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Eleanor Belmont Papers 4079125

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Description is written in: English.

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Rare Book and Manuscript Library

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Belmont, Eleanor Robson, 1879-1979
Title:	Eleanor Belmont Papers
ID:	4079125
ID:	Ms Coll\Belmont
Date [inclusive]:	1851-1979
Physical Description:	33 linear feet 37 boxes 159 volumes 1
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Belmont (1878-1979) was an American actress and a prominent public figure. The collection includes correspondence, subject files, and personal materials.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Eleanor Robson Belmont Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical Note

Eleanor Robson Belmont, actress socialite and philanthropist was born December 13, 1878 in Wigan Lancashire England to an actress mother and a musician father. Her father died when she was very young and her mother Madge Carr Cook remarried to the actor Augustus Cook immigrated to America. Eleanor was educated in American boarding schools after which she joined her mother Madge Carr Cook in the San Francisco-based Frawley Stock Company. She quickly graduated to starring roles while touring with the company. In 1900 she moved to New York where she was signed by the impresario George Tyler of Liebler and Company. She was a sensation acclaimed for her beauty her sweet rich speaking voice and her natural manner. Her greatest hit was Israel Zangwill's *Merely Mary Ann* in 1903. While playing the role in London, she captivated George Bernard Shaw who wrote *Major Barbara* for her. She was never able to play the part she inspired due to contractual obligations, but she continued to be a popular

draw starring in *Nurse Marjorie* (1906), *Salomy Jane* (1907), and *Dawn of Tomorrow* (1909). In 1910, she left the stage to marry the banker, August Belmont.

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Biographical Note

After marriage, as she tells us in her autobiography *Fabric of Memory*, life became a "world of horses, polo, social events, new friends, civic interests, and farming." She supported her husband's pursuits including the Belmont racing stables, the construction of the New York Subway, and the Cape Cod Canal. Both Belmonts actively took part in the war effort in World War I. Mrs. Belmont was appointed to the American Red Cross and she courageously traveled dangerous waters to personally inspect the Red Cross overseas effort. After the war, she helped develop the peacetime American Red Cross.

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Biographical Note

Mrs. Belmont was widowed in 1924 but continued to be active in philanthropic causes. During the Great Depression, she raised funds with the Women's Committee of the Central Emergency Unemployment Relief Agency devoting special attention to the needs of the single working woman. When World War II broke out Mrs. Belmont again served the war effort through the Red Cross.

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Biographical Note

Mrs. Belmont maintained her interest in the theater. In 1931, she co-wrote and produced a play *In the Next Room*. Her theatrical fame and her training as an actress had contributed to her success as a fundraiser, and the performing arts remained one of her causes. She was especially fond of the Metropolitan Opera Company. In 1933, she became the first woman to sit on its Board of Directors. She founded the Metropolitan Opera Guild in 1935 as a permanent vehicle for raising money and as a basis of support. She lived to see the Opera emerge from the precarious financial predicament in which she found it to become a thriving, well-supported, well-attended institution.

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Biographical Note

Mrs. Belmont died at the age of 101 in 1979. On her hundredth birthday, December 13, 1978, she had told the *New York Times* that, "the secret to long life is no diet no special care nothing like that. It's doing what you want and doing it happily."

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Summary

Correspondence, manuscripts, and papers reflecting Belmont's associations in the theatrical, musical, philanthropic, and social worlds. There are ten letters from Theodore Roosevelt, ten from George Bernard Shaw, twenty-two from Israel Zangwill, fifteen from Frances Hodgson Burnett, fifteen from Edith Wharton, and nine from Herbert Hoover, as well as letters from Anatole France, Mary Austin, Stephen Vincent Ben'et, Nicholas Murray Butler, Calvin Coolidge, Dwight David Eisenhower, Clyde Fitch, Harriet Ford, John Galsworthy, Ellen Glasgow, Yvette Guilbert, Amy Lowell, Archibald MacLeish, Edgar Lee Masters, John J. Pershing, Arthur Wing Pinero, William Howard Taft, and William Butler Yeats. In addition to the manuscripts of Mrs. Belmont's own writings, among them her autobiography FABRIC OF MEMORY, the collection contains a manuscript of Anatole France's "La Petite Ville de France" and a typescript of George Bernard Shaw's "Democracy and THE APPLE CART." There is also a considerable body of correspondence, notes and reports of the organizations with which Mrs. Belmont was associated, including the American Shakespeare Festival Foundation, Educational Dramatic League, Metropolitan Opera Association, Motion Picture Research Council, and the Red Cross.

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Arrangement

Selected materials cataloged; remainder arranged. The collection is arranged into four series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. XML document instance created by Catherine C. Ricciardi EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2009-06-26 2012-09-13 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

The following boxes are located off-site: Boxes 15-37. You will need to request this material from the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

Alternate Form Available

Royal Cortissoz letters are on: microfilm.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Belmont, Eleanor Robson. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1962. Accession number--M62.

Ownership and Custodial History

Gift of Eleanor Robson Belmont, 1962 & 1966; Bequest of Mrs Belmont, 1979.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 04/04/89.

Processed by Henry Rowen, 1980-1981.

Revised by Gwynedd Cannan 1999.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared.
Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Music -- United States -- Societies, etc
- Theater -- United States -- Societies, etc
- Opera -- United States -- Societies, etc
- Charities
- Motion picture industry
- Photographs
- Actresses
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919
- Shaw, Bernard, 1856-1950
- Zangwill, Israel, 1864-1926
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson, 1849-1924
- Wharton, Edith, 1862-1937
- Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964
- France, Anatole, 1844-1924
- Austin, Mary
- Benét, Stephen Vincent, 1898-1943
- Butler, Nicholas Murray, 1862-1947
- Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933
- Eisenhower, Dwight D (Dwight David), 1890-1969
- Fitch, Clyde, 1865-1909
- Ford, Harriet, 1868-1949
- Galsworthy, John, 1867-1933
- Glasgow, Ellen Anderson Gholson, 1873-1945

- Guilbert, Yvette, 1865-1944
- Lowell, Amy, 1874-1925
- MacLeish, Archibald, 1892-1982
- Masters, Edgar Lee, 1868-1950
- Pershing, John J (John Joseph), 1860-1948
- Pinero, Arthur Wing, 1855-1934
- Taft, William H (William Howard), 1857-1930
- Yeats, W. B (William Butler), 1865-1939
- American Shakespeare Festival Foundation
- Educational Dramatic League
- Metropolitan Opera (New York, N.Y.)
- Motion Picture Research Council
- American Red Cross

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1851-1980

Scope and Contents

The Correspondence is divided into Cataloged (1851-1979) and Arranged Correspondence (1908-1980.) The cataloged material is arranged individually by last name, then by date. The arranged material consists of general and family correspondence arranged alphabetically, then by date.

Subseries I.1 Cataloged Correspondence, 1851-1979

Scope and Contents

The cataloged correspondence reflects Mrs. Belmont's associations with the theatrical, musical, philanthropic, political and social worlds. Included are letters from Anatole France, Winthrop Ames, Mary Austin, Stephen Vincent Benet, Rudolph Bing, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Nicholas Murray Butler, Calvin Coolidge, John Foster Dulles, Dwight David Eisenhower, Clyde Fitch, Kirsten Flagstad, Harriet Ford, John Glasworthy, Ellen Glasgow, Yvette Guilbert, William Averell Harriman, Herbert Hoover, Henry Cabot Lodge, Amy Lowell, Archibald MacLeish, Edgar Lee Masters, John J. Pershing, ARthur Wing Pinero, Eleanor Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, George Bernard Shaw, William Howard Taft, and Israel Zangwill.

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Ainsley, Suzanne (Mrs. Henry), 1917-1918	box 1
Akeley, Mary L. Jobe (Mrs. Carl), 1934 October 16 Albanese, Licia, 1973-1977, 1934, 1973-1977	box 1
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Subseries I.2 Arranged Correspondence, 1908-1980

Scope and Contents

The arranged correspondence consists of general correspondence, especially greeting cards. Mrs. Belmont was close to her husband's extended family and there is a good deal of correspondence from various Belmont relatives.

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Series II: Subject Files, 1904-1979

Scope and Contents

The subject files relate to the Belmont family and Mrs. Belmont's philanthropic causes. There are extensive files on August Belmont's estate which have information on the New York Subway, the Belmont racing stables, and the several properties. Other files reflect Mrs. Belmont's interest in Belmont genealogy and her pride in the Belmont connection to Commodore Perry. There is extensive documentation on the organizations with which Mrs. Belmont was associated including the American Shakespeare Festival Foundation, the Metropolitan Opera Association, the Community Service Society, Unemployment Relief, and the Red Cross. There are also files related to her theatrical life including a file on George Bernard Shaw, Israel Zangwill, and Frances Hodgson Burnett. Included are drafts of her speeches, her autobiography, and her play, *In the Next Room*. The files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

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Roosevelt, Edith Kermit Carow (Mrs Theodore), 1935-1948	box 28
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1914-1943	box 28
Shakespeare Memorial Theater, 1927-1954	box 28
Shaw, George Bernard, 1905-1962	box 28
Speeches, 1933-1935	box 29
Unemployment insurance, 1930-1935	box 29
Unemployment relief, 1930-1933	box 29
Unemployment relief	box 30
Welfare Council of New York City, 1935-1951	box 30
Women's National Republican Club, 1951-1958	box 30
Writings	
Collected	box 30
Fabric of Memory	box 30
Fabric of Memory	box 31
Christopher Rand, 1924-1931	box 31
In the Next Room	box 32
That Man Gently	box 32

Yale University, 1948-1973	box 32
Zangwill, Israel, 1904	box 32

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Series III: Personal and Biographical, 1906-1975

Scope and Contents

This series contains awards and honors, mementoes, photographs, articles and clippings on Mrs. Belmont. There are clippings, cards, and letters on her 100th birthday celebration as well as documentation on her death in 1979.

Title/Description	Instances
Awards, Certificates, Medal and Mortarboard	box 33
Bookplates, book catalog cards	box 34
Mementoes: coin, Book of Corinthians, Drawings, Menus	box 34
Photographs	box 34
Friends: Photos and articles	box 34
Pamphlets and programs, 1916-1953	box 34
Pamphlets, Magazines, Programs, 1908-1978	box 35
Clippings, 1906-1972	box 35
100th Birthday, 1978	box 35
100th Birthday, 1978	box 36
100th Birthday, 1978	box 37
Death and funeral	box 37

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Series IV: Oversized Materials

Title/Description	Instances
Doctor of Humanities Hood from State College, Newark, NJ, 1966	box Flat Box 290
Flag, Red Cross on white field	box Flat Box 290
2 pencil drawings, signed	
Boy, hands in pockets, 38x51cm	box Flat Box 291
Sailors, 39x51cm	

	box Flat Box 291
1 print of ship by Chas Pear, 38x51cm	box Flat Box 291
Certificate awarding honorary Master of Arts signed by President Charles Seymour,, 1948	box Flat Box 291
Pencil and Crayon sketch of Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center and fountain, 28x31cm	box Flat Box 291
Autographed poster with Eleanor Belmont's photograph and "At Long Last, 100,000 Guild Members," 51x56cm	box Flat Box 291
Certificate granting honorary doctorate from Moravian Women's College, 30x41cm, 1936 May 23, 1936	box Flat Box 291
Post advertising "Illustrations of the Japan Expedition," 51x55cm	box Flat Box 291
Certificate of designation as delegate of the 16th international Red Cross Conference, signed by the Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 36x43cm, 1938 June, 1938	box Flat Box 291
Certificate of Honor to Eleanor R. Belmont by the American Red Cross, signed by President James F. Collins and by Chairman, 30x26cm, 1964 May 20, 1964	box Flat Box 291
Certificate granting honorary doctorate signed by President Rush Rhees from the University of Rochester,, 1934	box Flat Box 291
Certificate of vote of appreciation to Mrs. August (Eleanor) Belmont from the Executive Committee of the Emergency Employment Committee, 1931 April, 1931	box Flat Box 291
Certificate of Appreciation to Mrs. August (Eleanor) Belmont from the Emergency Unemployment Committee for her achievements during the winter of, 1931-1932	box Flat Box 291
Certificate of appreciation to Mrs. August (Eleanor) Belmont from the Executive Committee of the Emergency Unemployment Relief Committee for her work as chairman of the Woman's Division during the winter of, 1932-1933	box Flat Box 291
Photograph of Leonard Hand parading in graduation robes, inscribed, 1953 February 15, 1953	box Flat Box 291

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