Guide to the Fred W. Atkinson Drama Collection 1880-1925
Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary 3
Information on Use 3
Access 3
Citation 3
Biographical Note 3
Scope Note 4
Related Resources 4
Subject Headings 5
INVENTORY 5
Series I: Correspondence 5
Series II: Theatrical Ephemera 6
Subseries 1: Theater Programs and Playbills 6
Subseries 2: Press Clippings and Notes 6
Subseries 3: Writings concerning American Drama 7
Subseries 4: Scrapbook and Photographs 8
Series III: Oversize 8
**Descriptive Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>ICU.SPCL.ATKINSONF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Atkinson, Fred W. Drama Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>1880-1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td>5.25 linear feet (5 boxes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Repository**   | Special Collections Research Center  
|                  | University of Chicago Library  
|                  | 1100 East 57th Street  
|                  | Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A. |

**Abstract**

Fred W. Atkinson (1865-1941) was an educator and administrator best known for his tenure as the general superintendent of education in the Philippines (1900-1903) and president of the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn (1904-1925). This collection contains his materials related to the history and practice of American drama. It includes a significant number of theatrical programs from the early-twentieth century (largely based in New York City), as well as articles and essays he compiled concerning the American dramatic tradition. It also contains correspondence related to his collection of American plays, as well as scrapbooks and photo albums of famous actors and actresses from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

**Information on Use**

**Access**

This collection is open for research.

**Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Atkinson, Fred W. Drama Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

**Biographical Note**

Fred Washington Atkinson was born in 1865 in Reading, MA. He was the son of George W. and Eliza Atkinson. He received his B.A. at Harvard College in 1890, and was married the same year to Winnifred G. Whitford in Waltham, MA. Atkinson then studied at Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, and Jena Universities, as well as the Sorbonne in Paris. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Leipzig in 1893.
Atkinson then worked as a teacher and principal in the Springfield, MA school system from 1894-1900. In 1900 he was selected to assume the post of general superintendent of education in the Philippines. When he returned to the United States, he served briefly as the superintendent of schools in Newton, MA in 1904 before he was selected to assume the presidency of the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, a position he held until 1925. From 1916-1918 he served as a member of the New York City Board of Education. A frequent contributor to magazines and educational journals, Atkinson also published The Philippine Islands (1905), an account of the political and social conditions he encountered while serving in the Philippines' colonial government.

**Scope Note**

This collection is divided into three series: Series I: Correspondence; Series II: Theatrical Ephemera; and Series III: Oversize.

Series I includes Atkinson’s correspondence regarding his collection of American plays, including his efforts to collect plays performed by members of the military from the War Department in the years following World War I.

Series II is divided into four subseries: Theater Programs and Playbills; Press Clippings and Notes; Writings Concerning American Drama; and Scrapbooks and Photographs. These subseries contain numerous theatrical programs from the early-twentieth century; newspaper and magazine clippings regarding the state of American drama; articles and essays concerning the history and character of American drama; and photographs and magazine prints of prominent actors and actresses from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Series III contains oversized newspaper articles and clippings related to the history of American drama as well as contemporary theatrical performances. It also includes four photo albums with pictures of famous actors and actresses from the late-nineteenth century such as Lillian Russell, Sarah Bernhardt, Edwin Booth, Maurice Barrymore, Julia Marlowe, and Lillie Langtry.

**Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Barron, Elwyn A. Papers

Campbell, Mrs. Patrick. Letters

Chicago Drama Performances. Index
Goldman, Samuel. Papers

Goodrich, Adelaide Eunice. Collection

Moody, William Vaughn. Papers


Playbill and Program. Collection

Theatrical Portraits and Illustrations. Collection

Wilt, Napier. Papers

Please see also the Fred W. Atkinson Collection of American Drama. The University of Chicago acquired this substantial collection of American plays from Fred W. Atkinson in 1925. Six years later, the University of Chicago acquired Atkinson’s collection of 72 early American novels and works of fiction. The collection is notable both for the breadth of its early American holdings and its Ethiopian Drama section, which consists of nineteenth-century minstrel plays and joke books.

**Subject Headings**

- Atkinson, Fred W. (Fred Washington), 1865-1941
- American drama
- Theater--United States
- Celebrity Pictures
- Actors
- Actresses

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: Correspondence**

- **Box 1**
  - **Folder 1**
    - Helen Tyler Brown, 1918-1920
- **Box 1**
  - **Folder 2**
    - Gladys Cisney, 1924
- **Box 1**
  - **Folder 3**
    - Jane Dransfield, 1923
- **Box 1**
  - **Folder 4**
    - Julia M. Johnson, 1921
Folder 5
Frederick H. Koch, 1921-1923
Box 1
Folder 6
G. Tyler Mairs, 1916
Box 1
Folder 7
Frederick J. Shepard, 1915
Box 1
Folder 8
War Department, 1923-1924

Series II: Theatrical Ephemera

Subseries 1: Theater Programs and Playbills

Box 1
Folder 9
American Drama Matinees broadside, 1917
Box 1
Folder 10
Theater program booklets, 1909-1921
Box 1
Folder 11
Theater programs, 1914-1924

Subseries 2: Press Clippings and Notes

Box 1
Folder 12
The Carolina Dramatic Association – Regulations for the play contests, 1924
Box 1
Folder 13
The Dial clippings, 1915-1917
Box 1
Folder 14
The Drama clippings, 1919-1922
Box 1
Folder 15
The Literary Digest clippings, 1923
Box 1
Folder 16
The Nation – "The First American Play," fragment, 1918
Box 1
Folder 17
Newspaper clippings, circa 1915-1924
Box 1
Folder 18
Eugene O'Neill clippings, circa 1921-1922
Box 1
Folder 19
The Theatre clippings, circa 1915-1922
Box 1
Folder 20
Notes regarding various plays, circa 1915-1925

Subseries 3: Writings concerning American Drama
Box 1
Folder 21
Box 1
Folder 22
American Drama Year – "Revival of America's First Comedy," 1917
Box 1
Folder 23
Box 1
Folder 24
The Bookman's Literary Club Service – "Contemporary American Drama," undated
Box 1
Folder 25
The Bulletin of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences," 1916
Box 1
Folder 26
Oral Sumner Coad, "The American Theatre in the Eighteenth Century," The South Atlantic Quarterly, 1918
Box 1
Folder 27
The Drama League of America – Monthly Bulletin and Study Course on American Drama, 1916
Box 1
Folder 28
Box 1
Folder 29
Clara Morris, "A Memory of Dion Boucicault," The Cosmopolitan, 1905
Box 1
Folder 30
New York Drama League – "Drama Calendar," 1919
Box 1
Folder 31
The New York Public Library – Branch Library News, 1916
Folder 32
Old Penn: Weekly Review of the University of Pennsylvania, 1916

Box 1
Folder 33
Arthur Hobson Quinn, "The Significance of Recent American Drama," Scribner’s Magazine, 1922

Box 1
Folder 34
Arthur Hobson Quinn, "The Value of American Plays," reprint from The New York Evening Post, 1921

Box 1
Folder 35

Box 1
Folder 36

Box 1
Folder 37

Subseries 4: Scrapbook and Photographs

Box 2
Folder 1
Magazine photographs, circa 1922

Box 2
Folder 2
Scrapbook containing mounted clippings of actors and actresses, 1880-1911
• Unmounted portraits of actors and actresses, 1888-1893
• 12 photographs of cast of the one hundredth performance of The Two Orphans, Union Square Theatre, New York, 1875

Series III: Oversize

Box 3
Folder 1
Newspaper Clippings, circa 1916-1924

Box 3
Folder 2
Newspaper Clippings, circa 1916, 1922

Box 3
Folder 3

Box 4
Two albums containing photographs of actors and actresses, circa 1890s

Box 5
Two albums containing photographs of actors and actresses, circa 1890s