

Stewart Bell Jr. Archives
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Winchester Little Theatre Collection
Collection Number: 2 WFCHS/THL

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS: Collection is open to all researchers.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING REPRODUCTION AND USE: Restrictions may apply concerning the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a member of the archives staff for information concerning these restrictions. The user assumes all responsibility for identifying and satisfying any claimants of copyright. Some materials may require special handling.

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Initial processing undertaken in 1980. Last updated by Buffy Knappenberger in October 2024.

EXTENT: 0.46 linear feet

CREATOR: Winchester Little Theatre

DATE: 1929-2014

EXISTENCE AND LOCATION OF COPIES: Photographs in this collection have been digitized and are available to view online through the Past Perfect online database: <http://handley.pastperfectonline.com/>

SCOPE AND CONTENT: This collection contains playbills, newsletters, news clippings and 1900s a scrapbook produced by the Winchester Little Theatre.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL: Founded in 1929, Winchester Little Theatre is an all-volunteer organization, and has been at the forefront of providing entertainment for the Winchester-Frederick County area. The theater began as the Winchester Theatre Guild. The first production presented three one-act plays, which opened on April 8, 1930, to an audience of over 400 in the Handley High School auditorium. The Winchester Community Theatre was its name, and it performed in many places including Handley and James Wood High Schools, the First Baptist Church on Piccadilly St., the George Washington Hotel, the Elks and Moose lodges, and outdoors at Abrams Delight. The theater group sometimes performed in unusual places, like storefronts, warehouses, and even a swimming pool building. The theater took a break during World War II, but started up again in 1946 with a benefit performance.

In 1957, the theater became the Bark Mill Players. They performed at Wolfe and Braddock streets on the second floor of a building, which had previously been a mill that produced a bark product used in tanning leather. Irvan O'Connell, who was long active in the theater, owned the building and helped build the theater, which had a small stage in the round and seated 96. The building eventually became a hazard in 1973, and the company was forced to move. In 1974, the theater began its new 1974 season as the Winchester Little Theatre in the former train station at 315 W. Boscawen Street. Built in the 1890s as a freight station for Pennsylvania Railroad Co., the building was acquired by the theater with a sealed bid of \$57,000. A considerable amount of cleanup and renovation was conducted with volunteer labor at negligible cost to create the theater with 97 seats on three sides of a stage, a lobby, and necessary lighting and backstage rooms.

Today, the Winchester Little Theatre performs four or five plays a year, each of which runs for two or three long weekends. Each year members of the Winchester Little Theatre vote for the play of the year. The award is known as "The Barkie" in honor of the old Bark Mill.

IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Gift of multiple donors.

CONTAINER LIST:

BOX 1

Historic sketch, 2 leaves, typescript

List of plays known to have been produced by Winchester Little Theatre, 1929-1986, 3 leaves, 2 copies, typescript (photocopy)

News articles, unnumbered, printed photocopy

Newsletters, 2005 – printed

Patten, Louisa A. – 8 items, typescript and printed (photocopy)

Fundraising Restoration Fund, 2 items, printed

Poster, April 5, 1935, "Aren't We All," printed, color

Physical Location: Oversize, Box 21

Subscription Form 2005-2006, 1 item printed

Winchester Little Theatre Chronology, 1929-2005, 3 leaves, typescript (photocopy)

Winchester Little Theatre Playbills, 1933-1959, 29 items, printed

Winchester Little Theatre Playbills, 1960-1982, 27 items, printed

Winchester Little Theatre Playbills, 1993, 2005, 2011, 2014, 4 items, printed

BOX 2

Scrapbook of Mrs. Ella Hines McNally, on 1919-1920 season, Baltimore, Maryland (fragile)

PHOTOGRAPHS

[002-001] Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Glass Menagerie". Pattie Embrie as Laura, with glass animal collection (the titular "menagerie"), holding a glass rabbit, circa 1970.

[002-002] Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". No persons identified. Last play performed by Winchester Little Theatre at Bark Mill Theatre on Wolfe Street, 1973.

[002-003] Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Left to right: Charla Hayden, Marjorie Lewis, unknown, 1973.

[002-004] Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Left to right: G.T. Bryan, Marjorie Lewis, 1973.

- [002-005]** Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Left to right: Jane Foster, Marjorie Lewis, 1973.
- [002-006]** Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Left to right: Charla Hayden, Carolyn Rhodes, Marjorie Lewis, Wolfgang Schemeller, Barbara Swink (leaning in from right), 1973.
- [002-007]** Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". No persons identified in front row. Back row (left to right) unknown, Beth Slonaker, Judy Holler, 1973.
- [002-008]** Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Left to right: unknown, unknown, Carolyn Rhodes, 1973.
- [002-009]** Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Left to right: unknown, Charla Hayden (background); G.T. Bryan (foreground, working on canvas), 1973.
- [002-010]** Winchester Little Theatre production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Members of the cast, making faces. No persons identified, 1973.