

University of Chicago Library

Guide to the Chicago Repertory Group Collection of Scripts and Scrapbooks 1933-1947



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.CRG
Title	Chicago Repertory Group Collection of Scripts and Scrapbooks
Date	1933-1947
Size	5.5 linear ft (10 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	The Chicago Repertory Group Collection, presented to the University Library in June, 1958, by Gertrude Gunter Soltker, an original member of the group, consists of typescripts, carbons, and mimeograph copies of 267 plays, songs, and sketches used by the group, as well as six scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, programs, and publicity for the group.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for use.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Chicago Repertory Group Collection of Scripts and Scrapbooks, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Historical Note

The Chicago Repertory Group was founded in 1934 by six amateur actors with the aim of creating a social theater relevant to its time. The non-profit group sought to bring theater to people who could not afford the price of professional theater. Even after the group had produced several major successes and had a theater of its own, they continued to operate a mobile theater department, offering topical skits, songs, and short plays to trade unions, peace organizations, or any group that wanted "an evening of good entertainment with an educational value."

The CRG grew out of the Chicago Workers Theater, active 1933-34. It became the Group Theater, and then, at the request of New York's Group Theatre, changed to the name by which it was known throughout the Midwest, the Chicago Repertory Group. The CRG had its first major success in the spring of 1935 with the Chicago premiere of Clifford Odet's social drama, "Waiting for Lefty", at the Civic Theater. Under the directorship of Charles de Sheim, who

came to the group from the Federal Theater, the CRG soon won press acclaim, and a list of sponsors that included Clarence Darrow, Harriet Monroe, Ruth Page, Meyer Levin, and John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor.

In 1936, having moved to their own studio, the CRG established a theater school with an advisory board that included Langston Hughes, Clifford Odets, Morris Carnovsky, and Lee Strasberg. Carnovsky, Robert Lewis, and John Garfield of New York's Group Theatre came frequently to lecture. A playwriting Workshop provided nearly all of the material for the mobile department as well as several major productions.

The repertory of the group ranged from such highly acclaimed social dramas as "Hymn to the Rising Sun", "Waiting for Lefty", and "The Cradle will Rock", through Federal Theater plays adapted to the Chicago locale, such as "One Third of a Nation", to skits and plays written by the group itself. By the time the group produced its first three-act play, there were demands for the revival of its first one-act productions, especially "Lefty", which they played over 100 times in Chicago and its surrounding communities.

In 1937 the Chicago Repertory Group was awarded the "Palm" by Stage Magazine for "Being the only theater west of Broadway that is carrying out a policy devoted only to plays of social significance." The CRG was further noteworthy for its use of a modified version of the Stanislavsky approach to drama, practiced by very few groups in this country at the time. The group was governed collectively by a group council with the membership performing all of the functions of the productions. The group conceived of theater as a collective art, and its primary aim was to make each of its productions a synthesis of the creative contributions of the directors, actors, designers, and technicians.

Although in the late 1930's the group had produced several anti-war sketches and plays, in the early 1940's the CRG became active in the war effort. In 1942 the Office of Civilian Defense for the Chicago area made the CRG its official theater, and the group appeared at U.S.O. parties and at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

In June, 1943, the CRG celebrated its tenth anniversary, having grown to 50 members, but did not offer any major productions in the 1942-43 season. Apparently it did not survive long after its tenth anniversary. Just how long the group remained an active theater force in Chicago has not been determined, but there are skits concerning the Taft-Hartley bill and the hydrogen bomb in this collection which date from 1947. As no signatures are attached their source cannot be immediately identified.

Among the members of the CRG who achieved success in the professional theater are Charles de Sheim and (Louis) Studs Terkel, who acted in several CRG productions.

This collection is important in that it records the activity of one group during the peak period of social theater. It is especially rich in works produced by the members themselves and slanted to the specific problems of its audience and its period. Much of the material reflects the leftist attitude and the strong pro-labor sympathies which pervaded the major theater movements of the period, covering subjects such as the union organizing, strikes, and the evils of capitalism as well as praise of Russia and the Communist Party, attacks on Fascism in Spain and Germany, satires of prominent political figures, and anti-war material. One example shows the completeness of the collection; there are four separate copies of "One Third of a Nation", one of the most important Federal Theater productions showing the changes made as it moved from New York to its staging by the CRG as a study of tenement life in Chicago.

Scope Note

The scripts are housed in 7 Mss boxes. Boxes 1-5 contain sketches, plays, poems, and lyrics arranged alphabetically by author, or title if anonymous. Box 6 contains songs with and without music, arranged by title. Box 7 contains the oversized songs, musical scores, and a few miscellaneous items, arranged by title.

Series I: SKETCHES, PLAYS, POEMS, LYRICS

Series II: SONGS

Series III: OVERSIZED SONGS, MUSICAL SCORES, AND MISC. ITEMS

Series IV: OVERSIZED SCORES AND LYRICS; SONGS AND MUSICALS

Series V: SCRAPBOOKS

Related Resources

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

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

Subject Headings

- Chicago Repertory Group
- Theater -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Repertory theater -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Drama
- Theater and society
- Theater programs
- Scrapbooks

INVENTORY

Series I: Sketches, Plays, Poems, Lyrics

Box 1

Folder 1

- American Peace Mobilization, untitled script
- Anchor, Arthur. Pirates of Finance

Box 1

Folder 2

Arent, Arthur. It's Up To You

Box 1

Folder 3

One Third of a Nation

Box 1

Folder 4

One Third of a Nation

Box 1

Folder 5

One Third of a Nation

Box 1

Folder 6

One Third of a Nation

Box 1

Folder 7

- Bales, Allen. It's All in Fun
- Baumer, Marie. A Time to Remember

Box 1

Folder 8

- Bayer, Jerome. Dress Rehearsal
- Bengel, Ben. Plant in the Sun

Box 1

Folder 9

Bentkover, Jacob. Man of Monticello

Box 2

Folder 1

Blankfort, Michael. The Crime

Box 2

Folder 2

- Blitzstein, Marc. I've Got the Tune
- Blitzstein, Marc. The Cradle Will Rock
- Brecht, Bertolt. The Jewish Wife

Box 2

Folder 3

- Bunning, K.M. Information
- [Unity Theatre London] Capitalistic Boss
- anon., The Charge is Murder
- Chayevsky, Paddy. The King of Three

- anon., Chowderhead Cohen Comments

Box 2

Folder 4

- Coleman, William. Wreath without Laurels
- Coley, Marion K. Fixin's
- Conkle, E.P. Prologue to Glory

Box 2

Folder 5

- Corwin, Norman. Red, White and Blue Network
- We Hold These Truths

Box 2

Folder 6

- anon., Danny Miller
- Davis, Reuben. What's in a Name?
- Deacon, Ruth. Spain, 1937
- anon., Decision
- anon., Dedication

Box 3

Folder 1

DeKoven & Lorber. The Lady is Right

Box 3

Folder 2

- The Lady is Right
- Railroad Sketch

Box 3

Folder 3

- DeSheim, Charles. Aftermath
- [Russian War Relief] Dnieperstroy
- Dodson, Owen. The Ballad of Dorrie Miller
- Everybody Join Hands
- anon., Dream Job

Box 3

Folder 4

- Eisenberg, Emanuel. English Players on the Quota
- Eisenberg, E. & Williams, Jay. One Third of a Mitten
- anon., Election script
- England, Elizabeth. Nothing to Lose

Box 3

Folder 5

- anon., Fashion Show
- anon., Father Cogwheel
- various authors Five 1-act plays for radio stage on the subject of war savings
- Forrest, Ken, anon. The Man on the Tree
- Four Italian Angels
- Fraft, H.S., anon. The Bishop of Munster
- Free Clinic

- Furnes, J.C. Death Takes the Wheel

Box 3

Folder 6

- Gilbert, Lee. House about it, Room for a Crib
- Gold, Irving. How to canvass....
- Goldberg, Eddie Penny Candy
- [Chicago Park District] Good Neighbors
- Gordon, George L., anon., Baby Clucks in Congress
- "Grapes of Wrath", chap. 15

Box 3

Folder 7

Green, Paul Johnny Johnson

Box 3

Folder 8

- anon., Guild-edged Security
- anon., Gunga Din
- Hagood, William. Ideals Must Fall
- Harton, Margaret. And So They Laugh

Box 3

Folder 9

- Ghosts or Man?
- Lizzie
- Harton, Margaret &
- Leslie Davis. Night Life of a Teacher

Box 3

Folder 10

- Harton, Margaret. Old Lady Fate
- Sincere Hypocrites

Box 4

Folder 1

- Haserodt, Oliver. The Constitutional Convention
- Heitler, W.W. Election Circus of 1935
- anon., Hollywood Investigation
- Hughes, Langston. Song of Spain
- anon., Humanity versus the H-bomb
- [no name, but orig. by Paul Green] Hymn to the Rising Sun
- Irwin, Ben. Inside the Room
- International Hook-up

Box 4

Folder 2

- anon., It's Better With a Union Man
- Jeffey, Betty. Ten Years of Relief
- Revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto
- anon., The Japanese Peacemaker
- anon., Japanese Silk Mystery
- anon., A Job to Do

- [American Peace Mobilization] Johnny Got His Gun
- Johnsrud, Harold & Baxter, Alan. The Boys in the Back Room

Box 4

Folder 3

- Kahn, Lawrence Stone wall 'Gator
- Knell, Dick. Where, O, Where is That Picket Line?
- Kreymsbourg, Arthur. America, America
- anon., Landon-Roosevelt debate
- Lesan, David. and Frank Gabraelson Light'ning Relief
- anon., Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide
- Lipsitz, Mary. The Biggest Job Man' Ever Done
- anon., Little Green Bundle

Box 4

Folder 4

- Locke, Sam. Hire and Fire
- Loftus, John. Thy Father Was Too Valiant
- McLeod, Jane & Alfred Saxe. Johnny Doodle
- McKensie, Ken. [sketch]
- [CRG] Made to Order
- anon., Madrid

Box 4

Folder 5

- Maltz, Albert. Black Pit
- The Happiest Man on Earth
- The Journey of Simon McKeever
- Private Hicks

Box 4

Folder 6

- anon., Man of the Year
- Martin, Ben. We Hold These Truths
- Martin, Peter. Geo. Scuddle & Charles Friedman The Young Go First (3 act version, 1 act adapt.)
- Giddy, The Young go First
- Sheim, The Young go First, rev.

Box 4

Folder 7

- Martin, Peter, etc. The Young Go First
- [American League for Peace and Democracy] Martin Dies in the Land
- Beyond Time
- Miller, Arthur. You're Next
- Moore, Ruth. Short Wait Between Trains
- Somebody's After You
- Morris, Charlotte and Lester A. Terrific Idea
- Pine
- Nash, Ogden. The Four Bastards
- anon., National Labor Board

- anon., The Nazi Conference

Box 5

Folder 1

- Odets, Clifford. Waiting for Lefty (scenes)
- anon., Ol' Man Author
- anon., Once is Enough
- One Act Play Magazine Vildrac-The Pilgrim
- Mitchell - A Husband for Breakfast
- Stevenson - Transit

Box 5

Folder 2

- anon., Open Secret
- Orr, John. Blue Nocturne
- Girls from Birmingham
- anon., Packinghouse workers script
- Palmer, William R. A. Tennis Bum
- Papashvily, Helen Last Day in Munich
- [Theatre Guild] "Parade" revue - sketches

Box 5

Folder 3

- anon., Patriot
- Paull, Irene & Herman Griffith, Morgan-Ford duet
- Paull, Irene. There Will Always be the People
- [New Theatre League] Peace in Our Time
- anon., Perils of a Penthouse
- Peters, Hans, and others Virtue Rewarded

Box 5

Folder 4

- Pine, Lester. Coal
- Friends of the People
- Joseph McFinnical, Cynical Pinnacle
- Punk
- Sketch on H.R. 1776

Series II: Songs

Box 6

Folder 1

- [United Farmers League] Poems and Recitations
- Polacheck, Charles. Italian Infantry
- anon., Porterhouse Lucy
- anon., Pricing a Battleship
- Reynolds, Phillip T. Cigarette
- Roos, Joanna Among Ourselves

Box 6

Folder 2

- Sanderson, Melville Heil

- Savery, Gerald and Harry Gralnick, All Our Tomorrows
- Scribner, Robert. Tea for Nine
- Shakespeare, William The Comedy of Errors

Box 6

Folder 3

- Shaw, G.B. (adap. Arthur Arent) Candida

Box 6

Folder 4

Shaw, Irwin Bury the Dead

Box 6

Folder 5

Bury the Dead (light plot)

Box 6

Folder 6

- Shiffrin, A.B. Return at Sunset
- Sklar, George Coast to Coast
- Life and Death of an American

Box 6

Folder 7

- anon. Spoonful o Sugar
- Starr, Milton & Louis Gilbert High Flying Prices
- Stavis, Barrie Alex Shenko
- anon. Steel Worker

Box 6

Folder 8

- Stevenson, Philip Back Where You Came From
- anon. Stoolies' Lament
- anon. Sunrise in Dixie

Box 6

Folder 9

- anon. Talk in Darkness
- anon. That They May Win
- anon. They Fly Through the Air...
- anon. This is Our Man

Box 6

Folder 10

- Tipolacheck, Charles Help Yourself

Box 6

Folder 11

- Titus, William Tillie, the Toiler
- Tolkin, Mel & Reuben Davis We Beg to Differ

Box 6

Folder 12

- [New Theatre League] Trade Union sketches
- Twain, Mark War Prayer
- anon. Upsurge

- anon. The Unknown Soldier Rejects His Wreath

Series III: Oversized songs, Musical Scores, and Misc. Items

Box 7

Folder 1

[New Theatre League] V is for Victory

Box 7

Folder 2

- [New Theatre League] Waiting for Odets
- Ware, Alice Mighty Wind A'Blowin'
- Pass Word (Got a Vote)
- anon. We're Witnesses
- Wexler, Irving The Way Things Are
- Wexley, John. Steel

Box 7

Folder 3

- anon. Whata You Know!
- anon. Why Don't You Laugh
- Wilson, Ruth The Boy Who Had No Hero
- anon. With Honor
- Wolff, William Hearsterical Revue
- Yeuell, John The Flowers of Spring
- anon. You Can't Take the Pulitzer Prize with You

Box 7

Folder 4

- National Service Bureau Bibliographies
- Anti-war plays

Box 7

Folder 5

Anti-war plays: foreign Holiday musical plays for children, II.

Box 7

Folder 6

- Monologues
- Negro Plays

Box 7

Folder 7

New Plays Survey

Box 7

Folder 8

New Testament Plays

Box 7

Folder 9

- Publication no. 14; a misc. catalog
- Theatre techniques
- Vaudeville sketches

Box 7

Folder 10

Continental theater bulletin, no. 3

Box 8**Folder 1**

- Abe Lincoln, Earl Robinson, Alfred Hayes
- Babes in the Woods, Geoffrey Parson & Berkeley
- Unity March, Fase
- While the iron is hot
- Affiliate with me
- Love on the dole
- Ballad of Abe Lincoln, Beatrice Goldsmith & George Kleinsinger
- Ballad to Roosevelt, Langston Hughes
- Battle Hymn, Earl Robinson & John Latouche
- Bennie the air raid warden, anon.
- Berchtesgarden Choo-choo, anon.
- (with music to Chatanooga choo choo)

Box 8**Folder 2**

- Brooklyn, Cantata Mike Stratton & Geo. Kleinsinger
- Censorship revue, anon.
- Davy Crockett, Elie Siegmeister
- Doin' de Goon, Les Pine

Box 8**Folder 3**

- Farm Equipment Workers Strike Saga, anon.
- Farmer comes to town, anon.
- Get the Lead out of Your Plants, anon.
- Got plantin' do to, Sally, Les Pine, Charlotte Paglin
- Heil Hitler, Arny Freeman
- Hey Diddle Diddle, William Wolff
- Hogless, hogless are we, anon.
- Hullabaloo Belay Almanac singers
- Hungry blues, anon.
- I Like America, Lewis Allan
- I only have room for one, anon.
- I want to be an actress, Gert Gunter and Arny Freeman

Box 8**Folder 4**

- If this be reason, anon.
- If you take what they give you, Les Pine
- Indian chorus, anon.
- It can't happen here, anon.
- It shall not come to pass, TAC radio division
- Joe Hill, Alfred Hayes, Earl Robinson

Box 8**Folder 5**

- John L. Lewis had a plan...., anon.
- Knittin' for Britain, anon.
- Labor fakers, Martin & Robinson
- Labor songs-collection Lindbergh heeler & Nye, anon.
- Let me dance without my pants, anon.
- Men Awake! Harold J. Rome
- Mr. Hearst, Lewis Allan
- The nightmare, Les Pine
- No, no, a thousand times no, anon.
- Old Man, Horace Greeley Jack Shapiro, Earl Robinson
- On Time, Harold J. Rome
- One-A Blues, Les Pine
- One Hundred Three Percent American, anon.
- One Hundred Two Percent American, anon.
- Organize, Alfred Hayes & Earl Robinson
- Over Here! Lewis Allan

Box 8

Folder 6

- Peace Quartet, anon.
- Perkins & Green, anon.
- Praise the Lord and Pas the Ammunition, Frank Loesser
- Priorities, George Kleinsinger & Roslyn Harvey
- Quart of Milk a Day, anon.
- Refugee Road, Langston Hughes; Elie Seigmeister
- Roosevelt lullabye, anon.
- Schnitzelbank, anon.
- Sign on the dotted line, William Wolff
- Song of the evicted farmer, anon.
- Song of the Free, Archibald Macleish & Kurt Weill

Box 8

Folder 7

- Spring Song, Harry Schacter, Earl Robinson
- Strange Things Happening in This Land [Sharecropper song]
- These are the steel strike dead, anon.
- The Three Musketeers, John H. Little
- Troops, anon.
- Unemployment blues, William Wolff
- The union maid [Almanac Singers]
- The United Nations Harold Rome, Dimitri Shostakivitch
- V-gates, anon.
- Victory vamp Dick Crolley

Box 8

Folder 8

- Watch the Fords go by Marvin Lipsitz and Sonny Vale
- We can & we will & we must Fred Katz (music)
- Yahoo, anon.

- The Yanks are not coming, Hy Zaret, Bernie Wayne, Nat Gardner
- Yes we have no employment, anon.
- You can't live on love Lewis Allan

Series IV: Oversized Scores and Lyrics; Songs and Musicals

Box 9

Folder 1

- America, anon.
- Ballad of John Brown, George Kleinsinger, Beatrice Goldsmith
- Bill of Rights, David deKoven, Sonny Vale

Box 9

Folder 2

- Can't fool the people, Alfred Hayes, George Kleinsinger
- Don't Sing Solo, Roslyn Hanvey, George Kleinsinger
- Down with fascist terror, Earl Robinson, Julius Keil
- General & the goats, Saul Aarons, Mike Stratton

Box 9

Folder 3

Gertie the Stool pigeon's daughter, anon.

Box 9

Folder 4

The Lady is Right, deKoven, Lorber, Vale

Box 9

Folder 5

Life in a day of a secretary, Alfred Hayes, Jay Williams, George Kleinsinger

Box 9

Folder 6

- Mama, she..., anon.
- Miss Hogan, Take a Poem, Norman Corwin, George Kleinsinger
- My girl in Leningrad, Abner Greenberg

Box 9

Folder 7

Not on My Life, David deKoven, Dick Knell William Jefferson, [and others]

Box 9

Folder 8

Not on My Life, David deKoven, Dick Knell William Jefferson, [and others]

Box 9

Folder 9

Pins and Needles, Harold J. Rome & parts by E. Eisenberg

Box 9

Folder 10

- Send for the Militia, William Wolff
- Sing for your supper, Robert Sour; Lee Warner, Ned Lehad

Box 9

Folder 11

- Song of Democracy, Milton Wayne and Elie Siegmeister

- Turn Up the Lights-revue Arthur Pooley, John Berry

Box 9

Folder 12

- Uncle Sam Can Use It, Charlotte Morris, Lester Pine
- When Lilacs last in the Dooryard Bloomed (?)
- Folder 13:
- Miscellaneous scripts ALL HAVE DUPLICATES FILED SEPARATELY
- THE AUTHOR (magazine) v. XLII, n. 4

Series V: Scrapbooks

Box 10

Vol. 1: 1934-37 newspaper clippings

Box 10

Vol. 2: 1933-36 programs, publicity, and brochures

Box 10

Vol. 3: 1937 "Bury the Dead," "The Young Go First"-clippings programs, and publicity

Box 10

Vol. 4: 1938-40 clippings, and a few programs

Box 10

Vol. 5: 1938 programs, brochures, clippings, publicity

Box 10

Vol. 6: 1940 clippings, programs