



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Percy Hammond papers

1879-1943

*T-Mss 1992-014

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Summary

Creator: Hammond, Percy, 1873-1936

Title: Percy Hammond papers

Date: 1879-1943

Size: 19.71 linear feet (46 boxes, 6 volumes, 3 oversized folders)

Source: Donated by Florence Hammond, 1992.

Abstract: Percy Hammond was the theater critic for the Chicago Tribune from 1909 to 1921 and for the New York Herald Tribune from 1921 until his death in 1936. The Percy Hammond papers date from 1879 to 1943 and document Hammond's career, professional associations, and personal life through correspondence, clippings, theater programs, photographs, and drawings.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Processing note: Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014 Scrapbooks were disassembled and placed in folders. Original order was maintained.

Creator History

Percy Hammond was a journalist and theater critic for the Chicago Tribune and the New York Herald Tribune. He was born in 1873 in Cadiz, Ohio. Hammond married Florence Carnahan in 1896. The couple had a son, John.

Hammond began his career as a journalist in Chicago. He was drama editor of the Chicago Evening Post before going to work for the Chicago Tribune in 1909. He chiefly wrote theater news and criticism for the Tribune, though in 1918 the newspaper sent him to Europe, where he reported on the Paris Peace Conference. In 1921, Hammond was invited to New York to be theater critic for the New York Tribune (later Herald Tribune), a position he held until his death in 1936.

Hammond published one book during his life, *But—Is It Art?* (1927), a collection of essays on theater. After Hammond's death, a memorial book of essays, called *Percy Hammond: A Symposium in Tribute*, was published. Contributors included Brooks Atkinson, Burns Mantle, and Walter Winchell. In 1940, a collection of Hammond's essays and criticism was published under the title *This Atom in the Audience*.

Custodial History

The collection was arranged and maintained by Percy Hammond's son, John, and donated by Hammond's granddaughter.

Scope and Content Note

The Percy Hammond papers date from 1879 to 1943 and contain correspondence, scrapbooks, writings, theater programs, photographs, and drawings.

Correspondence is almost entirely incoming communications, and consists primarily of letters to Hammond dating from the 1910s to 1935. Correspondence is from professional associates, friends, and readers of Hammond's columns and reviews, including playwrights, actors, and other theater professionals responding to his assessment of their work. Correspondents include Hammond's editors at the Chicago Tribune and New York Herald Tribune, nightclub owner Barney Gallant, John Golden, Ring Lardner, Florenz Ziegfeld, and Algonquin Hotel owner Frank Case. There are a particularly large number of letters from Roscoe Peacock and William Lyon Phelps. A small number of typescripts and manuscript drafts are present with the correspondence, such as script outlines and draft articles. Among these typescripts are reminiscences of George C. Tyler, written in 1929.

The collection also contains letters to Florence Hammond, including letters from David Belasco, Wallace Irwin, Channing Pollock, Sophie Treadwell, and Carl Van Vechten. There are a large number of letters from Samuel Hopkins Adams. A scrapbook of letters to Florence from Percy, dating from 1913 to 1922, is held here. The letters were written when Hammond was traveling and include letters from his time in Europe in 1918 and 1919.

Scrapbooks date from 1905 to 1943, and contain newspaper and magazine articles by or related to Hammond. Scrapbooks contain clippings of Hammond's articles on theater, his "Oddments and Reminders" column for the Herald Tribune, and his book reviews from the 1920s, as well as other writings. A scrapbook of his theater-related articles from 1905 to 1916 includes some original manuscripts as well as clippings. Scrapbooks from after Hammond's death contain tributes to Hammond, articles containing brief references to him, and reviews of *This Atom in the Audience*. Loose clippings of Hammond's articles for the Chicago Evening Post are also present; the articles do not have a byline and date from about 1898 to 1901.

Manuscripts and drafts contain typewritten and handwritten drafts of several of Hammond's articles, reviews, and chapters for his book *But—Is It Art?*, mostly from the 1920s. Also held here are a play

scenario by J. M. Patterson and a handwritten draft of a speech by Laurette Taylor on the occasion of Hammond's departure to Belgium in 1918.

Photographs and drawings date from the 1900s to the 1930s and depict Hammond's friends and family as well as actors, producers, and other theater professionals. The images are mostly portraits, many of which are inscribed to Hammond. Photographs of Kyrle Bellew, Morris Gest, Gilda Gray, and Gabrielle Réjane are present. A group photograph from a benefit given by Nikita Balieff's Chauve-Souris in 1922 is signed by Balieff, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Al Jolson, Laurette Taylor, and others.

Drawn portraits depict Hammond, William T. Hodge, and Ethel Barrymore; there are also reproductions of portraits of Balieff and Fania Marinoff. Other drawings include an original sketch of a soldier, attributed to John Barrymore, and artwork by Eduardo Benito. Also held here is a book, *Guignol: A Collection of Caricatures*, by Conrado Walter Massaguer, inscribed to Hammond and with his caricature drawn inside.

Programs primarily date from around 1896 to the 1930s. Some have Hammond's handwritten notes. Souvenir programs from the 1920s are present for the Grand Guignol Players, Balieff's Chauve-Souris, Pickwick, Anna Pavlova, and the Folies Bergère. The earliest item in the collection is a silk souvenir program for the hundredth performance of *The Banker's Daughter* at the Union Square Theatre, dating to 1879. Some programs and invitations for dinners and other events, mostly from Hammond's time in Chicago, are also held here, as are a few concert programs from after Hammond's death, probably belonging to his son.

The collection also holds a large, folded New York Tribune poster that reads, "Follow the new shows with Percy Hammond."

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in six categories: Correspondence, Manuscripts and Drafts, New York Tribune Poster, Photographs and Drawings, Programs, and Scrapbooks and Clippings. Scrapbooks are further arranged by subject.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings
Correspondence
Photographs
Scrapbooks
Theater programs

Subjects

Dramatic criticism

Occupations

Theater critics

Names

Adams, Samuel Hopkins, 1871-1958
Phelps, William Lyon, 1865-1943
Tyler, George Crouse, 1867-1946
Chicago Tribune (Firm)
New York Herald Tribune (Firm)

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1-6 1890s-1921
- b. 2 f. 1-7 1905-1921
- b. 3 f. 1-8 1908-1920
- b. 4 f. 1-7 1917-1935
- b. 5 f. 1-9 1919-1934
- b. 6 f. 1-8 1921-1936
- b. 7 f. 1-7 1923-1936
- b. 8 f. 1-9 1924-1928
- b. 9 f. 1-7 1925-1936
- b. 10 f. 1-6 1926-1933
- b. 11 f. 1-8 1928-1934
- b. 12 f. 1-7 1928-1935
Includes George C. Tyler reminscences.
- b. 13 f. 1-8 1929-1935
- b. 14 f. 1-7 1932-1935
- b. 15 f. 1-7 1933-1936
- b. 16 f. 1-8 1934-1936
- b. 17 f. 1-2 1935-1937
- b. 18 f. 1-5 Letters to Florence Hammond 1901-1935
- b. 17 f. 3-6 Letters to Florence Hammond 1921-1935
- b. 24 f. 1-2 Letters to Florence Hammond from Percy Hammond 1913-1922
- b. 21 f. 1-11 Manuscripts and Drafts 1918-1931
 - b. 21 f. 12 New York Tribune Poster 1920s

Photographs and Drawings

- b. 22 f. 9-14 1900s-1930s
- b. 23 f. 1-11 1900s-1930s
 - o. 1 Soldier by John Barrymore 1910s
LPA C12 Dwr #18
 - o. 2 William Hodge 1920s
LPA C12 Dwr #18
 - o. 3 Percy Hammond by Maud Tousey Fangel 1920s
LPA C12 Dwr #18
- b. 22 f. 1-8 Programs 1879-1938

Scrapbooks and Clippings

- b. 46 f. 1-3 Book Reviews 1920-1922
- b. 18 f. 6-7 Chicago Evening Post 1900s
 - b. 19 f. 1 Chicago Evening Post 1900s
- Miscellaneous Clippings
- b. 25 f. 1-4 1905-1925

Scrapbooks and Clippings (cont.)
Miscellaneous Clippings (cont.)

- b. 46 f. 4-8 1912-1935
- b. 39 f. 3-5 1921-1927
- b. 45 f. 3-5 1921-1940
- b. 40 f. 1-5 1929-1930
- b. 41 f. 1-6 1930-1933
- b. 42 f. 1-4 1933-1935
- b. 43 f. 1-3 1936-1940
- b. 24 f. 3-4 1941-1943
- b. 44 f. 1-5 "Oddments and Reminders" 1922-1925
- b. 45 f. 1-2 "Oddments and Reminders" 1925-1927

Theater

- v. 1 1905-1906
- b. 27 f. 1-6 1905-1917
- v. 2 1906-1908
- v. 3 1908-1910
- b. 19 f. 2-6 1910-1913
- b. 20 f. 1-5 1911-1915
- v. 4 1913
- v. 5 1915-1916
- v. 6 1916
- b. 28 f. 1-4 1918-1919
- b. 29 f. 1-6 1920-1921
- b. 30 f. 1-5 1921-1922
- b. 31 f. 1-5 1923
- b. 32 f. 1-6 1924
- b. 33 f. 1-5 1925
- b. 34 f. 1-6 1926-1927
- b. 35 f. 1-5 1927-1928
- b. 36 f. 1-5 1928-1929
- b. 37 f. 1-5 1930-1931
- b. 38 f. 1-3 1932
- b. 26 f. 1-3 1933
- b. 38 f. 4 1934
- b. 39 f. 1-2 1934
- b. 26 f. 4-5 1935
- b. 25 f. 5-6 1936
- b. 43 f. 4-5 Tributes to Percy Hammond 1936