Guide to the Dan Totheroh papers, 1925-1975

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Note
Arts and Humanities --Performing Arts --TheaterHistory --History, California --History, Bay AreaGeographical (By Place)--California --Bay Area
Collection number: BANC MSS 76/14 c

Collection Title: Dan Totheroh papers,
Date (inclusive): 1925-1975
Collection Number: BANC MSS 76/14 c
Creator: Totheroh, Dan
Extent: Number of containers: 2 boxes, 3 cartons, 17 v., 1 package and 1 oversize folder
Repository: The Bancroft Library.
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Abstract: Letters written to him; copies and drafts of a few by him; mss. of some of his plays and other writings; biographical information; programs, publicity material and announcements for plays; contracts; copyrights; royalty statements: scrapbooks; clippings, etc.
Languages Represented: English
Access
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Photographs transferred to the Bancroft Pictorial Collections

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Biography
Dan Totheroh -actor, playwright, director and novelist -was intimately connected with the theater during his entire lifetime. Born in Oakland in 1894, he wrote his first play in high school and went from there directly onto the professional stage, acting with Nance O’Neil in stock at the San Francisco Alcazar Theatre. He also began writing vaudeville sketches, toured the Pantages and Orpheum vaudeville circuits and eventually made his way to New York. After service in World War I, he returned to the Bay Area, devoted himself to the little theater movement and also took part in productions at the Greek Theatre on the University of California campus.

In 1922 his play Wild Birds, having won a prize competition sponsored by the University, was performed at Wheeler Hall on campus under the direction of Irving Pichel. After a successful run, the production was moved to San Francisco and then to New York, where it met great critical acclaim, and was chosen as one of the ten best plays of the year in 1925. In succeeding years he wrote steadily, producing many plays, several novels, including Deep Valley and Wild Orchard, and stories for children.

Of his twenty plays, six were produced on Broadway - Wild Birds, Live Life Again, Distant Drums, Moor Born, Mother Lode and Searching for the Sun. Invited to Hollywood to try his hand at script writing, he had a successful career as a scenario writer also, with several films to his credit, including “The Devil and Daniel Webster” and “The Count of Monte Cristo.”

Dividing his time between New York and California, he maintained his interest in the little theater movement and was associated with the Ramona Pageant, the Pilgrimage Play and other southern California festivals, and, in the northern part of the state, with the mountain plays staged on Mount Tamalpais, the Cove Players at Tiburon, and the Wharf Theatre at Monterey. Professionally active to the end, Mr. Totheroh died in December 1976.

Scope and Content
He gave this collection of papers to The Bancroft Library in July 1975. It includes correspondence; MSS of some of his plays and other writings; biographical information; programs, publicity material and announcements for plays; contracts; copyrights; royalty statements; scrapbooks and clippings. Mr. Totheroh did not systematically save his papers and gave away a great deal during his lifetime, so the collection is an incomplete documentation of his long, productive career.

The papers are described in greater detail in the Key to Arrangement which follows. Most of the photographs have been removed from the collection.

Box 1
Letters written by Dan Totheroh, 1927-1966
Scope and Content Note
One folder containing carbon copies or drafts of a few letters, arranged chronologically

Boxes 1-2
Letters written to Totheroh
Scope and Content Note
Letters primarily from friends and colleagues, many of them in the theatrical world. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization. A list of the more important correspondents follows the Key to Arrangement. Unlisted letters (also arranged alphabetically) and unidentified and incomplete letters are in Box 2.

Letters from various agents, 1939-1974, arranged chronologically (one folder)
CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAMS ON PLAY OPENINGS (ONE FOLDER)

Carton 1
MSS of plays
Alice in Wonderland - adapted by Totheroh for a Mt. Tamalpais play
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript. Also included: list of hand props, and names of members of the cast for the 1960 performance.

Alice Through the Looking Glass - adapted by Totheroh
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript

Attack on a Glass House
Scope and Content Note
Typescript with manuscript emendations

Birds of a Feather
Scope and Content Note
Typescript with manuscript emendations. Original title: Uncle Bunny

Chocolate for My Darling
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Cora Potts
Scope and Content Note
Adapted from novel Cora Potts by Ward Greene. Typescript

Death on Sunday Typescript. The Devil and Daniel Webster
Scope and Content Note
Adapted from the short story by Stephen Vincent Benét and the screen play by Totheroh and Benét. Typescript; some additional pages of corrected typescript.

Eden Ends
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Scope and Content Note
Typescript.

The First of the Blacks
Scope and Content Note
One page only; corrected typescript.

Flamenca - Mt. Tamalpais play
Scope and Content Note
Two copies; one, a corrected typescript.

Ghost of a Chance
Scope and Content Note
Corrected typescript.
He Belongs to the Ages - a TV play
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

The Heart of Pierrot
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

In Dark Confusion
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Kismet - adapted by Totheroh from an Arabian Night by Edward Knoblock
Scope and Content Note
Mt. Tamalpais play. Typescript; 2 copies.

Live Life Again
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

A Lost Lady - dramatized from Willa Cather's novel
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Meadowlark, Change Your Song
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

The Monterey Centennial Pageant (1949) - Frank Lloyd, co-author
Scope and Content Note
Mimeographed copy

Moor Born - TV adaptation by Keith Fisk
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Mother Lode
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript; "prompt" copy.

New World Forward!
Scope and Content Note

Night Club - dramatized from the short story by Katharine Brush
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Once Upon an Earthquake
Scope and Content Note
Typescript. Clippings and program pasted in.
Peer Gynt - adapted by Totheroh for a Mt. Tamalpais play
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript

Prancing Nigger - dramatized from the novel by Ronald Firbank
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript

The Princess Salome
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript

Quick Silver - operetta; book by Totheroh
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Rain Angels
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Rip of the Mountain - Mt. Tamalpais play
Scope and Content Note
Mimeographed and typescript, annotated

Robin Hood - Mt. Tamalpais play
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Rough an' Ready (A Mountain Play of the days of `49)
Scope and Content Note
2 copies - one, photocopy and typescript, annotated, and the 2nd, annotated typescript

Searching for the Sun
Scope and Content Note
Original title: Odyssey; typescript.

The Sheep Are Kneeling
Scope and Content Note
A Christmas play written for the Bohemian Club Christmas Jinks. Annotated mimeographed copy.

Tamalpa - Mt. Tamalpais play
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript and hectographed copy.

Traipsin' Woman - suggested by the novel, The Traipsin' Woman, by Jean Thomas
Annotated mimeographed copy.

Wind in the Sails
Scope and Content Note
Corrected typescript.

MSS of other writings
Be Still and Know; the Story of Mary of Magdala [novel]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Big Sur Gothic [story]
Scope and Content Note
Corrected typescript

Bimbo's Christmas Presents [story]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

A Christmas Paper (1958)
Scope and Content Note
Written for Bohemian Club Christmas Jinks. Annotated typescript.

Egg Hunt [story]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Going Hollywood 1946 [novel]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

How to Direct the Amateur Play
Scope and Content Note
Corrected typescript. (Appears to be incomplete).

Men Call Me Fool - screen treatment based on his novel of the same name.
Typescript.
Rockmont Gothic - former title Mark Orme [novel]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

A Short History of the Tamalpais Mountain Play from 1913 to 1968
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

The Song of the Phoenix [novel]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Tailspin's Boy [novella]
Scope and Content Note
Corrected typescript

A Talk on Victorian Poetry - S.F. Women's Club, Nov. 15, 1963
Scope and Content Note
Annotated typescript
Visions [story]
Scope and Content Note
Typescript

Zoo in Budapest [screenplay]
Scope and Content Note
Based on original story by Melville Baker. Mimeographed copy.

Folder of poems written by Totheroh Typescripts, clippings, etc.
Screenplay for Deep Valley, by Salka Viertel and Stephen M. Avery, based on Totheroh's novel (Mimeographed copy)
Libretto for The Oregon Trail by Marion Morrey, based on Totheroh's play, Distant Drums

Carton 3
Biographical information
Awards
Programs for Totheroh plays
Programs for plays (not his own) directed by Totheroh
Publicity material for Totheroh's plays and for his personal appearances
Lyrics for songs, with musical settings
Mt. Tamalpais play announcements, publicity material, programs, etc.
Mountain Play Association - miscellaneous items including drawing of stage measurements; copy of financial report for Rip of the Mountain, 1961; Newsletter; press release; photograph of plaque to Garnet Holme, etc.
Bohemian Club announcements
Contracts, including publishing agreements and dramatic contracts, 1929-1966 (2 folders)
Copyrights - certifications of copyright registration, applications for renewal, etc.
Royalty statements (7 folders)
Financial records (6 folders)
The Wanderer (v. 1, no. 1 & v. 2, no. 10) containing poems by Totheroh

Wild Birds-1st edition: inscribed
Clippings re Totheroh
Clippings re The Cove Players, Tiburon
Clippings re Mountain plays
Miscellaneous clippings

Miscellany
17 scrapbooks containing clippings re production and reviews of his plays, reviews of plays he directed, reviews of his novels and of movies based on his screenplays, etc.; clippings about Totheroh; occasional photographs and snapshots of actors and of production scenes; programs and publicity material for plays, occasional congratulatory letters and telegrams, etc. As follows:

volume v. 1
ca. 1925-1929. Primarily re Wild Birds and reviews of his novels, Wild Orchard and Men Call Me Fool.

volume v. 2
ca. 1934-1944. Contains material re the plays Mother Lode, Searching for the Sun, Live Life Again, Wind in the Sails, Distant Drums, Moor Born, etc.

volume v. 3
ca. 1932-1938. Contains material re the plays Distant Drums and Moor Born and the movies Zoo in Budapest and Dawn Patrol.

volume v. 4
ca. 1945-1947. Contains material re the plays Live Life Again Distant Drums and Tamalpa and for the Carmel production of The Time of Your Life directed by Totheroh. Photograph of Totheroh pasted in on back cover.

volume v. 5
ca. 1940-1956. Material re the plays Rough an' Ready, The Pied Piper, The Stolen Prince, Wild Birds; his novel, Deep Valley and the film based on the novel; the film, All That Money Can Buy; clipping of Totheroh's play, Seeing the Elephant, as published in Scholastic, Apr. 29, 1940; Bohemian Club programs for plays.

volume v. 6
ca. 1941-1953. Material re the plays Distant Drums, Wild Birds, A Chinese Legend, Rough an' Ready, and for various plays directed by Totheroh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tr>
<td>v. 7</td>
<td>ca. 1949-1955</td>
<td>Material re pageant, Beginnings of Statehood, and the play, Once Upon an Earthquake; and material re the Wharf Players (Monterey, Calif.) and the Cove Players (Tiburon, Calif.).</td>
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<td>v. 8</td>
<td>ca. 1949-1958</td>
<td>Material re the Mountain play Rough an' Ready</td>
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<td>v. 9</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Material re the Mountain play, Alice in Wonderland</td>
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<td>v. 10</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Material re the Mountain play, Robin Hood</td>
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<td>v. 11</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Material re the Mountain play, Rip of the Mountain</td>
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<td>v. 12</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Material re the Mountain play, Flamencan</td>
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<td>v. 13</td>
<td>1965-1968</td>
<td>Material re the Mountain plays Rough an' Ready, Peer Gynt on the Mountain, Kismet and Alice through the Looking Glass</td>
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<td>v. 14</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Material re production of Traipsin' Woman at University Theatre, University of Denver</td>
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<td>v. 15</td>
<td>1963 &amp; 1970</td>
<td>Material re Tamalpa and other Mountain plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 17</td>
<td>ca. 1939-1967</td>
<td>Material re the play Traipsin' Woman and for various plays directed by Totheroh; material re his film plays, etc.</td>
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<td>Oversize</td>
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<td>Announcements for plays</td>
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Plaque presented to Totheroh by the Mountain Play Association, June 1970

Aldis, Mary
  Letter, n.d. congratulating Totheroh on Wild Birds

Bancroft Library

Barker, Chester W.

Barrett, Edith

Bates, Blanche
  see Norris, Charles G.

Benét, William Rose, 1886-
  Letter, Apr. 24, 1934. Re Moor Born.

Benkovitz, Miriam J.
  2 letters, 1961. Re her bibliography of Ronald Firbanks.

Bird, Remsen DuBois, 1888-
  Letter, June 6, 1965

Bohemian Club, San Francisco

Bondi, Beulah
  see also Thomas, Jean.

Brandt & Brandt
  6 letters, 1931-1967

Brown, Edmund Gerald, 1905-
  Letter, [1966]. Greetings to participants and spectators at the Mountain Play on Mt. Tamalpais.

Brush, Katharine, 1902-
  Letter, Nov. 10, 1941. Re Totheroh's adaptation of her story, Night Club. With this: 2 letters from her heir, renewal of copyright.

Bynner, Witter, 1881-1968
  2 letters, 1925

Caen, Herbert Eugene, 1916-
  2 letters, 1975. Addressed to David Forsberg. With these: copies of 2 letters from Forsberg to Caen.
California. Centennials Commission
2 letters, 1949

Clark, Barrett Harper, 1890-1953
see Dramatists Play Service Incorporated.

Cochran, Charles B.

Coward-McCann, Inc.
see also Hayward (Leland) Inc.
see also Liebling-Wood, Inc.
see also Cochran, Charles B.

Douglas, Helen (Gahagan), 1900-
see also Douglas, Melvyn.

Douglas, Melvyn, 1901-

Dramatists' Play Service Incorporated

Ferber, Edna, 1887-
Signed statement, [1924]. Holograph note added.

Firbanks, Ronald
For letters about him and his novel Prancing Nigger see Benkovitz, Miriam J.
see Coward-McCann, Inc.
see Hayward (Leland) Inc.
see Liebling-Wood, Inc.
see Cochran, Charles B.
see O'Bryen, Linnit and Dunfee (London)
see MS of Totheroh's play based on the novel (carton 1)

Fisk, Howard Keith
Letter, Apr; 9, 1958. Carbon copy, signed, addressed to Frank Price. Re his adaptation of Moor Born for television.

French (Samuel) Inc.
20 letters, 1928-1972. Re agreements covering publication and acting rights for his plays.

[Goddard, Paulette]
Letter, July 20, 1937. Written for her by Catherine Hunter. Commenting on his play, Moor Born.

Hart, Moss, 1904-
Letter, n.d.

Harvard University

Hayward (Leland) Inc.

Holme, Garnet
Letter, n.d.

Irwin, Inez (Haynes), 1873-
2 letters, 1924-1934. Letter, Apr. 24, 1924, addressed to Kathleen Norris; re Wild Birds.

Irwin, William Henry, 1873-1948
Letter, Apr. 12, [1924]. Addressed to Kathleen Norris; re Wild Birds.

Lasky, Jesse Louis, 1880-
Letter, Apr. 4, 1933. Re the movie, Zoo in Budapest.
Leake, Chauncey [Depew], 1896-
   Letter, July 27, 1960
Liebling-Wood, Inc.
   Letter, Feb. 25, 1939. Re Totheroh's dramatization of Ronald Firbank's novel,
   Prancing Nigger.
Loew's Incorporated
Markham, Edwin, 1852-1940
Mountain Play Association
   Society's Special Events Committee; proposing Totheroh for Night of Roses award.
   Enclosure: photocopy of biographical sketch for Totheroh.
Munson, Ona
   Postcard, ca. Sept. 28, 1949
Nathan, George Jean
   Letter, Apr. 25, 1934. Copy; re Moor Born.
Negalesco, Jean
   Letter, Aug. 29, 1947. Comments on reviews of the film Deep Valley, which he
   directed.
New York Drama League, Inc.
   Letter, Apr. 28, 1925
Nicholson, Kenyon
   Letter, Nov. 10, 1927. Thanking Totheroh for the novelization of his play.
Niles, Blair
   2 letters, 1934. Re Moor Born.
Norris, Charles G[jilman], 1881-1945
   Letter, n.d.to [Blanche Bates]. On the verso is her reply.
Norris, Kathleen (Thompson), 1880-1966
   Letter, [1924] and telegram, Aug. 2, 1947
O'Bryen, Linnit and Dunfee (London)
   5 letters, 1937. Re dramatic rights for Prancing Nigger.
O'Neill, Nance, 1874-1965
   Telegram, letter, & note on a Christmas card, 1934-1963. With these: note from an
   unidentified correspondent re Miss O'Neill and clippings.
O'Neill, Eugene [Gladstone], 1888-1953
   Letter, Mar. 28, [1925?] Re Wild Birds.
Pattison, Ellen J.
   Letter, July 16, 1943. Re Totheroh's play based on life of Walt Whitman. Addressed to
   Audrey Wood.
Pilkington, John, 1918-
Pollock, Channing, 1880-1946
   Letter, Apr. 30, 1925. Re Wild Birds.
Reed, Florence
   Letter, n.d.
Richter, Marion Morrey
   Letter, Jan. 24, 1966. Re the music she had written for his play, Distant Drums.
Roach (Hal) Studios Inc.
   2 letters, 1951-1952. Re dramatic rights for Once Upon an Earthquake.
Rolph, James, 1869-1934
   Telegram, Apr. 9, 1925. Congratulating him on his play, Wild Birds.
Samuels, Maurice Victor, 1874-
Serlin, Oscar, 1901-
   Letter, Nov. 23, 1944. Re a play written by Totheroh.
Sharmat, Stephen W.
  4 letters, 1963. Discusses possibility of musical version of The Devil and Daniel Webster.
Skinner, R. Dana
  Letter, May 9, 1925. Re Wild Birds.
Spiro, Leon
Starr, Frances
Stone, Carol
Thomas, Jean
  2 letters, 1959-1964. One addressed to Beulah Bondi, with Miss Bondi’s note on verso.
Towne, Charles Hanson, 1877-1949
  Letter, Apr. 26, 1934. Re Moor Born.
U.S. Copyright Office
Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation
  2 letters, 1960-1971
Wisconsin University. Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research
Young, Stark, 1881-