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Guide to the C.B. Mitchell University Theater Scrapbooks, 1920-1952

Title

C.B. Mitchell University Theater Scrapbooks (MSS Mitchell)

Dates

1920-1952 (inclusive)

Creator

Mitchell, C. B. (Charles Buren), 1886-1955.

Summary

The C.B. Mitchell University Theater Scrapbooks document theater productions at Oregon State College during the 1920s through early 1950s. The Scrapbooks consist predominantly of photographs and also include programs. Mitchell, a faculty member at Oregon State College from 1920 until 1952, was instrumental in development of the theater and dramatics programs.

Quantity

1 cubic foot, including 458 photographs (2 oversize boxes)

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

Oregon State University Libraries, University Archives
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Corvallis, OR 97331-4501
Phone: 541-737-2165
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Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Nielsen, 2008.

Biographical Note

C.B. (Charles Buren) Mitchell joined the faculty of Oregon Agricultural College in 1920 to head the new Department of Speech. As department head, he established and developed the dramatics and forensics programs at Oregon State. More than 200 plays were produced under his administration. Mitchell retired in 1952; the College Playhouse was renamed in his honor as Mitchell Playhouse in 1961.

Mitchell was born in Lebanon, Indiana, in 1886 and earned degrees at DePauw University and the University of Michigan. He taught at Michigan Agricultural College prior to his appointment at Oregon State. Mitchell died in 1955.

Content Description

The C.B. Mitchell University Theater Scrapbooks consist of four volumes assembled by Mitchell documenting 32 years of theater productions at Oregon State College. Several of the productions were staged by the Mask and Dagger Club. The scrapbooks consist predominantly of high quality photographs arranged chronologically; most depict finished stage sets with actors in complete costume. The volumes also include images of set construction, lighting equipment, application of makeup, outdoor productions, and the logistics of taking a production "on the road" to Portland. The play title and production dates are identified; many of the images include handwritten annotations by Mitchell regarding set design and production innovations, such as the first use of backstage lighting for atmosphere and the appearance of silhouette onstage. Many of the photographs were made by Ball Studio and Howell's Studio photographers.

The scrapbooks also include programs and playbills for some of the productions.

Preferred Citation

C.B. Mitchell University Theater Scrapbooks, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Custodial History

The scrapbooks were donated to the Theater Arts Program in the Speech Communication Department by Joseph D. Mitchell, the son of C.B. Mitchell.

Acquisition Information

Transferred from the Speech Communication Department in 2007.

Related Material

The OSU Archives collections include extensive documentation of theater and dramatics programs in the University Theater Records (RG 180) which include play files, posters, and playbills and the University Theater Photographs (P 112). The University Publications Photographs (P 094) also include images of theater productions. Materials pertaining to drama activities prior to 1920 are available in the [Feronian Literary Society and Mask and Dagger Club Records](#).

Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the OSU Libraries Catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog (<http://oasis.oregonstate.edu>) using these headings.

Organizations

Mask and Dagger Club (Oregon Agricultural College)
Oregon Agricultural College--Students.
Oregon State College--Students.

Topics

College and school drama, American--Oregon--Corvallis.
Drama--Study and teaching--Oregon--Corvallis.

Forms of Materials in the Collection

Photograph albums.

Photographic prints.

Scrapbooks.

Other Creators

Ball Studio.

Howell's Studio.