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* Special to The Cape Cod Times

REMEMBERING THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYHOUSE ON THE WHARF

The last time I saw Catharine her ~~face~~ face was lit. It was lit with beautiful memories of Provincetown and the salons attended by visual & theater artists she held at ^{her} ~~her~~ Beacon Hill home. The occasion was her 100th birthday.

A sign no longer points to the alleyway along Commercial Street which marked where the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf once flourished though many still when recalling a visit ^{to} Provincetown think of the Playhouse. Led by Catharine Huntington and Virginis Thoms LePeer, the Provincetown Playhouse On the Wharf made history by its own accomplishments from 1940 - 1972. Most notably, they kept alive the plays of Eugene O'Neill, and over 25 new or first ~~productions~~ professional productions were given. Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee and Eric Bentley were closely connected with this theatre. Hundreds of professionals began their career here including Richard Gere, Frank Langella, and producer John Wulp. Lawyer Chris Snow and Heaton Vorse acted there.

Often the Playhouse is confused with the Provincetown Playhouse in New York City which was home to the Provincetown Players who revolutionized American Drama. Historically the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf was third in a succession of wharf theaters in Provincetown beginning with the original one founded by the Players..

The distinction is one of importance as made clear by Susan Glaspell in her 1946 letter to the "Provincetown Advocate" picked up by the Associated Press titled WHAT'S IN A NAME when Broadway actors with Glenda ~~Far~~ Farnell rented Town Hall in Provincetown and announced themselves as the Provincetown Players. They were denounced by Glaspell, who with her husband George Cram Cook founded the Provincetown Players and Provincetown Playhouse.

~~Catharine~~

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Catharine Huntington was devoted to Eugene O'Neill and the spirit of the Players. She kept ties with O'Neill, Mary Heaton Vorse, Susan Glaspell, and Harry Kemp whose memorial service she held in 1960, but ~~she~~ she made clear in its ~~literature~~ published material the heritage of the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf.. What became the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf was actually the New England Repertory, an off shoot of the famed Hedgerow Repertory founded in 1923 by Jasper Deeter who had been an actor and director with the Provincetown Players in New York City. ~~The New England Repertory~~

The Provincetown Playhouse is on MacDougal Street in New York City. In the summer of 1915 and 1916, the group that was to be known as the Provincetown Players performed at Lewis Wharf, owned by Mary Heaton Vorse, which they called The Wharf Theater. They had ~~started~~ started their journey at ~~the~~ the home of writers Hutchins Hapgood and Neith Boyce. The group headed by George Cram (Jig) Cook and his wife Susan Glaspell moved to New York City and was known as the Playwrights Theatre.. Their second building in 1918 became known as the Provincetown Playhouse. It was at this building which had been a stable, where the ~~legendary~~ legendary John Reed etched above a hitching ring "Here Pegasus was hitched". It was here that ^u "The Emperor--Jones" by Eugene O'Neill premiered as well as 92 other plays by Americans including Susan Glaspell, Theodore Dreiser, Edmund Wilson, Floyd Dell, Max Eastman, Sherwood Anderson, ^p Juana Barnes, and Edna St. Vincent Millay.. The New York Company included Ida Rauh, Mary Blair, Charles Ellis, ^N Norma Millay, Ann Harding, Kirah Markham, James Light, Harry Kemp, Cleon Throckmorton, Robert Edmond Jones, and Jasper Deeter to name a few. The corporation was The Provincetown Players Inc. The organization dissolved in 1922. Contrary to what has been written, according to Jasper Deeter it was moti

~~The Emperor~~

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"The Emperor--Jones" uptown and touring that weakened the organization and not a dispute between O'Neill and George Cram Cook. In response to Susan Glaspell's statement upon first discovering O'Neill "And that's what we were for", many years ~~Norma Millay~~ later Norma Millay would clarify "But we were there, and ~~that's~~ that's what we were for." Even without O'Neill, the Provincetown Players ~~led~~ ~~the advent of a truly American drama and was the Bloomsbury of America~~ were the Bloomsbury of America and ~~led~~ led the advent of American Drama. George Cram wrote before he and Susan Glaspell left for Greece, "We give this theater we love good death, the Provincetown Players end their story here".

The Players voted that the building could retain the name Provincetown Playhouse, but any group operating there would have to take a new name. In 1923, some of the original members reorganized under the name Experimental Theater Inc. They performed at the Greenwich Village Theater and the Provincetown Playhouse. During this period Betty Davis performed there as did Walter Abel, and Heaton Vorse in ee cummings play "HIM". Jasper Deeter returned to direct ~~Paul~~ Paul Green's Pulitzer Prize play "In Abraham's Bosom". The general public never used the new title and never differentiated between the Provincetown Playhouse and the older Provincetown Players. In 1929, the Experimental Theater Inc. was dissolved, officially ending all association with the original group. In recent years the Provincetown Playhouse has been managed by producer Arthur Cantor and is currently owned by New York University School of Law.

In Provincetown, Mary Bicknell and others organized a group in 1923 which was to be known as the Wharf Players Theater.. Frank Shay of the original Players also later organized a group, not on a wharf, called The Barnstormers. When the Wharf Players Theater located on the West End was destroyed by a storm, artist Heinrich Pfeiffer in 1940 invited the New England Repertory founded in

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1938 in Boston which had been performing O'Neill's "Great God Brown" and Susan Glaspell's play "Inheritors" to start a theater on an old whaling wharf that he owned at the foot of Gosnold Street. Catharine Huntington, Edwin Pettet formerly of the Hedgerow Repertory and his wife Virginia Thoms accepted his offer. The New England Repertory actors included Adele Thane, Peggy ~~McGuire~~ McGuire, and Robert Chase (son of economist Stuart Chase who worked with FDR). At first they performed as the New England Repertory at the Artist Theater on Pfeiffer's Wharf. It is this group that became known as the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf. Throughout the years, Catharine always acknowledged the contribution and devotion of Heinrich Pfeiffer to theatre in Provincetown. Until 1963, the corporation was the New England Repertory Society.. In 1967, Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf Incx was formed.

No one who was there ^{will} ever forget the significance of that last performance of O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey into Night" in 1972 under ~~Catharine's~~ Catharine's and Virginia's long stewardship. Although more lucrative offers were made, in 1972, with the understanding that a theater would remain on the property, the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf was sold to Adele and Lester

Heller. Continuity was vital to Catharine. All her life she had fought for it.

The Heller's organization still holds the non-profit corporation ~~founded~~ formed in 1967.) In 1977, the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf ~~was sold and~~ destroyed by arson. Catharine agonized over this destruction - not so much for herself but for the loss to ~~the~~ the town and the record of those actors, directors and playwrights who made the Playhouse On The Wharf a reality, and the materials that paid tribute to the original Players which ^{were} ~~was~~ reported ~~as~~ destroyed.

All that remains standing is the box office/museum that is now the Julie Heller Gallery. ↗

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Catharine was devoted to the plays of ~~Jugens O'Neill~~ O'Neill. She started each season off with one of his plays when few theaters ventured to produce his work. In 1966, commemorating the 50th anniversary of his first play "Bound East For Cardiff" performed at the original Wharf Theater in 1916, she dedicated her whole season to the playwright producing 10 of his plays. Also she arranged for a plaque to be placed at the original site by the leading theater association of the time. Elliot Norton and Walter Able presided at the ceremony. The plaque disappeared, and while later recovered was replaced by a new plaque in 1988. Catharine told me that as important as he is, the important thing to remember about O'Neill is the spirit that enabled him and so many others to keep on with their work. Too, when one recalls the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf it is necessary to honor the work of Virginia Thoms LePeer who made her professional career the career of the Playhouse.

It was Catharine Huntington who was one of the few women connected with George Pierce Baker's famous Playwriting Workshop at Harvard, who entertained troops during WWI, studied with acting teacher Marie Ospenskya and went on to help found in 1922 the Boston Stage Society that introduced ^{J. S. Stringberg} (Chekov's) plays to Boston audiences. It was she who directed "Dessaline's Black Emperor of Haiti" which launched the career of black actors Avon Long and Jack Bates. It was Catharine Huntington who help found one of America's few true repertory theaters (the New England Repertory), the Brattle, Poet's and other theaters. After leaving the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf in her eighties, always a friend of the young, it was Catharine Huntington who spurred on the new Boston Repertory which was located at what is now the Next Move Theater in Boston. She declined to have the theater named after her, yet in her will asked ~~with~~ asked that contributions be donated to them in her memory.

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Catharine Huntington had no wealth, she was rich in passion and caring. She died with nothing but an indomitable spirit and keen intelligence.. Even her ^(her family home in Hadley the Huntington Porter Phelps house) property at Forty Acres was donated so that the land would be safe from development.

At the opening night of an exhibit of the Poet's Theater at the Harvard Theater Collection a few years ago, which also houses many of Catharine's papers the first comment I heard was actress Leslie Cass exclaim "I wish Catharine was here!" On her 97th birthday, December 29, I gathered many of Catharine's friends at Sherrill House for a celebration. Catharine had a gift for gathering people together. For many it was like the old days.. Paul Barstow, John Wulp, Molly Howe, Ann Smith, Hal Gaardner, artist Bradley Phillips, her grand-nephew Thomas Urquart, Jerome Kilde, Bill Lacey of Boston University, William Morris Hunt and others. The young too gathered to pay tribute and actor Martin Anderson who directed "Ten % Revenue" in Provincetown and the Living With AIDS project at Club Caberet in Boston read a citation by the Governor. From Provincetown came greetings from Josephine Del Deo, Joan Snow, Karen Katzel and Joel O'Brien. Catharine was the life of the party.

In the Spring of 1986, another young director Nora Hussey, who is devoted to O'Neill, was reading to Catharine a letter from the Mayor of Boston. Several times Catharine had been honored most notably by Radcliffe, the New England Theatre Association, and she had received the Rodgers and Hammerstein Award for ~~her~~ outstanding contribution to American Theatre. This occasion was a little different. Although worn by loss of hearing which affected her voice, and the years away from Pinckney Street, she asked me for a ~~gfa~~ gardenia to wear-for Catharine was regal to the end. The City of Boston was

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honoring her on the occasion of the International Conference on Eugene O'Neill being held at Suffolk University. The City Council of Boston had declared it Catharine Sargent Huntington Day. Councilman David Scondras stood and spoke in the reception room of Sherrill House Nursing Home. There he revealed that he never imagined that one day he would be representing the City's tribute to Catharine for her to^o as a young man not knowing what direction his life would take had worked at the Provincetown Playhouse On The Wharf. On the table sat ~~the~~ flowers from critic dean Elliot Norton who ~~when~~ as a young reporter had avidly reviewed the New England Repertory. A note was enclosed "With admiration and appreciation".

Catharine believed in the people of Provincetown. She loved doing theatre by the sea, which highlighted the theatre's unique relationship to the town. She especially cherished the deck where the actors often rehearsed because it was in close proximity to Commercial Street where other people frequently wandered in and became involved with the theatre. *Be for Evelyn Law
write to Catharine
date " "*

~~XXXXX~~ Ilona's portrait of Catharine no longer ~~hangs~~ hangs at Poor Richard Butterery in Provincetown from which it was stolen and never recovered. However a portrait of her by John Wulp has a place of honor in Frank Langell's summer home. She died on February 27, 1987. At her memorial service, a moving tribute by Edwin Pettet was read. It contained, "Hers was the greatest gift of all gifts: the ability to make others greater than they were". The family requested that donations in her name be made to Stage Source in Boston, New England's Theater Clearinghouse, to aid young theater artists.

Later that Spring, I was present with the group that gathered at Forty ~~Acres~~ Acres near Catharine's garden to hear Doris Abramson of the University of ~~MA read Catharine's poetry and lett~~

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MA.: read Catharine's poetry and letters. Afterwards her ashes were ~~interred~~
interred in the family plot nearby (though she said to me at the nursing home
that she wished she could be buried in Provincetown). I could not bring
myself to look at the beautiful wooden box containing her ashes. Instead I
gazed at the eternal wind rustling the leaves of the trees. Glaspell's
line in "Inheritors" came to me, "The world is all a moving field. Nothing
is unto ~~itself~~ ^sitself...The wind still blows, wind rich with lives ~~now gone~~
now gone". For this box was not Catharine. She was an idea, dedicated, loyal,
had sincerity, as Joel O'Brien often remarked -was gracious, and passionate
about life. Catharine Huntington made the world a better place because hers
was a creed of ~~determination and encouragement~~ determination and encouragement.
And if overlooked in the history of American Theatre, she will never be
neglected in the ~~souls~~ souls of men and women who know her contribution
to humanity.

GAIL COHEN

April 11, 1990

Ann Arbor, Michigan

IN OUR MAIL

What's In A Name?

Editor, The Advocate:

Quite a little time ago something happened in this town which reached so far, and in influence lasted so long, as to amaze the people who began it. A group of writers, some of them very young, dissatisfied with what is called "Broadway," and wanting to write the kind of plays they felt worth writing, said: "We will write and put on our own plays." They began here on a wharf, and later put on their plays in New York. There is not space here to tell their story, and anyway that story is well known, you can read it in most any history of The American Theatre. They called themselves "The Provincetown Players," and it was Eugene O'Neill who proposed the subtitle, "The Playwrights' Theatre."

A playwrights' theatre it always was, giving only first productions, of plays which we felt should be given, and which were not likely to find production in the commercial theatre of that time.

Because of a singleness of purpose, an integrity which kept it from veering from its course, and because there was an audience which needed what it had to offer, the name "Provincetown Players" still stands for an amazing burst of creative energy. There was a wonderful director, George Cram Cook, who said: "We will let this theatre die before we let it become another voice of mediocrity." He talked also of the deep level where writer and actor and audience are one. There were moments when we seemed to find that level, and while we had our cruddles, one thing we never became was another voice of mediocrity. None of us got rich, but it has been pretty well agreed the American Theatre became a little richer.

And because of what purpose and integrity made of this name, through the years other groups playing here in Provincetown have wanted to use it. What odd folk they were, to be sure, for they seemed to think it would be courteous to ask. We would suggest they take their own name, endeavor to make that, too, a name to be proud of, not trade upon the already established. And so the name, "Provincetown Players" has remained there, speaking for the particular thing that theatre did, and at the same time a challenge to others to go on and do in their time what we had tried to do in ours.

Now comes a group of people from New York, playing "professional summer stock", announcing plays which have already succeeded on Broadway (all very well in itself, but nothing could be farther re-

moved from the animating idea of The Provincetown Players, who never went in for successes and stars) and without a by-your-leave to us these Broadway actors fill the town with posters declaring they are "The Provincetown Players."

Ah, but they asked the Selectmen, though neither these men in office, nor their predecessors, ever had one thing to do with "The Provincetown Players." The Selectmen always wanted the name used, thinking it good publicity, and with little idea of what made the name notable in the first place. To them it is simple: This is Provincetown, you are players. Rent the Town Hall and then naturally you are The Provincetown Players. Pay no attention to those people. There aren't very many of them anyway.

Mr. Editor, when a name has been made, and has persisted because of a particularly creative spirit, are you entitled to that name because you rent the Town Hall? I think not. I believe you will find many who think not.

If I wanted to call myself George Bernard Shaw would I ask the London Board of Trade? And if that august body said, Why not? It may promote Anglo-American relations; would I then be George Bernard Shaw? Maybe I'm funny, but if I had this cockeyed notion I believe I'd ask Mr. Shaw. And what he would say one shudders to think.

What's in a name? Something that keeps things straight. Would it not be confusing if Atlantic Fisheries called itself The Art Institute? And if The Seamen's Savings Bank billed the town with the announcement it was Highland Light—would that bring any boats into port? If the haddock began calling themselves mackerel, would the fish-minded be fooled?

And would this detract from the mackerel? Well, mackerel is a pretty well-established fish, and probably the reaction would be that the haddock was behaving a little foolishly, being in itself a very fine fish, and why confuse itself with mackerel?

Very truly,
Susan Glaspell.

Letters To The Editor

Hitching Pegasus

To the Editor:

The Provincetown Playhouse is in New York City. In the summer of 1915 and 1916, the group that was to be known as the Provincetown Players performed at Lewis Wharf in Provincetown, which they called The Wharf Theater. The group, headed by George Cram Cook and his wife, Susan Glaspell, moved to New York City and was known as The Provincetown Playhouse. The corporation was The Provincetown Players, Inc. The organization dissolved in 1922. George Cram Cook wrote, "We give this theater we love good death; the Provincetown Players end their

story here." The Provincetown Players had voted that the building could retain the name Provincetown Playhouse, but any group operating there would have to take a new name. In 1923, some of the original members reorganized under the name Experimental Theater, Inc. The general public never used the new title and never differentiated between the Provincetown Playhouse and the older Provincetown Players. In 1929, the Experimental Theater, Inc., was dissolved, officially ending all association with the original group.

In Provincetown, Mary Bicknell and others organized a group in 1923, which was to be known as the Wharf Players

Theater. When that West End theater was destroyed by a storm, artist Heinrich Pfeiffer in 1940 invited the New England Repertory, which was founded in Boston in 1938, to start a theater on an old whaling wharf that he owned at the foot of Gosnold Street. Catharine Huntington, Virginia Thoms, and Edwin Pettet accepted his offer, and this group became known as the Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf. Historically, the Playhouse was third in a succession of wharf theaters, beginning with the original one founded by the Players.

The Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf, led by Catharine Huntington and Virginia Thoms LaPeer, made history by its own

accomplishments from 1940-1972. Most notably, they kept alive the plays of Eugene O'Neill, and over 25 new or first professional productions were given. Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, and Eric Bentley were connected with this theater. Hundreds of professionals began their careers here. Until 1963, the corporation was known as the New England Repertory Society. In 1967, Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf, Inc., was formed. Adele and Lester Heller purchased the theater in 1972. The corporation is still held by their organization. In 1977, the Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf was destroyed by arson. The theater has never been rebuilt, though

money was raised over the years and a contest held that picked a design for the new Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf.

A few years before Susan Glaspell's death in 1948, Broadway actors rented Provincetown Town Hall and announced themselves as the Provincetown Players with Glenda Farnell as their star. They were bitterly denounced by Susan Glaspell. She charged them with stealing the name which, to the original company, meant "an amazing burst of creative energy." The company ceased.

There is an error in the historical notes contained in the program for the current productions of the Provincetown Playhouse.
(Continued to Next Page)

Letter

house with the Provincetown Players at Cape Cod Community College, produced by Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf, Inc.

After the 1916 season was over at the Wharf Theater, the Players moved to a brownstone at 189 MacDougal St. in New York City. In 1918, they moved to 183 MacGougal St., still named the Provincetown Playhouse, and it was at this building, which had been a stable, where John Reed etched on a hitching ring "Here Pegasus was hitched."

Gail Cohen

Read at the memorial service for Catharine Huntington March 5th 1988
Edwin Pettit from the Hadgerow Theatre Repertory Company founded with
Catharine & Virginia Thoms the New England Repertory 1938. He
taught at Brandeis University for many years.

A TRIBUTE TO CATHARINE SARGENT HUNTINGTON

Edwin Pettit

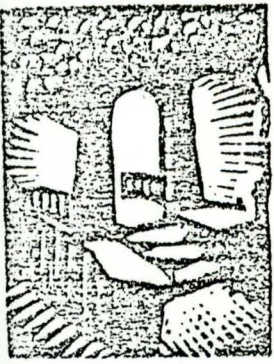
Almost fifty years ago Catharine Huntington was one of the three who founded the New England Repertory Theater in Boston. We worked hard and for long hours and gradually many wonderful things happened. It seemed that luck was on our side, and I took it all for granted as youth is inclined to do.

But it was not granted. Years later, when I had learned that I was not at the center of any universe, I realized how much of our success was owed to Catharine's gift in legerdemain: she could make the improbable materialize with no visible effort. It was she who arranged for our Boston Theater on Joy Street; she who located the Wharf Theater in Provincetown. She brought into existence the company communal home and workshop on Pemberton Square and again later on Revere Street, as well as our various living quarters on the Cape.

Catharine rarely talked of herself. Of her enormous energy, she spared little for reminiscences and anecdotes. She had done much in the theater before I met her and was to do still more after our active association came to an end. Ultimately I learned that I had not been especially singled out, for her magic was inexhaustible; and many others had experienced its touch. Hers was the greatest of all gifts: the ability to make others greater than they were. She did that for me. Her strength became my strength, just as, by the same benign trickery, her judgement validated mine; her taste reinforced my own.

She never disagreed with me. I was the director and to dispute my decision seemed never to have occurred to her. Yet how often have I awakened to the next morning, my opinion changed, only dimly conscious that Catharine had, in passing, said something like this the day before.

Upon hearing of the death of William Morris, Bernard Shaw said, "You can lose a man like that by your own death but not by his." Those of us who are blessed in the knowing of Catharine can only feel so about our beloved friend.



HEDGEROW THEATRE

ROSE VALLEY ROAD • MOYLAN PA. 19065
THEATRE (215) 565 4855
SCHOOL (215) LO 6 9892

July 1, 1982

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF PROVINCETOWN

July 1st would have been Pulitzer Prize playwright and novelist Susan Glaspell's centennial birthday. Susan lived and wrote in Provincetown from 1913 until her death in 1948. She and her husband George Cram (Jig) Cook with the help of their many neighbors founded the famous Provincetown Players. We at Hedgerow Theatre in Moylan, Pa. outside of Philadelphia are celebrating Susan Glaspell's Centennial with a special exhibit titled JASPER DEETER: INHERITOR. Jasper Deeter, Founder of Hedgerow Theatre was a member of the original Provincetown group in New York City. There he directed and acted in Susan Glaspell's play INHERITORS which was to become the most important play of the Hedgerow Repertory. From 1923 - 1954, INHERITORS was performed every year at Hedgerow with special performances given on the Fourth of July and Memorial Day. In 1973, a production of the play was done in Jasper Deeter's memory. Both he and Susan Glaspell saw all people as being united in a stream of time. They believed as stated in INHERITORS that "Thought is not something OUTSIDE the business of life. Thought - why thought's our CHANCE." The main display board of the exhibit at Hedgerow features a letter from Jasper Deeter to Susan Glaspell dated December 9, 1936. He wrote, "Your vision taught me how to look; your insight taught me how to perceive; your words enabled me to speak and your play gave me a life to live. I can't tell the story of how INHERITORS made possible a new kind of theatre and even if I could people are not interested they just don't care. But the story of what life might be if people could bring their caring directly to bear upon their ways of doing can best be told by you." On December 19, 1941 after a visit to Provincetown he wrote, "I looked at the harbor and thought of your beginnings, and my own. And your place and part in mine and of how much I owe to a few people." The exhibit includes photographs, letters, book jackets, excerpts from Glaspell's writings, as well as programs and other material from the Provincetown Players.

I had the privilege several weeks ago of speaking about Susan Glaspell after a production of her play TRIFLES at a local college celebrating her centennial. We at Hedgerow are proud to know the plays and novels of Susan Glaspell, and urge others to learn about her. She touched the lives of many here and elsewhere. Years ago, she wrote to Langston Moffatt, "Remembering the dead, I think of life and its infinite possibilities. There never seemed a better chance for creative work, for expressing the past, and trying to shape the future." Susan Glaspell did indeed make it to a hundred, and for hundreds of years ahead of us will be a part of the fight to make Life more than it has been.

Gail Cohen
Project Director
Hedgerow Theatre Collection

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

1300 LOCUST STREET PHILADELPHIA PENNSYLVANIA 19107



THE ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY-SIXTH
ANNUAL MEETING

Gail Cohen

WILL GIVE AN ILLUSTRATED TALK ON

*America's Repertory
Hedgerow Theater
1923-1956*

ON FRIDAY MAY 23, 1980

AT FOUR O'CLOCK

Gail Cohen is director of the Hedgerow Theater Collection for which she was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to organize and microfilm. Her connection with theater is long standing and includes press work for the New York productions of *Sleuth* and *Hot L Baltimore*. She has also served as press director for numerous touring dance presentations including The Pennsylvania Ballet.

*Guests will be welcomed
Refreshments will be served*

GIOVANNI'S ROOM

345 S. 12th St., N.E. Corner 12th & Pine Sts.
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 923-2960

April 28, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been my pleasure to be associated with Gail Cohen for approximately five years. When she approached me to write a recommendation I felt no hesitation, as our relationship has been very helpful to me both in my business and in a variety of community organizations that we worked on together.

Our first working situation was with a Philadelphia-based women's art group --A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME. Gail was very resourceful in both outreach and publicity. She advertised the group in a number of newspapers and was instrumental in forming a membership drive. In a matter of months we had a membership of over 100 women.

In the two years of the organization's existence we had 12 one-woman shows, several group shows, slide-show presentations and lectures. Gail single-handedly organized the publicity mailing list and took charge of public relations. As a result of her work we gained respect from the community at large, the events were well-attended and they proved to be moderately successful for individual artists.

Gail's most effective work at GIOVANNI'S ROOM was doing public relations on our May Sarton Week-end, November, 1980. Sarton is a prominent Maine author, who with the feminist movement is starting to receive the recognition she deserves. She had not been to Philadelphia for a number of years. Because her fee was quite high, I was concerned that this event be successful.

We worked through The Poetry Center of the YM/YWHA. The program was a week-end celebrating the author's 40 years of achievements. It included an autograph party, two film showings and a reading. Each event was a tremendous success. The autographing continued solidly for two hours with lines from the back corner of the second floor and out the front door. The reading was the best attended at the Y of that entire year--well over 500 people, every age category from 7 to 70 years.

Gail ran for weeks to newspapers, making connections, writing releases, phoning and hand-delivering information about the event. By the time of Sarton's appearance, at least a dozen newspapers had published her picture with a write up on the event.

Over the years Gail has been very committed to the archival materials of the HEDGEROW THEATER. It was a pleasure to attend the slide presentation and lecture by Gail at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The excellent presentation was a chronology of the theater and its philosophy and an account of the individuals involved.

GIOVANNI'S ROOM

345 S. 12th St., N.E. Corner 12th & Pine Sts.
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 923-2960

April 28, 1982

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As a highlight to the presentation many of the early people of the theater were in attendance and were introduced during the program. The lecture audience filled the main hall and was probably more people than The Historical Society has seen in many years.

I did not intend to write such a lengthy recommendation, but felt illustrating this note was necessary. When Gail believes in and is committed to a project, she is skilled, faithful to every detail, resourceful, hardworking and has ceaseless energy.

Yours truly,



ARLEEN OLSHAN
CO-OWNER

Recommendation for proposal AMERICAN THEATRE: THE NEGLECTED
HERITAGE (Gail Cohen) by James Hatch, director of the
Hatch/Billops Collection of Black Performing Artists,
author, playwright and professor at City College, New York.

I shall not recapitulate Gail Cohen's project; she has in her lines
stated it clearly. What I may do here is fill in "between the lines."

Wail is the real thing: that is a person totally devoted to a
cause which consumes her life, her money, her time and talent. For
examples, she travels to Paul Green's home and interviews him for hours
because she feels he is the neglected genius of American theatre; when
he dies, she returns to record the memorial services and to interview
relatives. She flies to Cleveland to spend times with Rowena Jelliffe,
now long retired from the Karamu Theatre, the oldest, and finest Black
American theatre. Years ago, she interviewed on tape, the amazing
Jasper Deeter of Hedgerow; she has spent eight years organizing the
papers of Hedgerow and placing them in the Twentieth Century Collection
in Boston.

Sometimes she has a bit of money from a grant; usually she has none.
She lives by the help of friends and admirers who are attracted by her
passion and by her devotion for preserving the archives of American
theatre. These individuals offer to assist her. I am such a one.

I have known Gail for eight years. We here at the Hatch-Billops
Collection, Inc., have written recommendations for her, given her food
and lodging, assisted with travel money, and all because we believe

III

Both. About 8 years

James V. Hatch

Professor, English at

The City College of New York
Hatch-Billops Collection, Inc.

491 Broadway - 7th fl., New York City 10012

(cont.)

that the work she is doing is important and no one else is dedicated to doing what Gail does.

She regularly appears at the American Theatre Association conventions or those of the Society for Theatre Research to urge others of us to follow her examples, to promote the heritage of the forgotten and the obscure. Because of Gail, the H-B Collection, has now transcripts of the Paul Green interviews; we have a microfilm listing of the Hedgerow materials; we have a record of the "obscure" Black Americans who worked at Hedgerow as actors; we have a record of the actor-director, Jasper Deeter.

Gail belongs to that fine and excentric tradition of researchers who literally and figuratively give their lives to an idea. Hers is the preservation of American theatre history. While academia is focused on the distant past and the profitable present, Gail continues to dig out, to record, organize, and preserve the great neglected figures of our theatre history.

She is still young in years and youthful in ambition. A year with the Bunting Institute would free her from debts and survival struggles that seriously hamper her work. I hope that the Bunting Institute will help Gail and thereby help American theatre history.

PS - See file

please see
file
copy of file
Hedgerow file

A "Don't Miss" IMPORTANT Program



Provincetown Playhouse, 1915

**Saturday, November 19, 8:30
The Plaza Ballroom**

LEGACY FROM PROVINCETOWN **American Theatre Steps into the 21st Century**

No other American town has impacted our nation's theatre more than Provincetown, Massachusetts. Much has been written about the advent of the 20th Century American drama and the Provincetown Players, who brought the plays of Eugene O'Neill to the world stage. Nationally recognized theatre historian Gail Cohen examines the history of the Provincetown Players and other theatre efforts in Provincetown, including those by Catherine Huntington. Ms. Cohen reveals the stepping stones of that profound heritage, what it has done for Provincetown itself, and the values of the Provincetown legacy as American Theatre approaches the 21st Century.

NETC brings together experts, peers, stars, and the most diverse theater population in the region. Don't miss this chance to learn, network, socialize and attend performances.

High School Teachers and Students: Friday is dedicated to you, with workshops and exhibitors tailored to secondary school theater—special audition workshop, professional development for teachers, the latest developments in curriculum frameworks, a mini-festival of performances, lots more!

Professional Companies: Sunday is your day, with panels and round tables focusing on concerns of New England theater companies. A chance to hear from top names in the field, like Paul Libin, Broadway producer and Susan Zeder, celebrated author.

Community Theaters: You will find valuable skill-building programs and performances throughout the Conference. How the state, regional and national festival associations work; fund raising, stage management—and more.

College Theater People: The College Division has assembled experts from the region and the nation offering a variety of programs concentrated on Saturday. Examine recruitment of undergrads, the changing academic climate, scholarly papers, and more.

LUMINARIES



- Paul Libin, a Producing Director of *Angels in America*, shares experiences and ideas Saturday and Sunday.
- Susan Zeder, celebrated author of plays about children, comes from the University of Texas at Austin to speak Saturday, and her play *Wiley and the Hairy Man* will be performed that day.
- Past Chair of Northwestern University Theater Department Les Hinderycx joins local academics to continue provocative examination of the changes impacting university theater departments.
- Gail Cohen, theater historian, explores the rich theater heritage in Provincetown, a program sponsored by the College of Fellows.

*

Hello, Dolly
starring the
inimitable
Carol Channing,
Saturday evening at
Boston's magnificent Wang
Center in the heart of the
theater district. We have a
block of great seats at a
special price which includes
the NETC Award Ceremony
and reception after the show.
Don't miss Kitty Carlisle Hart
bestowing the Moss Hart
Awards as well as
Ms. Channing receiving
the Major Award for a
Lifetime Achievement
in Theater.

PERFORMANCE

Storytellers, Magic Lantern shows, clowns and Commedia all through the Convention program.

ALSO . . .

High School mini-festival of performances from three states, Friday evening. FREE admission!

Performances around Boston, from Emerson's *King Lear* to Huntington's *Pterodactyls*. Details and discounted ticket info are included with your registration.

NEW IDEAS

Eight sessions—dozens of programs and workshops—rich in expertise and hands-on practice. Provocative panels on topics from directing to stagecraft to planning, producing, and fund raising. Take home ideas and skills you can really use!

New England
Theatre Convention
Boston Park Plaza
1995

Theatre Historian and Archivist / Press, PR, Special Events, and Fundraising

Summary of Accomplishments

- Grants - 14 including a National Endowment For The Humanities grant for projects in American Theatre Heritage. I organized, documented, and preserved theatre collections including the Hedgerow Theatre Collection, Barter Theatre Collection, and Theatre Of The Living Arts Collection. I have also preserved materials from Karamu House, Cleveland Playhouse, San Francisco Performing Arts Collection, Jessie Bonstelle - the Detroit Civic Theatre, Catharine Huntington. Periwig Club, and other materials.
- I was the College of Fellows lecturer at the New England Theatre Conference in Boston. The title of my lecture was LEGACY FROM PROVINCETOWN. I have lectured all over America, and shown my film MARCHING DOWN FREEDOM ROAD, an interview with the co-founder of Karamu House - Rowenna Jelliffe. These talks have been given at MLA, ATHE, Hostra University, Spellman College, GA. State College, Black Theatre Conference, Ohio State, Provincetown Library, and the Black Theatre Festival to name a few.
- I have contributed to numerous biographies including Langston Hughes, Jane Bowles, Ann Harding, Wayland Rudd, and Susan Glaspell. I have contributed obits to the AP, Variety, LA Times, Detroit Free Press, Boston Globe, Boston Herald, New York Times, and Philadelphia Daily News. I have mounted many exhibits at conferences, and theatres including Hedgerow Theatre, MLA, ATHE, and the George Bernard Shaw Conference.
- I did fundraising and activism to save the Martin Luther Jr. papers from being auctioned, and for them to remain in Atlanta. I worked with the India Embassey, and members of Gandhi's Family to help India acquire artifacts that belonged to Gandhi. I was responsible for the Indian Government contacting the owner of the auction house. I did fundraising to save torchsinger Libby Holman's property in Stamford, CT. from development. Today it is a public park. I worked with preservation groups.
- I led the fight to try and stop New York University from destroying the famed Provincetown Playhouse in New York City. We lost, but at least they did not get away with it totally. I also led the fight for the Provincetown Theatre in Provincetown, MA. not using the name Provincetown Players which Susan Glaspell co-founder of the real Provincetown Players forbid. The historic Provincetown Players ended all activity in 1929.
- I worked for Press Agent Dorothy Ross. We opened HOT L BALTIMORE, and did the press for Circle Rep. I worked for Producer Morton Gottlieb. I was Press Director for Contemporary Theatre Productions working in conjunction with American Theatre Productions.
- Grant Writing for non-profits including SAME (Southeastern Arts, Media, and Education Project Atlanta, GA)., and the Joan Kerr Dance Company in Philadelphia, PA..
- May, 2012 - Helped raise \$24,550 in one week for Judith Malina and The Living Theatre. This fundraising saved them from being evicted from their Theatre in New York City.
- 1988 to Present - Helped save the historic Dune Shacks of Cape Cod. They were finally put on

- the National Register of Historic Places in April 2012. I have been involved all this time in trying to
- save the historic Dune Dweller who have lived out on the dunes for generations. They will be evicted
- in the future. I worked with the Cape Cod National Seashore, National Park Service,
- Congressmen, MA. Secretary of State, MA. State Preservation Officer, and the National Register of
- Historic Places. All Local and National Press, and activism for all of the Dune Shack Issues.

Professional Experience

Functional Area of Expertise

- 20th Century American Theatre Heritage Specialist
- Grant Writing, and Fundraising
- Press, Public Relations, Communications, and Special Events

Functional Area of Expertise

- I have done other archival work including the School House Museum on Martha's Vineyard, and recently for Jewish Family Services in Tampa Bay. NYU gave me interns to supervise for my work with the Hedgerow Theatre Collection.
- I received a scholarship from the Public Relations Society of America to study Corporate PR at NYU. My client was the Insurance Institute of America. We dealt with the Malpractice Issue in 1975. I also received a scholarship to attend the Economic Institute at Hillsdale College in 1979.
- In 1985, I received a Certificate from Boston University's School of Communication. My multi-media presentation was titled THIS IS MY HOME on teenagers in Public Housing at Fildelis Way in Boston. It was shown on television in the Boston area.
- I worked for Backstage, Hillyer International, Van Joyce Agency, and the Joan Kerr Dance Company.
- I have volunteered at the Senior Center in Gulfport, Florida.

Employment Summary

Theatre Historian and Archivist

1973 to Present

Education

Richmond College, Experimental branch of City University, Staten Island, New York

1973

B.A., Psychology

I also directed LILIOM for director John Hancock's class, and took a creative course with artist Louise Fishman. I spent a semester being assistant director for THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES at Temple University directed by Jan Silverman with Patrick Quinn, and Mary Louise Burke which Hal Prince, and some of the original cast attended. I also took Theatre Management, and Creative Drama at the University of Minnesota the summer of 1972. In 1985, I updated my PR skills at Boston University at the School of Communications Summer Institute. Previously, I attended Eisenhower College with an extensive background in the Humanities.

Skills

- Activism, Press, Public Relations, Special Events, Fundraising, Writing Grants, Communications, Media, Lectures, Exhibits, Archival and promoting Justice.
- Teaching about those who have been neglected in theatre heritage. I promote Jasper Deeter, Fred Koch, Paul Green, Catharine Huntington, Jessie Bonstelle, Lynn Riggs, Eva Le Gallienne, Russell and Rowenna Jelliffe, K. Elmo Lowe, Fred McConnell, all of the Provincetown Players, the Carolina Playermakers, those of the family of Karamu House and the Gilpin Players, E.C. Mabie, the playwrights of the Hedgerow Repertory, Interplayers, The Playhouse, Susan Glaspell, Jig Cook to name a few.
- Writing, Research, Press Releases, TV, Radio, and I write Poetry. I have done over 100 interviews on audio tape and video.

- Highly creative, intelligent individual seeks interesting positions. Specializes in Outreach and unique projects. Extensive background in public relations and press. Grant writing, fundraising, and booking experience. Public speaking skills. I have been a guest on TV and Radio. Especially skilled in telephone ability to locate, and speak with any one I need to contact as well as on a computer.

Publications

"AMERICA'S REPERTORY - HEDGEROW THEATRE." Ohio State University Theatre History Conference. Educational Resources Information Center ERIC, April 1977. An account of the achievements of the famed Hedgerow Repertory founded by Jasper Deeter, as well as my work organizing, documenting, and preserving the Hedgerow Theatre Collection.

"PLAYS OF THE HEDGEROW REPERTORY." Compiled for the Free Library of Philadelphia. January 1977. A compiling of the 210 plays of the Hedgerow Repertory with opening date, years played in the repertory, and notes World Premiere, American Premieres, and those for the first time in English.

"BLACK ACTORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE PLAYS OF THE HEDGEROW REPERTORY." January 1977. Widely distributed to theatre departments, scholars, and theatre collections.

"A SALON IN A RESTAURANT." MARGUERITE YOUNG, OUR DARLING" 1994, Dalkey Archive Press.. A book edited by Marian Fuchs honoring the writer Marguerite Young who wrote MISS MACINTOCH MY DARLING, and a biography of Eugene Debs. Marguerite taught at the New School For Social Research.

Affiliations

Modern Language Association. I have given lectures over the years, and produced INHERITORS by Susan Glaspell in 1982 for MLA in Los Angeles. Several years ago, I held a panel on Karamu House with Raol Abdul, and Walter Nicks and showed my film MARCHING DOWN FREEDOM ROAD.

American Theatre Association (ATHE). I have given lectures for ATA, and done exhibits for conventions. Dramatist Guild subscriber, and have tried over the years to get them to preserve their archives.

American Society for Theatre Research

Alternate ROOTS

Theatre Communications Group

Manhattan Theatre Club - I was around in the early years of MTC, I painted many of the rooms, and worked on plays there.

New England Theatre Association

Training

David Cogan, Producing; Rose Schulman, Dolores Tanner, Gloria Alter Acting; Merle Lopnow Theatre Managemen; Dorothy Heathcote, Kenneth Graham, Lin Wright Creative Drama; Jerry Ames Tap; Gerald Mast Film; John Hancock Directing; Holly Maxson, Martha Mahard at the Harvard Theatre Collection, and Lola Sladitz of the Berg Collection - Archives.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Leon Silverman, Philadelphia Lawyer (215) 985-0255

Rozanne Seelen, Owner of the Drama Book Shop in New York City
(212) 741-0599

Josephine Del Deo, Provincetown, MA., Former Director of the Heritage Museum
(508) 487-1775

Jack Morrison, Philadelphia, PA., Editor Philadelphia Daily News
(215) 854-5573

Jackson Bryer, O'Neill Scholar, U of MD, (301) 405-3739

Jack Welch, former Owner of Baker's Plays, Boston, MA. (978) 465-3880