

# Guide to the Eda Edson papers, 1930-1976

Eda Edson papers  
1930-1976

## Title Statement

Guide to the Eda Edson papers, 1930-1976

**Subtitle:** Eda Edson C0218

**Author:** Finding aid prepared by Greta Kuriger Suiter

## Publication Statement

**Date:** September 2012

**Publisher:** George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections & Archives

## Profile Description

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## Revision Description

**2019-02-13**          Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

## Descriptive Summary

### Collection Number

C0218

### Date

1930-1976

### Language

English

### Abstract

The Eda Edson papers contain personal papers collected by Edson from the 1930s to 1976. These papers include newspaper clippings highlighting her work in vaudeville in the early 1930s, correspondence regarding connections to the Federal Theatre Project, photographs of Edson and her orchestra, as well as scripts, production notes, and programs from the production Follow the Parade.

### Physical Description

0.5 linear feet (1 box)

### Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections & Archives

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

### Use Restrictions

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

### Acquisition Information

Donated by Eda Edson to Special Collections and Archives May 30, 1976.

## Processing Information

Processing and EAD markup completed in September 2012 by Greta Kuriger Suiter.

## Preferred Citation note

Eda Edson papers, C0218, Special Collections and Archives, George Mason University Libraries.

# Biographical Information

The Federal Theatre Project was a division of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided employment for large numbers of artists, writers, and performers during the Great Depression (1929-1939). The Federal Theatre began in 1935 and, until its end in 1939, flourished as the first and only federally sponsored and subsidized theater program in the United States. Directed by Hallie Flanagan (1880-1969), it was a way for theatrical professionals to gain employment during the Depression.

The number of unemployed theatre workers in Los Angeles was second only to those in New York. Eda Edson worked on the Los Angeles Federal Theatre Project productions "Follow the Parade" and "The Black Crook." Under the direction of Eda Edson, formerly employed in vaudeville as a conductor, the variety unit wrote the sketches, lyrics, and music of "Follow the Parade." Part topical revue, part circus, part dramatic show, it ran in Los Angeles for ten weeks before large audiences, and then was taken to the Texas Centennial in Dallas, where it played for the rest of the summer in 1936. Edson later went on to more conducting work, and in 1953 she authored the short self help guide "The world is your stage...learn how to be the leading lady: How acting in everyday life will reveal the vivid, lovely, effective you."

## Scope and Content

The Eda Edson Federal Theatre Project papers contain personal papers collected by Edson from the 1930s to 1976. These papers include newspaper clippings highlighting her work in vaudeville in the early 1930s, correspondence regarding connections to the Federal Theatre Project, photographs of Edson and her orchestra, as well as scripts, production notes, and programs from the production Follow the Parade.

## 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

### Persons:

Edson, Eda

### Corporate Names:

Federal Theatre Project (U.S.)

Federal Theatre Project (Los Angeles, Calif.)

### Subjects:

New Deal, 1933-1939.

Music--20th century.

Performing arts.

Theater--United States.

## Alternative Form Available

There are digital documents from this and other GMU FTP collections in the [Federal Theatre Project collection](#).

## Arrangement

Organized alphabetically by folder title.

## Contents List

### **Eda Edson papers,**

**Unit Date** 1930-1976

#### **Correspondence,**

**Unit Date** 1960s-1976

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 1 (Folder)

#### **Federal Theatre,**

**Unit Date** circa 1939

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 2 (Folder)

#### **Scope and Content**

Programs for Follow the Parade; copies of correspondence and resignation letter regarding Federal Theatre and Follow the Parade; one page of sheet music; costume design sketch; photocopy of Los Angeles Federal Theatres volume 1 number 1; photocopies of photographs depicting Edson, theatres, and stages.

### **Excerpt from Eda Edson oral history interview,**

#### **Follow the Parade,**

**Unit Date** 1936

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 3 (Folder)

#### **Scope and Content**

Programs for The Black Crook, Follow the Parade, The first performance of the Federal Theatre project staff of W.P.A. region number 5; synopsis of Follow the Parade; production number Crazy House Suite; synopsis for On a Holiday; notes for Follow the Parade; resignation letter.

### **Follow the Parade,**

#### **Follow the Parade,**

**Unit Date** 1936

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 4 (Folder)

#### **Scope and Content**

Production notes / script.

#### **Miscellaneous,**

**Unit Date** circa 1930s

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 5 (Folder)

#### **Scope and Content**

Newspaper clippings, advertisements, correspondence about Edson's work before the Federal Theatre Project; Follow the Parade program, telegrams; articles about female conductors; handmade artwork/letters sent to Edson; photocopies of Federal Theatre correspondence regarding Black Crook.

#### **Oscar material,**

**Unit Date** circa 1970s

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 6 (Folder)

**Scope and Content**

Photocopies from unknown publication about Oscar winners; typed notes on Di Maggio, and conductors; eight photographs of movie stars "before and after".

**Photographs,**

**Unit Date** circa 1930s

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 7 (Folder)

**Scope and Content**

Photographs of Edson; Edson and orchestra; one photograph with cardboard backing of Edson during a performance; one photograph on cardboard backing with unidentified people.

**Eda Edson with orchestra,**

**Programs,**

**Unit Date** circa 1935-1939

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 8 (Folder)

**Scope and Content**

Power; Follow the Parade; The Black Crook; Los Angeles Federal Theatres vol. 1 no. 1.

**Scrapbook pages,**

**Unit Date** 1930s-1972

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 9 (Folder)

**Scope and Content**

Scrapbook pages with newspaper articles, correspondence, and telegrams. One black and white photograph possibly of Edson.

**Telegram from Hallie Flanagan,**

**Telegram from George Gerwing to Eda Edson,**

**Write Dammit!,**

**Unit Date** undated; 1976

**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)

**Container** 10 (Folder)

**Scope and Content**

Newspaper clipping; blank greeting card; note to Edson encouraging her to write.