

Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collection

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circa 1935-1943



Title Statement

Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collectionGuide to Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collection C0512

Subtitle: Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collection

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Publication Statement

Publisher: George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

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Fairfax, Virginia 22030
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March 22, 2024

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2024-09-17 16:11:19 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0512

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/704

Unit Date

circa 1935-1943

Language

English .

Abstract

Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project Benjamin Franklin puppet and wooden furniture.

source

O'Rourke, Nancy

Creator

Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project

Extent

2.5 Linear Feet 2 boxes

Physical Location

OS R 4, C 1, S 3

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright and related rights status of this collection have not been evaluated (See <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/CNE/1.0/>)

Acquisition Information

Donated by Nancy O'Rourke in 2015.

Processing Information

Processing and finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in March 2024.

Preferred Citation

Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collection, C0512, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries

Historical Information

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created in by Executive Order in 1935, part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, as a work program for those facing unemployment as a result of the Great Depression. The WPA's stated purpose was to provide opportunities for unemployed workers to use and preserve their skills through public works projects, as well as arts and culture initiatives such as the Federal Arts Project, Federal Theatre Project, and Federal Writers' Project. Renamed the Works Projects Administration in 1939, its programs and projects provided work for approximately 8.5 million people over its eight years, coming to an end in 1943 with the boom in employment provided by the new wartime economy.

In 1935, soon after the establishment of the WPA, Pennsylvania began a Museum Extension Project, also known as the State-Wide Museum Extension, with the purpose of creating visual educational aids for classroom use. The Museum Extension Project employed artists, sculptors, and writers to create historic models, puppets, illustrated plates, and maps to be used throughout Pennsylvania's school districts, particularly those without easy access to the larger museums. The program had seven offices throughout the state, centered in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia, with the latter office co-sponsored with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Atwater Kent Museum (now known as the Philadelphia History Museum), and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology.

Scope and Content

This collection includes a Benjamin Franklin puppet and 7 individual pieces of miniature wooden furniture.

The Benjamin Franklin puppet measures approximately 22 inches in length and includes a papier-mâché

head, a rounded cap filled with straw, and some strings showing possible use as a marionette. The left foot is detached and placed inside the box next to the puppet. Label inside of jacket reads: "State-Wide Museum Extension Philadelphia Unit W.P.A."

The miniature furniture pieces each measure approximately 6 inches or less in length and are mostly desks and tables, as well as one standing candelabra and a spinning wheel attached to a colorful fabric rug. One piece includes metal hinges and several pieces show signs of damage. Some pieces include labels with identification numbers or names.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other Works Progress Administration collections, including the Works Progress Administration oral histories collection, and Federal Theatre Project photograph collection.

Keywords

Philadelphia (Pa.)
New Deal, 1933-1939
Miniature furniture
Puppets
United States -- History -- Study and teaching -- Audio-visual aids
O'Rourke, Nancy
United States. Works Progress Administration
United States. Works Progress Administration of Pennsylvania

Bibliography

Caust-Ellenbogen, Celia, and Sarah Leu. n.d. "Philadelphia History Museum: WPA Museum Extension Project Photographs of Philadelphia." Philadelphia Area Archives. Accessed March 20, 2024. https://findingaids.library.upenn.edu/records/SMREP_PHM.24.

"Works Progress Administration (WPA)." 2024. In Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Works-Progress-Administration>.

Arrangement

Items are stored in two boxes based on medium and size requirements.

Description of Subordinate Components

Benjamin Franklin puppet

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/187971

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Miniature wooden furniture

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/187972

Mixed Materials 2 (box)