
Hoctor, Harriet--Photographs.
Hoctor, Harriet.
Hoctor, Harriet.
Pickford, Mary, 1892-1979--Correspondence.
Rose, Billy, 1899-1966--Correspondence.
Shawn, Ted, 1891-1972--Correspondence.
Winchell, Walter, 1897-1972--Correspondence.
Ziegfeld, Flo, 1869-1932--Correspondence.

Subjects

Choreography--United States.
Costume design--United States.
Dance in motion pictures, television, etc.--United States.
Dance music.
Dance schools--United States.
Dance--United States.

Musical theater--United States.
Vaudeville--United States.
Women dancers--United States.

Places

Hoosick Falls (N.Y.)--History.

Form/Genre

Albums (Books)
Business correspondence.
Choreography.
Clippings (Information artifacts)
Correspondence.
Dance music.
Notes (Documents)
Personal correspondence.
Photographic prints.
Photographs.
Programs (Documents)
Programs (Publications)
Scores.
Scrapbooks.
Sketches.

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-2, 5-6

Series

Biographical Files, 1868-1977

Biographical files cover several aspects of Hoctor's personal life as well as her later career managing the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet. Clippings and magazines document Hoctor's life in the public eye and include advertisements for products she endorsed such as E. Landi Theatrical Shoes. This series also contains material on her hometown, Hoosick Falls, New York, and clippings regarding her brother John and nephew Fred Hoctor. Prints, postcards, documents of family history, and notes are filed as personal papers and include a note from a young Hoctor asking her mother to please come get her and bring her home. Writings for and about Hoctor include several poems inspired by her and two published works on ballet inscribed or dedicated to her. It is unclear if works organized under drawings were done by Hoctor or collected by her. A scrapbook contains clippings and related ephemera from her early years on stage. A folder of programs consists of ephemera from productions Hoctor likely attended, but do not feature her or her choreography. Material on the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet includes programs from school recitals, correspondence from former students, and ephemera related to their continuing careers in dance.

Biographical files are arranged alphabetically by type or subject.

BOX 2

Correspondence, 1928-1977

Correspondence consists of letters, notes, postcards, and telegrams sent to Hoctor during her lifetime. A folder on family members contains letters from several of her nieces including the collection's donor as well as Hoctor's brother, John. Notable correspondents include dance teacher Louis H. Chalif, journalist Frank Crowninshield, actress Mary Pickford, conductor Emil Newman, columnist Walter Winchell, and producers Daniel Frohman and Flo Ziegfeld. A small card signed by Ted Shawn and letters from admirers are among the miscellaneous correspondents. Correspondence of unknown authorship is discoverable in the folder marked unidentified. Letters and telegrams related to specific productions are found in the Production Files series.

Correspondence is organized alphabetically by author or type.

BOX 3, 6

Photographs, circa 1910-1972

This series primarily contains photographs of Hoctor including images of her youth, early dance training with Louis H. Chalif, formal studio portraits, and publicity shots. Photographs of paintings depicting her are filed under artwork, as are images of the dancer with her own bronze bust and the sculptor Jacob Epstein. Several photographs feature Hoctor's extended family including her grandmother, siblings, and nieces and nephew. Most of the family members are unidentified. Depictions of the Hoctor School of Ballet capture rehearsals and recital performance. Portraits of notable individuals inscribed to Hoctor or otherwise collected by her include Edwin Booth, Jimmy Durante, Ruth Etting, Alicia Markova, and Marilyn Miller. Images related to identified productions are found under Production Files.

Photographs are organized by subject.

BOX 4, 6-8 MAPCASE 6 Production Files, 1922-1965

Production files contain documents and ephemera related to Hoctor's career on stage and screen. Material types include broadsides, clippings, choreographic notes, contracts, correspondence, costume sketches, photographs, posters, programs, and typed scenarios. Several files include telegrams or correspondence consisting of congratulatory messages to Hoctor from famous friends including Milton Berle, Russel Crouse, Rudolf Friml, Arnold

Genthe, and Billy Rose. Miscellaneous productions includes an early performance contract signed by Hoctor's aunt, Anna Kearney, as Hoctor was a minor at the time. Materials are arranged alphabetically by production title.

BOX 7

Music, 1900-1949

The twelve pieces in this series were likely used by Hoctor either in the creation of her own work or in classes at her School of Ballet. Though there is little information directly connecting the music to Hoctor's career, most of the works are marked or annotated. Music is arranged alphabetically by composer.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-2, 5-6	<p>Biographical Files, 1868-1977</p> <p>Biographical files cover several aspects of Hoctor's personal life as well as her later career managing the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet. Clippings and magazines document Hoctor's life in the public eye and include advertisements for products she endorsed such as E. Landi Theatrical Shoes. This series also contains material on her hometown, Hoosick Falls, New York, and clippings regarding her brother John and nephew Fred Hoctor. Prints, postcards, documents of family history, and notes are filed as personal papers and include a note from a young Hoctor asking her mother to please come get her and bring her home. Writings for and about Hoctor include several poems inspired by her and two published works on ballet inscribed or dedicated to her. It is unclear if works organized under drawings were done by Hoctor or collected by her. A scrapbook contains clippings and related ephemera from her early years on stage. A folder of programs consists of ephemera from productions Hoctor likely attended, but do not feature her or her choreography. Material on the Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet includes programs from school recitals, correspondence from former students, and ephemera related to their continuing careers in dance.</p> <p>Biographical files are arranged alphabetically by type or subject.</p> <p>Clippings</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/1, 5/1 1924-1929</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/2, 5/2 1930-1939</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/3 1940-1945</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/4, 6/1 1952-1967, and undated</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/5 Death, 1977</p> <p>Condolence card and obituaries</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/6 Drawings, undated</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/7 Hoctor, Fred and John, 1935-1939 and undated</p> <p>Clippings</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/8 Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet, 1943-1957, 1966-1977</p> <p>Clippings, programs, and rates listing</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/9 Harriet Hoctor School of Ballet: former students, 1953-1976</p> <p>Clipping, correspondence, and programs</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/10 Hoosick Falls, New York, 1926, 1957, 1967, and 1976</p> <p>Clippings and pamphlet</p> <p>Magazines</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 6/2 1925-1929</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 6/3 1933</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/11 1936</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 1/12 1937</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 2/1 1965</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 2/2 Personal papers, 1868, 1896, 1915-1931, and undated</p> <p>Clippings, ephemera, family papers, notes, and prints</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 6/4 Print of Anna Pavlova, undated</p> <p>BOX-FOLDER 2/3 Programs, 1936, 1956, 1969, and 1977</p> <p>BOX 5 Scrapbook, 1923-1927</p>

Biographical Files, 1868-1977

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 2/4 Writings for and about Harriet Hoctor, 1928-1936 and undated

BOX 2

Correspondence, 1928-1977

Correspondence consists of letters, notes, postcards, and telegrams sent to Hoctor during her lifetime. A folder on family members contains letters from several of her nieces including the collection's donor as well as Hoctor's brother, John. Notable correspondents include dance teacher Louis H. Chalif, journalist Frank Crowninshield, actress Mary Pickford, conductor Emil Newman, columnist Walter Winchell, and producers Daniel Frohman and Flo Ziegfeld. A small card signed by Ted Shawn and letters from admirers are among the miscellaneous correspondents. Correspondence of unknown authorship is discoverable in the folder marked unidentified. Letters and telegrams related to specific productions are found in the Production Files series.

Correspondence is organized alphabetically by author or type.

BOX-FOLDER 2/5 Bliss, John Gibson, 1931 and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/6 Caton, Edward, undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/7 Chalif, Louis H. (Louis Harvy), 1933

BOX-FOLDER 2/8 Christmas cards, 1976 and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/9 Corcoran, Ed, 1976 and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/10 Crowninshield, Frank, 1932

BOX-FOLDER 2/11 Family members, 1931-1933, 1958, 1974-1977, and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/12 Frohman, Daniel 1933

BOX-FOLDER 2/13 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1931-1933, 1958, 1974-1977, and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/14 Newman, Emil and Robert, 1934

BOX-FOLDER 2/15 Nilsen, Gloria, 1974 and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/16 Pickford, Mary, 1934

BOX-FOLDER 2/17 Vasel, Mary, 1974-1977

BOX-FOLDER 2/18 Winchell, Walter, 1934, 1937, and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/19 Ziegfeld, Flor, 1928, 1930, and undated

BOX-FOLDER 2/20 Unidentified, 1923, 1934, 1974-1976, and undated

BOX 3, 6

Photographs, circa 1910-1972

This series primarily contains photographs of Hoctor including images of her youth, early dance training with Louis H. Chalif, formal studio portraits, and publicity shots. Photographs of paintings depicting her are filed under artwork, as are images of the dancer with her own bronze bust and the sculptor Jacob Epstein. Several photographs feature Hoctor's extended family including her grandmother, siblings, and nieces and nephew. Most of the family members are unidentified. Depictions of the Hoctor School of Ballet capture rehearsals and recital performance. Portraits of notable individuals inscribed to Hoctor or otherwise collected by her include Edwin Booth, Jimmy Durante, Ruth Etting, Alicia Markova, and Marilyn Miller. Images related to identified productions are found under Production Files.

Photographs are organized by subject.

Harriet Hoctor

BOX-FOLDER 3/1 Apartment, undated

BOX-FOLDER 3/2 Artworks, circa 1935

BOX-FOLDER 3/3, 6/5 Childhood and youth, circa 1910-1919

BOX-FOLDER 3/4, 6/6 Dancing, circa 1925-circa 1935

BOX-FOLDER 3/5 Dancing (negatives), circa 1925-circa 1935

Photographs, circa 1910-1972

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 3/6, 6/7	Portraits, circa 1925-1937
BOX-FOLDER 3/7	Harriet Hoctor, with others, 1937 and undated
BOX-FOLDER 3/8-9	Hoctor family members, 1919-1972 and undated
BOX-FOLDER 3/10	Hoctor School of Ballet, performances and students, 1972 and undated
BOX-FOLDER 3/11, 6/8	Portraits of others, 1922-1948 and undated
BOX 4, 6-8 MAPCASE 6	Production Files, 1922-1965 Production files contain documents and ephemera related to Hoctor's career on stage and screen. Material types include broadsides, clippings, choreographic notes, contracts, correspondence, costume sketches, photographs, posters, programs, and typed scenarios. Several files include telegrams or correspondence consisting of congratulatory messages to Hoctor from famous friends including Milton Berle, Russel Crouse, Rudolf Friml, Arnold Genthe, and Billy Rose. Miscellaneous productions includes an early performance contract signed by Hoctor's aunt, Anna Kearney, as Hoctor was a minor at the time. Materials are arranged alphabetically by production title.
BOX-FOLDER 4/1, 6/9	<i>A la Carte</i> , 1927 Clippings, contract, and photographs
BOX-FOLDER 4/2	<i>Blue Danube</i> (choreographic work), circa 1932 Choreographic notes
BOX-FOLDER 4/3, 6/10	<i>Bow Bells</i> , 1931-1932 Clippings, correspondence, and photograph
BOX-FOLDER 8/1	<i>Casa Manaña Revue</i> , 1937 Clippings
BOX-FOLDER 6/11	<i>A Connecticut Yankee</i> , 1936 Clippings
BOX-FOLDER 4/4	<i>The Dollies' Follies</i> , 1945 Program
BOX-FOLDER 6/12	<i>Earl Carroll's Vanities</i> , 1932 Clippings and telegrams
BOX-FOLDER 4/5, 6/13	<i>Great Ziegfeld</i> (motion picture), 1936 Clippings, photographs, and program
BOX-FOLDER 4/6, 6/7	<i>Harriet Hoctor Ballet Revue</i> , 1934 Clippings, ephemera, letter, and poster
BOX-FOLDER 4/7, 7/1	<i>Hold Your Horses</i> , 1933-1934 Clippings, photographs, and telegrams
MAPCASE-DRAWER 6/7	Manchester Hippodrome performances, 1932 Broadsides
BOX-FOLDER 4/8	Miscellaneous productions, 1922-1932, 1947, and undated Contract, postcards, programs, and typed scenario
BOX-FOLDER 4/9	<i>The Nightingale and the Rose</i> , 1934 Telegram and typed scenario
BOX-FOLDER 4/10	<i>The Nutcracker</i> (choreographic work), 1965 Program
BOX-FOLDER 4/11	<i>The Raven</i> (choreographic work), 1928 and undated Photographs and program
BOX-FOLDER 4/12	<i>Shall We Dance</i> (motion picture), 1937 Clipping and photographs

Production Files, 1922-1965

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 4/13	<i>Show Girl</i> , 1929 Clippings and telegrams
BOX-FOLDER 4/14, 8/2	<i>Simple Simon</i> , 1930-1931 Clippings, choreographic notes for "The Hurdle" ballet, photographs, program, and telegrams
BOX-FOLDER 4/15, 8/3	<i>The Three Musketeers</i> , 1928-1929 Clippings, contract, correspondence, ephemera, and photographs
BOX-FOLDER 4/16, 7/2	<i>Topsy and Eva</i> , 1923-1925 Clippings, contract, ephemera, and photographs
BOX-FOLDER 4/17, 8/4	<i>Ziegfeld Follies of 1936</i> , 1935-1936 Clippings, ephemera, photographs, and telegrams
BOX-FOLDER 7/3	Unidentified productions, undated Costume sketches
BOX 7	Music, 1900-1949 The twelve pieces in this series were likely used by Hocter either in the creation of her own work or in classes at her School of Ballet. Though there is little information directly connecting the music to Hocter's career, most of the works are marked or annotated. Music is arranged alphabetically by composer.
BOX-FOLDER 7/4	Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel Petite Suite de Concert, 1911 Printed piano-conductor score with annotations
BOX-FOLDER 7/5	Dinicu, Grigoraș Hora Staccato, 1930 Arranged by Jascha Heifetz Printed piano-conductor score with annotations
BOX-FOLDER 7/6	Heller, Stephen Tarentelle, op. 85, no. 2, undated Printed score for piano with annotations
BOX-FOLDER 7/7	Khachaturian, Aram Gallop. Masquerade Suite, 1949 Printed piano-conductor score with annotations
BOX-FOLDER 7/8	Loewe, Frederick Waltz at Maxims, undated Hybrid manuscript and print score for piano <i>Note:</i> For Hocter Dancers
BOX-FOLDER 7/9	Margis, Alfred Valse Bleue, 1900 Parts
BOX-FOLDER 7/10	Offenbach, Jacques Orpheus Can Can, undated Negative photostats of parts
BOX-FOLDER 7/11	Poldini, Ede Poupée Valsante, 1903 Printed score for piano with annotations
	Pugni, Cesare

Music, 1900-1949

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 7/12	Pas de Quatre, undated Manuscript parts; negative photostats of parts <i>Note:</i> Markova Dolin Ballet Trinkaus, George J.
BOX-FOLDER 7/13	A Game of Tag, 1911 Printed score for piano with annotations Unidentified
BOX-FOLDER 7/14	The Cockatoos, undated Manuscript score for piano with annotations
BOX-FOLDER 7/15	I Wish I Had Never Seen Sun Shine, undated Manuscript piano-vocal score