

# Guide to the Maurine Watkins Papers

YCAL MSS 1079



by Rosemary K. J. Davis

August 2017

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

---

## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Collection Overview .....                    | 3  |
| Requesting Instructions .....                | 3  |
| Administrative Information .....             | 3  |
| Immediate Source of Acquisition .....        | 3  |
| Conditions Governing Access .....            | 4  |
| Conditions Governing Use .....               | 4  |
| Preferred Citation .....                     | 4  |
| Processing Information .....                 | 4  |
| Maurine Watkins .....                        | 4  |
| Scope and Contents .....                     | 4  |
| Arrangement .....                            | 5  |
| Collection Contents .....                    | 6  |
| Series I: Plays, 1926-2012 .....             | 6  |
| Series II: Other writings, 1927-1949 .....   | 8  |
| Series III: Personal papers, 1890-1939 ..... | 10 |
| Selected Search Terms .....                  | 11 |

---

## 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 1079

**CREATOR:** Watkins, Maurine

**TITLE:** Maurine Watkins papers

**DATES:** circa 1890-2012

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.75 linear feet (7 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Maurine Watkins Papers, which span from 1890 to 2012, contain writings, including scripts and short stories, printed material, correspondence, photographs and other papers by or relating to Maurine Watkins. Watkins was a journalist and playwright whose most well-known work was the play "Chicago," which Bob Fosse adapted into an award-winning musical.

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

---

## 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.watkins>.

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](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

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

b.      box

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Ken Lopez Bookseller, Ann Margaret Brown Buckland and Peter L. Brown on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, and the Adele Gutman Nathan Theatrical Collection Fund, 2016.

---

## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

---

## Conditions Governing Use

The Maurine Watkins 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

Maurine Watkins 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 as they are acquired, 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.

Information included in the Description of the 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.

---

## Maurine Watkins

Maurine Dallas Watkins (1896-1969) was a playwright and journalist most well-known for writing the play "Chicago." Watkins was born in Kentucky, attended several colleges including Radcliffe College, and got hired by the Chicago Tribune as a reporter in 1924. While working at the Tribune, Watkins reported on the trials of Beulah Annan and Belva Gaertner, who were both found not guilty of murder. Soon after, Watkins left her position at the Tribune and went to Yale University to continue her studies, eventually writing a fictionalized version of the Annan and Gaertner trials entitled "Chicago." Watkins went on to write over twenty plays. After Watkins's death of lung cancer, her estate sold the rights of "Chicago" to Bob Fosse, who adapted the play into a successful musical.

---

## Scope and Contents

The Maurine Watkins Papers, which span from 1890 to 2012, contain writings, including scripts and short stories, printed material, correspondence, photographs and other papers by or relating to Maurine Watkins. Watkins was a journalist and playwright whose most well-known work was the play "Chicago," which Bob Fosse adapted into an award-winning musical.

## **Arrangement**

Organized into three series: I. Plays, 1926-2012. II. Other Writings, 1927-1949. III. Personal Papers, 1890-1939.

---

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Plays, 1926-2012

*1.67 linear feet (4 boxes)*

Primarily contains plays written by Maurine Watkins including manuscript drafts and typescripts, along with a small number of photographs and pieces of ephemera.

Materials arranged alphabetically by title.

|     |   |         |
|-----|---|---------|
| b.1 | Against the day                               | undated |
| b.1 | An old fashioned girl                         | undated |
| b.1 | Blue roses                                    | undated |
| b.1 | Chicago                                       | undated |
| b.1 | Chicago                                       | undated |
| b.1 | Chicago                                       | 1926    |
| b.1 | Chicago: printed version                      | 1927    |
| b.1 | Chicago: printed version (in German)          | 1927    |
| b.1 | Chicago 1975                                  | undated |
| b.2 | Chicago: photographs                          | undated |
| b.2 | Photos, articles, and the "Chicago" file 2009 | undated |
| b.2 | Gesture                                       | undated |
| b.2 | Gesture                                       | undated |
| b.2 | Glory   | undated |
| b.2 | Henrietta's mother                            | undated |
| b.2 | Legend  | undated |
| b.2 | Mardi Gras or Snatch the city                 | undated |
| b.2 | Mardi Gras                                    | undated |
| b.2 | Marshland                                     | undated |
| b.2 | Marshland                                     | undated |
| b.3 | Marshland                                     | undated |
| b.3 | Marshland                                     | undated |
| b.3 | Prologue                                      | undated |
| b.3 | Quick action                                  | undated |
| b.3 | Real Jan Braaten                              | undated |



**Series II: Other writings, 1927-1949***0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Contains writings by Maurine Watkins including short stories, personal notes, and writings from her time in school.

Materials arranged alphabetically by title.

|      |                             |                |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| b. 5 | Alimony                     | undated        |
| b. 5 | All out for love            | undated        |
| b. 5 | All out for love            | undated        |
| b. 5 | Blue flower                 | undated        |
| b. 5 | Blue flower                 | undated        |
| b. 5 | Blue flower                 | 1949 June      |
| b. 5 | Bound                       | undated        |
| b. 5 | Bound                       | undated        |
| b. 5 | Bound                       | undated        |
| b. 5 | Bound                       | undated        |
| b. 5 | Butterfly goes home         | undated        |
| b. 5 | Change                      | undated        |
| b. 5 | Circus story                | undated        |
| b. 5 | Doors                       | undated        |
| b. 5 | Home free                   | undated        |
| b. 5 | Honors are even             | undated        |
| b. 5 | Leaf from Eve               | undated        |
| b. 5 | Miscellaneous short stories | bulk 1927-1928 |
| b. 5 | Morning glory               | undated        |
| b. 5 | Notes on art, inc.          | undated        |
| b. 5 | Poison                      | undated        |
| b. 5 | Poison                      | undated        |
| b. 5 | Same boat                   | undated        |
| b. 5 | Thistle                     | undated        |
| b. 5 | Thistle                     | undated        |
| b. 6 | Wait, colonel               | undated        |



|      |                             |         |
|------|-----------------------------|---------|
| b. 6 | World wise                  | undated |
| b. 6 | Miscellaneous short stories | undated |
| b. 6 | School writings             | undated |
| b. 6 | Bible college writings      | undated |
| b. 6 | Bible college writings      | undated |

**Series III: Personal papers, 1890-1939***0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Contains materials related to Maurine Watkins' personal life.

Materials within this series are organized maintain the original physical organization found at time of acquisition.

|      |                                  |                 |
|------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| b. 7 | Correspondence                   | bulk 1920–1939  |
| b. 7 | Estate records                   | undated         |
| b. 7 | Hamburg trip itinerary           | no year, August |
| b. 7 | Passport                         | 1933            |
| b. 7 | George Watkins theological notes | 1890 September  |
| b. 7 | Photograph                       | undated         |

## **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**

American drama -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Dramatists, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

### **Genres / Formats**

Photographs

### **Occupations**

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century  
Dramatists -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Watkins, Maurine

### **Acquired From**

Ken Lopez Bookseller , bookseller  
Buckland, Ann Margaret Brown , bookseller  
Brown, Peter L. , bookseller