

Sturgis Library Archives

Genealogy and Personal Manuscripts Collection

Evelyn Lawson (1908-1984)
Theatre Archives

MS. 30

Extent: 8 boxes

Biographical note: Born in 1908, Evelyn Lawson of Hyannis, MA, was well known as a prolific writer on theatre and dance on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Her signature column was “Dateline: Cape Cod,” which appeared in a number of publications. Ms Lawson attended Wellesley College and worked her way through the Columbia School of Journalism by performing in the theatre in New York City. Although she started her journalism career at the *Baltimore Sun* she also worked for the *New York American newspaper*, United Features Syndicate as a public relations specialist and for *Variety* magazine. Spending part of her career on the West coast as a screenwriter in Hollywood, she wrote television scripts for such shows as “The Beverly Hillbillies,” and “Death Valley Days.” In 1969 she made Cape Cod her permanent home, and for the next 15 years wrote about theatrical and dance productions for many newspapers, including *The Register*, *The Caper*, *The Barnstable Patriot*, and the *Cape Cod Times*. She was publisher of the *Provincetown Log*, and authored 2 books, *Theatre on Cape Cod* (1969) and *Yesterday’s Cape Cod* (1977). Lawson was instrumental in the establishment of the Provincetown Playhouse and was affectionately known locally as “Daphne”. In addition to the above she handled public relations for the Ethnic Dance Arts and La Meri Dance Studio, was on the board of the Hyannis Ballet and hosted a television show on cable entitled “Star Night.” At the time of her death in 1984 Evelyn Lawson was living in Hyannis.

Scope and Contents note: Series I of the collection consists mainly of Evelyn Lawson’s scrapbooks of newspaper clippings of articles she published between 1969 and 1984, the period she lived on Cape Cod. There is a complete set of duplicate copies of the articles that were not pasted into scrapbooks, and these have been photocopied for preservation purposes. There are also original typescript and handwritten copies of some of her writings, as well as photographs. Of special note is what appears to be an unpublished manuscript on the 1969 Truro dune murders, of which Antone Costa of Provincetown was convicted. Lawson had a particular interest in this case and intended to publish a book about the subject. There is a related collection of Evelyn Lawson papers at the Cape Cod Community College.

Series II is a collection of Cape Cod Playhouse playbills donated by Sally Sawyer to the Evelyn Lawson Theatre Archives. Series III is a set of 7 theatre scrapbooks compiled by an unknown author that dates from 1908-1940.

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Acquisition: Evelyn Lawson papers donated by Evelyn Lawson in 1983. Accession # 04-03. Playbills of series II donated by Sally Sawyer,

Access: Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library Archives for publication purposes.

Processed by: Stephen Robert Lovell Farrar, 2005.

Series I: Evelyn Lawson's papers and collected writings, 1962-1984

Box 1

Folder #

- 1 Biographical information (resumes, obituaries), 1962-1984
- 2 Correspondence, 1969
- 3 " 1970-1971
- 4 " 1972-1978
- 5 " 1981-1984
- 6 " Undated

- 7 Financial (bills submitted to *Variety*), 1970-1980
- 8 Photographs, about 1969-1984
(includes Lawson in Provincetown and inside the old Provincetown Playhouse)
- 9 Typescripts of articles written, 1969-1974
(includes "Ghost of Pamet," 1974)
- 10 Truro dune murders (1969), handwritten notes (unpublished manuscript for a book) and typescript transcriptions of published articles by other authors, 1969
- 11-12 Truro dune murders, collected copies of newspaper articles about murders and other notes, 1969-1970
- 13 Christmas poems by Lawson, 1973-1974, 1982
- 14 *Theatre on Cape Cod* (1969), press releases and jacket samples, 1969
- 15 Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf, playbill for "El Camino" by Tennessee Williams, 1969

Box 2

Folder #'s 16 - 19

Copies of newspaper clippings of articles written by Lawson, 1968-1979:

The Caper, 1975-1976

The Caper, 1977-1979

The Caper, 1978-1979

The Register, 1968

Box 3

Folder #'s 20 – 32

Newspaper Clippings, original

Variety, 1970-1979

Cape Cod Illustrated, 1972-19734

Barnstable Patriot, 1972-1973

The Register, 1968

The Register, 1969

The Register, 1970

Cape Cod Illustrated, 1972

The Caper, 1974?, 1979

Various publications, 1971

“ 1972

“ 1973

“ 1974

“ 1979

Box 4

Original clippings of box 2

Box 5 (small oversize box)

Scrapbooks, collated and disbound (mostly clippings of articles Lawson published),
1975-1983

1975 scrapbook

1976 scrapbook on *Yesterday's Cape Cod* publication

1980-1982 scrapbook (2 folders)

1983 scrapbook

1983 scrapbook (5 folders)

Box 6 (large oversize box)

(contains some articles that have been encapsulated)

1976 scrapbook

1977-1978 scrapbook

1979-1980 scrapbook

loose material from 1975 scrapbook

loose material from 1976 scrapbook

loose material from 1980scrapbook

loose material from 1983 scrapbook

Extra copies of articles published in *Cape Cod Times*, 1976-1977

Provincetown Log, articles, 1983

Series II Cape Theatre playbills, 1929-1961

Box 7

Cape Playhouse Theatre playbills, 1929-1950, 1955, 1961, 1970's - 1984
Other Cape Cod theatre playbills, 1936, 1956, 1947-1948

Series III, Theatre scrapbooks, 1908-1940

Box 8

Scrapbook # 1

Theatre scrapbook, unknown compiler, January 1908-August 1934
14 ½ x 10 5/8 x 3", 138 pages, green cloth, bound

Excerpts from playbills of theatres in New York city and Boston, pasted in and annotated. Theatres include New Amsterdam, Liberty, Colonial, Tremont, Toy, Hollis Street, Orpheum, Astor, Majestic, Lyric, Belasco, and Herald Square. With a loose wedding portrait from the 1940s; Lowell, Massachusetts photographer.

Scrapbook #2

Theatre scrapbook, unknown compiler (appears to be by the same hand as #1),
1934-1940
11 6/8 x 15 x 2", 30 pages, black cloth covered board, tied binding; some pages are loose.

Excerpts from playbills and published articles of theatres in Boston, New York City, Plymouth and Cape Cod, Massachusetts, pasted in and annotated. Theatres include the Colonial, Metropolitan Opera Association, Opera House of Boston, Shubert, Wilbur and Cape Playhouse. With a loose portrait of an unknown woman, 1930s or 1940s.