

Guide to the Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood Papers,1929-1986

*T-Mss 1984-010

Billy Rose Theatre Division



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Descriptive Summary

Title: Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood Papers, 1867-1974

Creator: Hapgood, Elizabeth Reynolds.

Collection ID: *T-Mss 1984-010

Size: 1 lin. ft., (3 boxes)

Repository: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
Billy Rose Theatre Division. New York, New York

Abstract: Renowned Russian translator and Soviet culture lecturer Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (1894-1974) is best known as the English translator for Konstantin Stanislavsky, the actor, director, and dramatics coach for the Moscow Art Theatre. The collection consists of correspondence in English, Russian, French, Italian and German; articles; photographs; and scrapbooks. There is a document in the collection that predates Mrs. Hapgood's birthdate. The collection contains voluminous correspondence from Konstantin Stanislavsky's associates and family, although there is no correspondence from Stanislavsky himself.

Administrative Information

Source: Gift of papers from Mrs. Hapgood's daughter, Elizabeth.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Advance notice may be required.

Processing Information: The Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood papers were recataloged in 2003. The old classmark was: 8-MWEZ 24533-24535.

Preferred Citation: Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood Papers, *T-Mss 1984-010, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Biographical Note

Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood was born in 1894. She graduated in two years from the three year program at L'Ecole Speciale Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, the branch of the University of Paris that provided training for the consular and diplomatic service. At 21 she was appointed the first head of the newly created Russian department at Columbia University, a position she occupied until her marriage a year later. In 1916 she married Norman Hapgood, a prominent journalist and statesman. In 1918 she was appointed the first woman instructor and the first instructor of Russian at Dartmouth College.

Elizabeth Hapgood is best known as Konstantin Stanislavsky's translator. She met him in 1924 when her husband arranged for Stanislavsky and several senior members of the Moscow Art Theatre to tour the White House and meet President Coolidge. She translated for them, and Stanislavsky was so impressed that he asked her to translate *My Life in Art*. In 1928 Stanislavsky suffered a heart attack, and went to Germany to recuperate. Elizabeth Hapgood started a fund raising drive to enable him to publish his acting techniques so that he could financially afford to stay longer in the West and concentrate on preserving his acting techniques on paper. She also arranged publication contracts. He completed *An Actor Prepares* and *An Actor Works on Himself: Part One* before his death in 1938. After his death, the remainder of his writings were prepared for publication in the eight volumes that comprise his *Complete Works*. These works were published in segments throughout the fifties and sixties.

Although Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood is best known as Konstantin Stanislavsky's translator, she also translated works of a number of other prominent Russian artists. She was also a popular teacher and lecturer on the Russian language and culture.

She died in 1974.

Scope and Contents

The Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood Papers consist of correspondence, contracts, writings, translations, lecture notes, clippings, photographs, and scrapbooks. The strength of the collection lies in the voluminous correspondence, including letters from Stanislavsky's contemporaries in the Russian theater, especially the Moscow Art Theatre. Although there is considerable correspondence from Stanislavsky's son Igor Alexeiff, there is very little correspondence from Stanislavsky himself.

In addition, the Russian language documents contain correspondence with Tolstoy's family. Letters from Stanislavsky's and Tolstoy's families give insight and understanding to the life of Soviets in exile after the revolution. Members of these families left Russia and settled in countries such as France, Italy, Germany and the United States.

Organization

- Series I: Papers
- Series II: Scrapbooks

Series Descriptions/Container List

Series I: Papers, 1915-1973

.82 lin.ft. (2 boxes)

Alphabetical

The papers include correspondence with Maria Lilina (wife of Konstantin Stanislavsky), Igor Alexeiff (Konstantin Stanislavsky's son), Alexandra Sagatsky-Tolstoy (Granddaughter to Leo Tolstoy and ex-wife to Igor Alexeiff), Andrei Dostoyevsky (Russian writer and Grandson to Feodor Dostoyevsky) and Alexandr Sanin (veteran director of the Moscow Art Theatre).

In addition, Elizabeth Hapgood had a very interesting and enriching correspondence with Sergei Alexandrovich Vasiliev. As her teacher in Russian culture and literature, he discussed numerous topics within these letters. For example, discussed in his letters the daily life in Russian schools, the last visit that Sergei's father had with Leo Tolstoy before his death, and the role of terrorism in Russian politics (as it connected with Russian terrorist Vera Fingert).

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|------|------|--|
| b. 1 | f. 1 | Correspondence "A", 1930-1973
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 2 | Correspondence-Alexeiff, Igor, 1938-1969
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 3 | Correspondence-Angell, Sir Norman, 1948-1960
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 4 | Correspondence-"B", 1924-1979
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 5 | Correspondence-Bassage, Howard, 1937-1944
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 6 | Correspondence-Bryant, Russell, 1969-1973
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 7 | Correspondence-"C", 1943-1956
1 folder |
| b. 1 | f. 8 | Correspondence-Chekhov, Michael, 1934-1946
1 folder |

- b. 1 f. 9 Correspondence-"D-E", 1931-1946
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 10 Correspondence-Dostoyevsky, Andrei, 1960-1961
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 11 Correspondence-"F-I", 1938-1943
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 12 Correspondence-Haggard, Stephen, 1938-1943
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 13 Correspondence-Houghton, Norris, 1943-1970
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 14 Correspondence-"K-L", 1938-1973
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 15 Correspondence-Lilina, Maria, 1938-1940
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 16 Correspondence-"M-R", 1931-1959
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 17 Correspondence-MacGregor, Robert, 1948-1973
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 18 Correspondence-Prising, Robin, 1952-1973
1 folder
- b. 1 f. 19 Correspondence-Rutherford, Tom, 1960-1972
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 1 Correspondence-"S", 1935-1973
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 2 Correspondence-Sanin, Alexandr Akimovich, 1938-1955
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 3 Correspondence-Sagatsky-Tolstoy, Alexandra, 1957-1962
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 4 Correspondence-Stanislavski, Constantin, 1962
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 5 Correspondence-Syromiatnikov, P. and Sergei, 1936-1934
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 6 Correspondence-"T-Z", 1917-1953

- 1 folder
- b. 2 f. 7 Correspondence-Vasiliev, Sergey, 1953
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 8 Correspondence-Vogel, Jaroslav, 1929-1969
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 9 Unidentified-English language, 1928-1968
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 10 Unidentified-French language, 1940
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 11 Unidentified-German language, 1937-1960
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 12 Unidentified-Italian language, 1964
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 13 Unidentified-Russian language, 1924-1967
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 14 Contracts, 1915-1954
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 15 Writings: Translations and Lecture Notes, 1963
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 16 Clippings, 1915-1967
1 folder
- b. 2 f. 17 Photographs, 1932
1 folder

Series II: Scrapbooks, 1867-1970

1 box

Chronological

The Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood Scrapbooks consist primarily of clippings, including articles by and about Mrs. Hapgood, correspondence, manuscripts by various authors, programs, and a deed from 1867.

The scrapbook, for convenience sake, was divided up into four folders.

- b. 3 f. 1 Volume 1, Part 1, 1867-1958; 1867-1970
1 folder

b. 3 f. 2

Volume 1, Part 2 , 1966-1970; 1867-1970
1 folder

b. 3 f. 3-4

Volume 2, 1920-1967
2 folders