

# Finding Aid

## NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE RECORD GROUP

### THEORA ENGLAND WILCOX SCRAPBOOKS

1942-1974

NCRG 12.1

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## Introduction

The Theora England Scrapbooks Collection documents the origins and development of the theatre and speech program at Northwestern College during her tenure. The materials cover theatre performances, Choral Readers and Alpha Psi Omega, the theatre student organization. The books include playbills, photographs, newspaper articles, brochures, posters, personal correspondence and ephemera. The books also include wedding invitations, birth announcements, reception napkins and other materials from events in theatre students' personal lives.

Collectively, these scrapbooks also provide evidence for the resolve and forcefulness needed by a woman seeking to establish a new program in an institution and local community where women's leadership was not the norm.

Size: 13.5 linear feet.

Provenance: The scrapbooks were donated by Theora England Wilcox to Northwestern College in 1974.

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Processing Notes: This arrangement and finding aid were created by Dan Daily, Joan Terpstra Anderson, and Greta Grond and completed in December 2009.

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## Historical Notes

Theora England joined the faculty at Northwestern Classical Academy in 1942. While she was originally hired to teach math, she soon began directing the school's annual plays. England began to pursue graduate study in the field of theatre, and in 1949 she became a member of the speech department at Northwestern Junior College teaching dramatics, while also teaching English and speech at the Academy. In 1964, England received her Ph.D. in theatre from the University of Minnesota.

For much of her tenure, England directed four plays each year. She had a particular passion for children's plays, and the college annually produced one show specifically for children. Those shows included "Heidi," "Androcles and the Lion," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "The Wizard of Oz," and "Beauty and The Beast." These shows were well-attended by children from the region; an estimated 8,000 children saw "Beauty and The Beast" in the fall of 1973.

England also believed that drama was an appropriate way to worship God. In addition to teaching a course titled *Drama in Religious Education*, she also arranged for her students to conduct workshops in religious drama. Her convictions about drama and worship were underscored in 1967 when Northwestern College purchased a former church building to serve as a college drama center. England helped plan the building's transition to a theatre.

Choral Readers also figured prominently in England's contributions to Northwestern College. This group, formed in 1959, used speaking, both solo and in unison, to interpret text. The Choral Readers toured not only in the area, but also visited San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and other cities across the country.

Professor England retired from teaching at Northwestern in 1974.

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## Related Materials

See the following collections for more information:

- Digital Display Setting the Stage (<http://projects.library.nwciowa.edu/theatre>)
- Campus Activities: Theatre/Speech
- Student Organizations: Theatre
- Scrapbooks, NWC Actors

- Theatre Masks

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## Arrangement and Description

Among the many activities that Theora England took on was the keeping of scrapbooks. Throughout sixteen scrapbooks is a random collection of photos of scenes of plays, playbills, newspaper articles relating to plays given, and activities in which theatre students were involved. Four scrapbooks focus on the Choral Readers, which Dr. England organized in 1959. She was also active in directing plays for the Orange City Women's Club, and those are noted in the scrapbooks.

But that is only part of the story told throughout the scrapbooks. As students went through Northwestern's theatre program, they developed an attachment to Professor England that lasted beyond their college years. Scrapbooks contain numerous Christmas cards, valentines, wedding invitations, and birth announcements addressed to her, as well as news of alumni.

Dates are attributed to scrapbooks, though there is overlap in contents.

BOX	BOOK	CONTENTS	DATES
1	1	Financial reports of plays; photographs; play programs; newspaper articles and items relating to plays given by the Orange City Women's Club; Northwestern Academy play, "Early to Bed, Early to Rise;" Northwestern Junior College play, "Magnificent Obsession"	1943-1946
	2	Organization of a drama club; charter in Delta Psi Omega; photographs of Dr. England; Orange City Women's Club plays include "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Annie Get Your Gun;" Northwestern Junior College plays include "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," "A Silver Lantern," and "Elizabeth the Queen"	1950-1954
	3	Identification of actors; information about England's son Gene; photographs and newspaper articles	1953-1955
2	1	Special activities of Delta Psi Omega including play produced, speech festivals, play festivals and trips; Thanksgiving play "Time Out for Ginger," presented jointly by Orange City Women's Club and Delta Psi Omega; newspaper article about Distinguished Service Award presented to England between acts of Thanksgiving play "Charley's Aunt" in 1957; records about "Northwestern – A Silver Lantern" pageant written by England; Northwestern Junior College plays include "Cyrano de Bergerac," "Anastasia," "Our Town," and "Diary of Anne Frank;" senior class of Academy	1955-1961

		presented “Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates” and “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer;” news article about England’s upcoming tour of Europe to study religious drama	
	2	Various forms of Delta Psi Omega correspondence; Christmas cards, thank you notes, acknowledgments, and congratulations to England	1950-1961
	3	Regular activities of Delta Psi Omega such as monthly meetings, special speakers, picnics, potlucks, parties, banquets, initiations, annual reports, and yearly programs; newspaper clippings and photographs of these activities	1952-1960
3	1	Individual members of Delta Psi Omega, such as engagements, weddings, births, graduations, achievements, honors, family pictures, and publicity; Northwestern plays include “The Barretts of Wimpole Street” and “The Heiress;” Orange City Women’s Club play was “The Teahouse of the August Moon;” newspaper article related to “College on Camera,” about the religious drama “A Very Cold Night” presented by Northwestern College over television station KUTV in Sioux City; Northwestern <i>Beacon</i> from 1962 about Choral Reading tour that year	1955-1962
	2	1961 letter from Alpha Psi Omega, dramatic fraternity, granting the college a charter; news article about installation of Delta Psi Omega installation as a Delta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Psi Omega; plays produced by the college include “Pygmalion,” “Antigone,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “Under the Gaslight,” “The Glass Menagerie,” “The Streets of New York;” children’s plays included “Heidi,” “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves,” “The Wizard of Oz,” and “The Emperor’s New Clothes;” programs of the Choral Readers such as readings from scripture and musical numbers and “The Boy with a Cart;” newspaper article by England about Choral Readers’ extended concert tour	1961-1966
4	1	News article about England becoming member of Upsilon State Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, a fraternity of women educators; college and community events; wedding invitations, Christmas greetings and the like	1962-1965
	2	Community news, engagement and wedding announcements, and college activities; college plays include “Twelfth Night,” “The Girl of the Golden West,” and “Death of a Salesman;” children’s play was “Rumplestiltskin;” Choral Readers presentation with the	1965-1967

		book of Job as theme; pantomime Frans Reynders appearance at college for a program; photographs of plays	
5	1	Delta Psi Omega events; children's play "Rumplestiltskin;" Keith Allen added to theatre staff as technical director; college plays include "Othello," "John Brown's Body," "St. Joan," and "The Caucasian Chalk Circle;" children's theatre production include scenes from "The Elves and the Shoemaker," "Hansel and Gretel," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty and The Beast," and "Rapunzel and the Witch;" Choral Readers presentation of "Spoon River Anthology"	1967-1969
6	1	News article of children's play "Jack and the Beanstalk;" other children's plays referenced include "The Merry Pranks of Tyll," "Heidi," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Beauty and The Beast;" article reporting that England has been selected an outstanding educator; dedication of new Northwestern College Playhouse – the former church building of American Reformed Church – on January 17, 1971; dedication play "A Man for All Seasons;" college plays include "Arms and the Man," "My Heart's in the Highlands," "The Star Spangled Girl," "Romeo and Juliet," "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," "Pygmalion," "The Fantastiks," and "Diary of Anne Frank;" brochure for 1971 European Student Theatre Study Tour to the British Isles and Scandinavia; brochure for 1972 European Theatre Tour; news article on England's 1974 retirement banquet	1970-1974
7	1	News release about Choral Readers; Choral Readers programs to civic groups and churches; news articles about pecan rolls sales as trip fundraiser for performance at the General Synod of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania; notes and letters of appreciation about Choral Readers; letter and photographs from Charles B. Hoeven, U.S. Representative from Alton, Iowa	1959-1964
8	1	Choral Readers performance at South Dakota Education Association convention, Iowa Council of Teachers of Speech, and Concordia Teachers College; itineraries for various tours; programs, photographs and articles about Choral Readers; valentines	1965-1968
9	1	Choral Readers photographs, programs, tour itineraries, newspaper articles, booklets of travel instructions, and letters of appreciation; federal grant through the Iowa Arts Council for the 1970-71 school year; valentines and cards	1969-1970
10	1	Brochure promoting Choral Readers; photograph of	1972-1973

		Choral Readers on United States Capitol steps in 1973; visitor's passes to the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate Chamber; Choral Readers tour itineraries and church bulletins; Christmas cards, valentines, get well cards, and thank you notes	
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