

Guide to the Theodore Browne papers, 1936-1941

Theodore Browne papers
1936-1941

Title Statement

Guide to the Theodore Browne papers, 1936-1941

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

C0225

Date

1936-1941

Language

English

Abstract

Papers from Theodore Browne, playwright, actor, and director who worked with the Federal Theatre Project in Seattle, Washington. Contents include playscripts, programs, and newspaper clippings, as well as a scrapbook with materials collected by Browne from 1936 to 1941.

Creator

Browne, Theodore.

Physical Characteristics

1.0 linear feet (2 boxes)

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections & Archives

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

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There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions on personal use. Permission to publish material from the Theodore Browne papers must be obtained from the Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Theodore Browne on October 22, 1975.

Processing Information

Processed and EAD completed by Greta Kuriger Suiter in September 2012.

Preferred Citation

Theodore Browne papers, C0225, Special Collections and Archives, George Mason University Libraries.

Biographical Information

Theodore Browne was born in Suffolk, Virginia, around 1910. He was a playwright, actor, and director in the Federal Theatre Project. In Seattle, Washington, he worked with the Civic Repertory Theatre, a community theater group that would become the Seattle Negro Unit of the Works Progress Administration in 1936. The unit produced four plays written by Browne including *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, *A Black Woman* called *Moses*, *Swing*, and *Natural Man*.

The adaptation of *Lysistrata* included changing the location of the play from Greece to Ethiopia. The play was performed to a full house, but only once. The head of the Works Progress Administration in Seattle, Don Abel, declared the play bawdy and indecent and stopped future performances. Hallie Flanagan, the national director of the Federal Theatre Project, sent her assistant Howard Miller to take care of the situation. Miller did not resurrect the play but came to a compromise with Abel that would allow the FTP in Seattle to have full control over future productions.

Browne left Seattle to join the American Negro Theatre in 1940 where he led the production of *Natural Man* at the 135th St. Library Theatre in Harlem. He went on to receive degrees from the City College of New York in 1941 and from Northeastern University in Boston in 1944. Browne stayed in Boston after World War II where he taught and lectured. He died in Boston at the age of 68.

Scope and Content

Papers from Theodore Browne, playwright, actor, and director who worked with the Federal Theatre Project in Seattle, Washington. Contents include playscripts, programs, and newspaper clippings, as well as a scrapbook with materials collected by Browne from 1936 to 1941.

Related Material

The Works Progress Administration oral histories collection, the Federal Theatre Project collection, the Federal Theatre Project photograph collection, as well as numerous other personal papers.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Federal Theatre Project (U.S.)

Subjects:

Theater--United States.

Theater--Washington (State)--Seattle.

Arrangement

Papers are arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Contents List

Theodore Browne papers,

Unit Date 1936-1941

Scrapbook,

Unit Date 1936-1941

Mixed materials 1 (Oversize)

Scope and Content

Scrapbook contains photographs, programs, and newspaper clippings of the Negro Repertory Co. in Seattle, Washington, as well as assorted newspaper clippings and programs for 1940-1941 New York City production of Natural Man.

The Day of the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere playscript,

Unit Date 1930s

Mixed materials 2 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

Lysistrata of Aristophanes: an African version playscript,

Unit Date 1930s

Mixed materials 2 (Box)

Container 2 (Folder)

Natural Man playscript,

Unit Date 1930s

Mixed materials 2 (Box)

Container 3 (Folder)

Newspaper clippings,

Unit Date 1936-1937

Mixed materials 2 (Box)

Container 4 (Folder)

Programs,

Unit Date 1937

Mixed materials 2 (Box)

Container 5 (Folder)