

Oregon Shakespeare Festival

ARCHIVES DIVISION

Dorothy Pruitt Collection, circa 1920-1997

Collection Number M0001

Collection Number: M0001

Title: Dorothy Pruitt Collection

Dates: circa 1920-1997

Creator: Dorothy Pruitt

Summary/Abstract: Personal papers of Dorothy Pruitt, an early actress, Assistant Director, and long-time supporter of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Included in the collection are correspondence, scrapbooks, photographs, metal printing plate scripts, and a first draft of a European travel book. Correspondents include Angus and Gertrude Bowmer, Lois Bowmer, Shirley and Bill Patton, Peggy Rubin, and Al Reiss.

Quantity/Physical Description: .6 c.f. in 2 document boxes.

Restrictions on Access: None

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Preferred Citation: [Box Number, Folder Number], M0001 Dorothy Pruitt Papers, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Archives, Ashland, OR

Acquisition: Presented by William Patton (portions), circa 1998.

Related Material: Oral history transcripts and tapes, and photography collections.

Note: There are two scrapbooks in the collection, though one consists of negatives and prints of images in a scrapbook maintained by Ms. Pruitt. That original scrapbook is not in our possession, but was loaned for photocopying.

Processed by: Debra Griffith

Arrangement: The papers are arranged in alphabetical order by subject.

Biographical/Historical Note: Dorothy Pruitt, nee Green, was born July 6, 1906 in Stillwater, Oklahoma Territory. She moved to the Rogue Valley in 1924 and on August 28, 1928 married Almus Pruitt. Together they ran Pruitt's Music in Medford, Oregon for 20 years. She passed away in Medford, on March 5, 1997 at the age of 90.

Ms. Pruitt acted in the first five seasons of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), then known as the Oregon Shakespearean Festival Association (OSFA). She originated the role of Olivia in *Twelfth Night* for the production company, and also starred as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, and as Bianca

in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In 1938, she toured the state with fellow actor Doreen Leverette as part of a public relations outreach. In addition, she was a cast member during the San Francisco Exposition performances in 1939.

During the 1940 season Ms. Pruitt served as Assistant Director. In the 1937 and 1938 seasons she also edited the souvenir program. At Angus's behest, she wrote a history of the Company for the 1947 souvenir program. She served as a member of the Board of Directors in 1938-1939, and was on the committee promoting 'sponsoring memberships.' Her active involvement with the Company ended in 1940, though she and her husband Almus remained strong supporters. In 1980, she was made a life member of the Company.

In addition to performing with the OSFA, she was also a member of the Teensy Weensy Theatre Company, an informal group that gathered irregularly in Angus and Lois Bowmer's kitchen nook; other members included Bob Stedman and Bill Cottrell.

In the 1940s, she became a published author, with short stories and poems published in Ladies Home Journal, Everywoman Magazine, and others.

Ms. Pruitt is represented in other parts of the institutions records, including the oral history transcripts and tapes, and photography collections.

Scope and Content: These papers were acquired, in part, from William Patton after Ms. Pruitt's death in 1997, and include material related to her career with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, writing career, home life, and friendships with founding members of OSF.

Significant correspondents include Angus and Gertrude Bowmer, Lois Bowmer, Shirley and Bill Patton, Peggy Rubin, and writer Al Reiss.

This collection fills in some gaps in the Prompt Book collection. The prompt book for the 1940 production of *Much Ado About Nothing* is missing, though the Dorothy Pruitt papers contain her Assistant Director copy of the script, as well as a fragment of her script for the 1939 production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The papers document the early days of the Festival, and significant events such as the Golden Gate International Exposition, and the first state-wide promotional tour.

Subject Terms:

Bowmer, Angus
Bowmer, Gertrude
Bowmer, Lois
Leverette, Doreen
Patton, Shirley
Patton, William
Pruitt, Dorothy

Pruitt, Almus
Reiss, Al
Rubin, Peggy
Golden Gate International Exposition
Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Pruitt Music
Teensy Weensy Theatre Company
Ashland, Oregon
Medford, Oregon
Theater
Manuscript
Photographs

Collection Inventory

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	1	Background materials, circa 1920-1997
1	2	Clippings, 1962-1985
1	3	Correspondence, 1936-1995
1	4	Electrical notes, undated
1	5	Oral history notes, 1983
1	6	Playbills, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1960
1	7	Radio Schedule, 1940 July 5
1	8	Scrapbook, 1938-1940
1	9	Script – <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , 1940
1	10	Script – <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , 1939 (fragment)
1	11-14	Writings - <i>A Do-It Yourself Tour of Europe</i> , draft, circa 1960
1	15	Writings - General, 1983, undated
2		Scrapbook, Prints and Negatives, 1935-1939