

Guide to the Mary Hoyt Wiborg Papers

YCAL MSS 1408



by Brooke McManus

November 2021

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1408

CREATOR: Wiborg, Mary Hoyt, -1964 , author

TITLE: Mary Hoyt Wiborg papers

DATES: circa 1910s-2017

BULK DATES: 1914-1964

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4.67 linear feet (7 boxes) + 1 broadside

LANGUAGE: In English, with some materials in French.

SUMMARY: The collection consists of correspondence, writings, photographs, personal papers, printed material, and electronic files by or relating to Mary Hoyt Wiborg. Materials document her life as an expatriate in France, service as a volunteer nurse in both World Wars, and work as a playwright. Included are letters from Wiborg to her father Frank Bestow Wiborg in 1918, describing her experiences at a French military hospital during World War I, and correspondence with her sisters Sara Murphy and Olga Fish, and Sara's husband Gerald. Among the other correspondents are prominent literary, artistic, political, and military figures such as Jean Cocteau, Noel Coward, Mamie Eisenhower, Manuel de Falla, John J. Pershing, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The collection additionally contains a scrapbook of clippings, correspondence, and posters for Wiborg's play *Taboo*, which starred African American actor Paul Robeson, and essays and memoirs about her work as a wartime nurse. Also included are two medals awarded to Wiborg by the French government and French Red Cross for her WWI service, photographs of Wiborg, family, and friends, and papers concerning her death and estate.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.wiborg>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.wiborg>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, 2017, 2020 and 2021.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Box 8 (computer media): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Mary Hoyt Wiborg Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Mary Hoyt Wiborg Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization. Various acquisitions associated with the collection have been merged and organized as a whole.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Mary Hoyt Wiborg (1888-1964)

Mary Hoyt "Hoytie" Wiborg, an American playwright, arts patron, and socialite who lived in New York City and Paris, was born in 1888 in Cincinnati, Ohio to Adeline Moulton Sherman and businessman Frank Bestow Wiborg. Wiborg was a volunteer nurse during World War I and earned the French Medal of Honor for her service; during the second World War, she worked for the French Red Cross. Wiborg also authored the play *Taboo*, performed by a predominantly Black cast, including Paul Robeson in one of his earliest stage roles, in 1922.

During Wiborg's childhood, her father's ink manufacturing business, Ault & Wiborg Company, expanded to New York, and the family thereafter maintained homes in Cincinnati, Manhattan, and Long Island. She had two sisters, amateur artist Sara Sherman Wiborg, who married painter Gerald Murphy and joined the American expatriate community in France in the 1920s, and Olga Marie Wiborg, who married Sidney Webster Fish. In 1918, Wiborg traveled to France to join the ambulance corps. She received a commendation and medal for attending to wounded soldiers at a field hospital in Montmirail, Marne, and after World War I ended, France conferred on her an apartment in Paris in appreciation for her service. During World War II, Wiborg remained in Paris at the start of the German occupation in 1940, but departed after the United States entered the war in December 1941. She was subsequently stationed with the French Red Cross in Switzerland, Germany, and Portugal. Wiborg was named honorary corporal of the 213th Regiment of the French infantry, which referred to her as its *marraine*, or "godmother." Additionally, she was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor for her part in the French Resistance. Immediately after Paris was liberated in 1944, Wiborg returned to the city and lived there until her death on March 26, 1964.

Notable members of Mary Hoyt Wiborg's family include great-uncles General William Tecumseh Sherman and U.S. Senator John Sherman.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, writings, photographs, personal papers, printed material, and electronic files by or relating to Mary Hoyt Wiborg. Materials document her life as an expatriate in France, service as a volunteer nurse in both World Wars, and work as a playwright. Included are letters from Wiborg to her father Frank Bestow Wiborg in 1918, describing her experiences at a French military hospital during World War I, and correspondence with her sisters Sara Murphy and Olga Fish, and Sara's husband Gerald. Among the other correspondents are prominent literary, artistic, political, and military figures such as Jean Cocteau, Noel Coward, Mamie Eisenhower, Manuel de Falla, John J. Pershing, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The collection additionally contains a scrapbook of clippings, correspondence, and posters for Wiborg's play *Taboo*, which starred African American actor Paul Robeson, and essays and memoirs about her work as a wartime nurse. Also included are two medals awarded to Wiborg by the French government and French Red Cross for her WWI service, photographs of Wiborg, family, and friends, and papers concerning her death and estate.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1914-1964, undated. II. Personal Papers, circa 1910s-circa 2017. III. Computer Media, undated.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1914-1964

0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)

This series contains Mary Hoyt Wiborg's correspondence with immediate and extended family, and letters from friends and acquaintances. The bulk of the series consists of Wiborg's letters to her father in 1918, which give detailed accounts of her day-to-day experience as a nurse at a field hospital in France during World War I and include descriptions of injuries sustained by Allied soldiers, bombings and other military activities, and the impact of the war on French citizens.

Associated materials: Correspondence can also be found in Series II. Personal Papers.

Organized into two subseries: Family Correspondence, and Other Correspondence.

Family Correspondence

This subseries contains Mary Hoyt Wiborg's correspondence with her father Frank Bestow Wiborg, sisters Olga Fish and Sara Murphy, Sara's husband Gerald Murphy, her aunt Mary "Mame" Wiborg, and other relatives. Also included is a small amount of correspondence between other family members, and a letter to Frank Wiborg from the mother of an American soldier regarding Mary Hoyt Wiborg's notification of the death of her son in World War I.

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent, with unidentified correspondence filed at the end of the sequence.

b. 1, f. 1	Fish, Olga	1918, undated
b. 1, f. 2	Fish, Sidney	1940, undated
b. 1, f. 3	Fish, Stuyvesant	1963
b. 1, f. 4	Hoppin, Rosina	undated
b. 1, f. 5	Murphy, Gerald	1921
b. 1, f. 6	Murphy, Sara, letter to Mary C. Wiborg	1935
	Wiborg, Frank Bestow	
b. 1, f. 7	Letters to Mary Hoyt Wiborg	1930
b. 1, f. 8	Letter from Mrs. J. Mahamura [?]	1918
	Wiborg, Mary C. ("Aunt Mame")	
b. 1, f. 9	Letters to Harry Wiborg	1930
b. 1, f. 10	Letter to Mary Hoyt Wiborg	1921
	Wiborg, Mary Hoyt	
b. 1, f. 11	"Letter to be printed after war," addressed to Sherman	1940
b. 1, f. 12	Letters to Sara and Gerald Murphy	1931-1935
b. 1, f. 13-16	Letters to Frank B. Wiborg	1914-1935

Family Correspondence > Wiborg, Mary Hoyt (continued)

b. 1, f. 17	Letters to Mary C. Wiborg	circa 1918-1938
b. 1, f. 18	Unidentified	undated
<p>Other Correspondence</p> <p>This subseries consists of letters and brief notes to Mary Hoyt Wiborg from friends and acquaintances including poet Jean Cocteau, playwright Noel Coward, composers Manuel de Falla and Darius Milhaud, guitarist André Segovia, actor Mary Pickford, and political figures such as Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Among the other correspondents are American generals John J. Pershing and Henry T. Allen, and French physician Alexis Carrel, who served in World War I as a military surgeon. Most letters relate to social engagements, and a small amount of correspondence concerns legal and financial matters.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by correspondent, with unidentified correspondence filed at the end of the sequence.</p>		
b. 1, f. 19	Allen, Henry T.	1920
b. 1, f. 20	Barkley, Alben W.	1949
b. 1, f. 21	Bohlen, Charles E.	1962
b. 1, f. 22	Bridgeman, Francis, Sir	1926
b. 1, f. 23	Bromfield, Louis	1936
b. 1, f. 24	"C" General	1942-1956
b. 1, f. 25	Carrel, Alexis	1940
b. 1, f. 26	Clemenceau, Georges	1929
b. 1, f. 27	Cocteau, Jean	1939
b. 1, f. 28	Coward, Noel	undated
b. 1, f. 29	Dali, Salvador [autograph]	undated
b. 1, f. 30	Donahue, Lester, writing on George Gershwin [photocopy]	undated
b. 2, f. 31	Eisenhower, Dwight	1956
b. 2, f. 32	Eisenhower, Mamie	1956-1963
b. 2, f. 33	Falla, Manuel de	1927-1939
b. 2, f. 34	Gershwin, George	1926
b. 2, f. 35	Goncharova, Natalii ^a	1933
b. 2, f. 36	Flouret, Marcel	1946
b. 2, f. 37	Harding, Warren G.	1920-1921
b. 2, f. 38	Henderson, Neville [also includes one letter from Wiborg]	1925-1936
b. 2, f. 39	Henry, Jules	1935

Other Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 40	Hoover, Herbert	1919
b. 2, f. 41	Kerr, Philip	1927
b. 2, f. 42	Lawrence, Gertrude	1943
b. 2, f. 43	Lindsay, Elizabeth	1935–1937
b. 2, f. 44	Lord Chamberlain [invitations to palace events in London]	1934–1947
b. 2, f. 45	Marina, Duchess of Kent	1942
b. 2, f. 46	Marshall, George Catlett	1947
b. 2, f. 47	Marshall, Katherine Tupper	undated
b. 2, f. 48	Maugham, W. Somerset	1936
b. 2, f. 49	Milhaud, Darius	1933, undated
b. 2, f. 50	Nabokov, Nicolas	1933
b. 2, f. 51	Parsons, Harold	1956
b. 2, f. 52	Pershing, John J. [also includes one letter from Wiborg]	1918–1938
b. 2, f. 53	Pickford, Mary	undated
b. 2, f. 54	Reber, Sam	1954–1956, undated
b. 2, f. 55	Reynaud, Paul	1933–1934
b. 2, f. 56	Roosevelt, Eleanor	1933–1962
b. 2, f. 57	Rutland, Violet, Duchess of	1933
b. 2, f. 58	Segovia, André	1936
b. 2, f. 59	Sert, Misia [also includes two letters from Wiborg]	1931, undated
b. 2, f. 60	Stravinsky, Soulima	undated
b. 2, f. 61	Thompson, Dorothy	undated
b. 2, f. 62	Le Tresorier Payer Général	1961–1962
b. 2, f. 63	Valentiner, William	1931
b. 2, f. 64	Veach, William	1964
b. 2, f. 65	Viner, Joseph	1946
b. 2, f. 66	Wiley, Louis	1933
b. 2, f. 67	Windsor, Edward and Wallis	undated
b. 2, f. 68	Zimmerman, Thomas	1956–1963

Other Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 69

Unidentified

1926-circa
1930s, undated

Series II: Personal Papers, circa 1910s-circa 2017*3.63 linear feet (4 boxes) + 1 broadside*

This series contains writings, photographs, ephemera, and medals awarded to Mary Hoyt Wiborg for her service as a nurse in France during World War I. Included are several drafts of Wiborg's "Report of a Voluntary War Worker in the French Société des Services Blessés Militaires, 1939-1942" and typescripts of program notes and act eleven of *Taboo*, as well as a scrapbook of clippings, ephemera, and correspondence documenting theatrical runs of the play. Photographs, photographic postcards, and drawings depict Wiborg and family members such as Frank B. Wiborg and Mary "Aunt Mame" Wiborg, friends including Olga Picasso and Misia Sert, monuments, and houses. The series additionally includes Wiborg's passport, French death certificate, letters of condolence to her relatives, and legal correspondence about her funeral and terms of her will. Also present are a small amount of Frank B. Wiborg's papers, consisting of a typescript diary and certificate of appointment as an aide-de-camp to the Kentucky governor.

Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

b. 5, f. 97	Certificate of appointment of Frank B. Wiborg as aide-de-camp to Kentucky Governor Flem D. Sampson	1928
b. 2, f. 70	Clipping and commendation	1918
b. 2, f. 71	Death and estate of Mary Hoyt Wiborg	1964
b. 2, f. 72	Diary of Frank Bestow Wiborg, January 1-June 30, 1928 [typescript]	undated
b. 2, f. 73	Ephemera	1957, undated
b. 5, f. 98	Invitation to presidential inauguration [removed from <i>Taboo</i> scrapbook]	1953
b. 3, f. 74	Medaille d'honneur des affaires étrangères	1935
b. 5, f. 99	Medaille d'honneur des affaires étrangères, certificate	1935
b. 3, f. 75	Medal from the French Red Cross for World War I service	undated
b. 3, f. 76	Photo printouts and notes Printouts and descriptions of photographs found in this collection, as well as collections related to the Wiborgs at other libraries, and notes about Mary Hoyt Wiborg compiled by family members.	circa 2017
b. 3, f. 77-78	Photographs	circa 1922-1940, undated
b. 5, f. 100	Portraits of Mary Hoyt Wiborg	circa 1910s-1920s
b. 3, f. 79	War permits	1942-1951
	Writings of Mary Hoyt Wiborg	
b. 4, f. 80	"Behind the Scenes (Report of a War Worker)," 1940-1941	undated
b. 4, f. 81	"Chateau-Thierry - Juin 1918"	undated
b. 4, f. 82	"Goering in Paris"	undated
b. 4, f. 83	"Hints for a Single Lady or Gentleman about to Settle in France by X - (no name)"	undated

Writings of Mary Hoyt Wiborg (continued)

b. 4, f. 84	"Paris Scene: Life of the River"	1938
b. 4, f. 85-86	"Report of a Voluntary War Worker in the French Societé des Services Blessés Militaires, 1939-1942," first version	undated
b. 4, f. 87-88	"Report of a Voluntary War Worker in the French Societé des Services Blessés Militaires, 1939-1942," [later draft?], with photograph	undated
b. 4, f. 89	"Resume of my Life"	undated
b. 4, f. 90	"The Summer of 1918 on the Marne"	undated
<i>Taboo</i>		
b. 4, f. 91	Typescript drafts, annotated, and ephemera	circa 1922
b. 6	Scrapbook	1922
b. 4, f. 92	Scrapbook - loose letters and telegrams	1922
b. 4, f. 93	Scrapbook - loose clippings	1922
b. 5, f. 101	Scrapbook - loose clippings	1922
b. 4, f. 94	Scrapbook - photograph of Margaret Wycherly [?] and child	1922
b. 7 (Broadside)	Scrapbook - loose posters	1922
b. 5, f. 102	Scrapbook - programs and other theater ephemera	1921-1922
Writings of others and unidentified		
b. 4, f. 95	"Le Monstre"	undated
b. 4, f. 96	Untitled French poem, translated into English	1961

Series III: Transcribed Letters and List of Memorabilia, 2017

0.21 linear feet (1 box)

This series consists of transcriptions of select Wiborg family correspondence and a list of various memorabilia in the Mary Hoyt Wiborg Papers provided by the family.

b. 8

Transcribed Letters and List of Memorabilia

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Americans -- France -- History -- 20th Century
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Military nursing -- France
Theater -- United States -- 20th Century
Women authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
World War, 1914-1918 -- Personal narratives, American
World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives, American

Genres / Formats

Born digital
Medals
Photographs
Scrapbooks

Occupations

Dramatists -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Cocteau, Jean, 1889-1963
Coward, Noel, 1899-1973
Fallá, Manuel de, 1876-1946
Fish, Olga, 1889-1937
Murphy, Gerald, 1888-1964
Murphy, Sara
Pershing, John J. (John Joseph), 1860-1948
Robeson, Paul, 1898-1976
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962
Wiborg, Frank Bestow, 1855-1930
Wiborg, Mary Hoyt, -1964

Families

Wiborg family