

*Guides to Special Collections
in the Music Division of the Library of Congress*

**HARRIET HOCTOR
COLLECTION**

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Introduction

The Harriet Hocter Collection consists primarily of photographs, newspaper clippings, and telegrams belonging to the vaudeville, Broadway, and film dancer, Harriet Hocter (1905-1977). The material was donated to the Library in 2000 by Hocter's niece, Harriet Hocter Groeschel.

Certain restrictions as to the use or copying of the materials in this collection may apply.

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: container number, the Harriet Hocter Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Biographical Sketch

- 1905 Born on September 25 in Hoosick Falls, New York, to Timothy and Elizabeth Kearny Hoctor.
- 1917 Hoctor moves to New York City to live with her Aunt Annie Kearney and to study dance at the Louis H. Chalif Normal School of Dancing. Later she studies with Ballets Russes member Ivan Tarasov, as well as with notable ballet stars Anton Dolan and Nicholas Legat.
- 1918 Hoctor appears in minstrel shows in her hometown of Hoosick Falls.
- 1920 Makes her Broadway debut in the chorus of *Sally* (music by Jerome Kern; ballet music by Victor Herbert; produced by Florenz Ziegfeld; and starring Marilyn Miller).
- 1922 Hoctor begins to work in vaudeville on the Keith/Orpheum Circuit. She also begins to study with dancer, teacher, and choreographer Merriel Abbot, who would choreograph many of Hoctor's specialty acts.
- 1923 Hoctor is hired by vaudeville superstars Vivian and Rosetta Duncan (known as the Duncan Sisters) to dance in *Topsy and Eva* (music and lyrics by Vivian and Rosetta Duncan), the Sisters's odd musical comedy adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The show previews in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, and Cincinnati.
- 1924 While in Chicago, Hoctor choreographs her first show, a Chicago Junior League production of *Wizard of Oz*. She also performs three solos as part of the Chicago Theatre's "Mighty Twin Organ" concerts.
- Topsy and Eva* opens in New York City on 23 December at the Sam H. Harris Theatre and plays for twenty weeks.
- 1925 *Topsy and Eva* tours to Boston and Chicago.
- 1926 Hoctor returns to San Francisco to perform vaudeville on the Orpheum Circuit and begins a life-long dance partnership with William Holbrook, whom she meets at Ivan Tarasov's ballet studio.
- 1927 After tryouts in Boston, the Broadway revue *A La Carte* opens in New York City's Martin Beck Theatre (music and lyrics by Herman Hupfeld, Louis Alter, Norma Gregg, and others; dances and ensembles staged by Sam Rose; special ballet direction by Theodore Bekeli; produced by Rosalie Stewart). Critics say that "Harriet Hoctor is the only member of the cast who is certain to be pleasantly remembered." After *A La Carte* closes, Hoctor returns to vaudeville.
- 1928 Hoctor stars in Florenz Ziegfeld's sumptuous Broadway musical, *The Three Musketeers* (music by Rudolf Friml; lyrics by P.G. Wodehouse and Clifford Grey; choreography by Albertina Rasch), which previews in Washington D.C. and Boston, opening in New York City at the Lyric Theatre.
- In the spring of 1928, Hoctor presents a series of Sunday evening recitals and includes her interpretation of Debussy's "Claire de Lune" and "The Raven," based on Edgar Allen Poe's poem. She also receives permission from Ziegfeld to dance in a series of Sunday night

entertainments at the Selwyn Theatre.

Hoctor is selected as leading prima ballerina on the American stage.

1929 Hoctor opens in *Show Girl*, produced by Florenz Ziegfeld (music by George Gershwin; lyrics by Ira Gershwin and Gus Kahn; dances staged by Beth Connell and ballets created by Albertina Rasch). Harriet Hoctor becomes the first dancer to dance to Gershwin's "American in Paris."

1930 Hoctor opens in the Broadway musical, *Simple Simon* (music by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart; book by Ed Wynn and Guy Bolton; sets by Joseph Urban; produced by Florenz Ziegfeld).

1932 Hoctor arrives in England to star in the musical revue, *Bow Bells*. One critic noted "the audience gave her an ovation such as London's representatives only give to artistes of the very front rank."

Hoctor opens in Earl Carroll's *Vanities* (music by Harold Arlen; lyrics by Ted Koehler; costumes created by Vincent Minnelli; ballets created by Gluck Sandor, other dances by Ned McGurn; production conceived and produced by Earl Carroll).

1933 Hoctor opens in New York City's RKO Music Hall Stage with her work, "The Nightingale and the Rose," based on a work by Oscar Wilde. New York critics hail the work as "an awe-inspiring performance which one cannot forget."

Hoctor appears in previews for *Hold Your Horses* (music and lyrics by [Robert] Russell Bennett and others; scene and costume design by Russell Patterson; ballets created and staged by Harriet Hoctor; produced under the supervision of John Shubert). After previews in Boston and Pittsburgh, the show opens at the Winter Garden on 25 September 1933. Even though the show survives a mere eleven weeks, Hoctor receives the best reviews: "Except for Miss Hoctor's really lovely dancing, there isn't much about *Hold Your Horses* to recommend it to your attention."

1934 A revamped and pared down *Hold Your Horses* tours Chicago and Washington, D.C.

The *Harriet Hoctor Ballet Revue* opens in New York City's Belasco Theatre. Hoctor presents six new ballets of her own creation.

1935 Columnist Louella O. Parsons announces in the *New York American* that the noted dance team of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers are to split and Hoctor is to star in Astaire's next film, *Shall We Dance* (1937). Regrettably for Hoctor, Rogers decides to appear in the film. Hoctor is given a ballet at the end of the film.

1936 Hoctor opens in Florenz Ziegfeld's *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1936* (music by Vernon Duke; lyrics by Ira Gershwin; scenery and costumes by Vincent Minnelli; dances by Robert Alton and George Balanchine). Reviews consistently praise the show's three stars: Josephine Baker, Fannie Brice, and Harriet Hoctor.

Hoctor appears as herself in the Hollywood film, *The Great Ziegfeld* (directed by Robert Z. Leonard; music by Walter Donaldson, starring Myrna Loy and William Powell).

Hoctor signs as premier ballerina for the tenth edition of Earl Carroll *Vanities* and spends the summer in St. Louis dancing in productions of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee* and Noel Coward's *Bitter Sweet*.

- 1937 Hoctor stars in Billy Rose's musical revue, *Casa Manaña*, in Fort Worth, Texas. More than 10,000 attend the show's four performances. One critic declares "The ballerina does her exquisite toe work so lightly it actually looks as though the breeze were blowing a slim boneless body from side to side."
- Hoctor appears in the musical revue "Chez Paree Revue" with orchestra leader, Vincent Lopez.
- The *New York Times* announces that Hoctor is to be Fred Astaire's leading lady in RKO's film *Damsel in Distress* (1937). Unfortunately, the part eventually goes to Joan Fontaine.
- 1937-41 Hoctor appears in stage shows that preview movies, often with her own company.
- 1941 Hoctor is billed as "Favorite Ziegfeld Ballerina" at the Latin Quarter in Boston and appears in a solo recital at the Malden (MA) Auditorium.
- 1942 Hoctor appears in Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe revue, *Mrs. Astor's Pet Horse*, New York City.
- 1943 Hoctor performs in Beverly Hills in *All American Revue*.
- 1945 Hoctor choreographs the dances and performs in Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe revue, *Toast of the Town*.
- Hoctor opens a ballet school in Boston and devotes herself full-time to teaching. She retires in 1974 and moves to Lorton, VA.
- 1977 Harriet Hoctor dies on 9 June in Arlington, VA.

Scope and Content Note

The Harriet Hocter Collection is comprised of materials that document her professional life as a vaudeville, Broadway, and film dancer. The Collection contains materials that begin with her early dance training at the Louis H. Chalif Normal School of Dancing in New York in 1917 to the founding of the Harriet Hocter Ballet School in Boston in 1945.

Some of the highlights of the collection are correspondence (letters, cards, and telegrams) and contracts. Represented in the correspondence sent to Harriet Hocter are Mary Pickford, Ted Shawn, Walter Winchell, Billy Rose, Milton Berle, and Florenz Ziegfeld.

The Collection also contains one scrapbook, which includes articles, clippings, photographs, and posters, detailing the early career of Hocter (1923-1925) as well as programs, posters, and publicity materials. A few of Hocter's choreographic notes are in the collection, including sketches for the "Hurdle Ballet," which was originally staged by Seymour Felix for Hocter in Ziegfeld's *Simple Simon*.

The Harriet Hocter Collection is organized in eleven series:

- Photographs
- Scrapbook (1923-1925)
- Clippings
- Posters, Programs, and Publicity Materials
- Choreographic Notes
- Monographs and Poems
- Correspondence
- Contracts
- Music
- Magazine Articles about Harriet Hocter
- Personal Papers, Magazines, Costume Designs

Elizabeth Aldrich April 2007

Container List

PHOTOGRAPHS

<i>Box/Folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
	Harriet Hoctor alone
1/1, 7/1	Hoctor, dancing as a child
1/2, 7/2	<i>Topsy and Eva</i>
1/3, 7/3	<i>A La Carte</i>
1/4, 7/4	<i>Three Musketeers</i>
1/5, 7/5	<i>Simple Simon</i>
1/6, 7/6	<i>Hold Your Horses</i>
1/7	"The Raven," from <i>Ziegfeld Follies of 1936</i>
1/8	Billy Rose's <i>Diamond Horseshoe</i>
1/9	<i>Show Girl</i>
1/10	<i>Shall We Dance</i> (RKO Film)
1/11	<i>The Great Ziegfeld</i> (Universal)
1/12, 7/7	Unidentified photographs
1/13	Publicity Photographs
1/14	Negatives
1/15	Photograph of portrait of Harriet Hoctor by Abram Poole
1/16, 7/8	Headshots
	Harriet Hoctor with Others
1/17	Hoctor, dancing as child
1/18	Hoctor and Edward Chalif at Chalif's Dancing School, New York
1/19	Hoctor and Chalif's Dancing School
1/20	Hoctor and others (unidentified)
1/21	Hoctor and others at London's Hippodrome
1/22	Hoctor and sculptor Jacob Epstein
7/9	Hoctor and William Holbrook in <i>A La Carte</i>
7/10	Hoctor and unidentified partner in <i>Three Musketeers</i>
	Locations
1/23	Hoctor's New York City Apartment
1/24	Unidentified set locations
	Hoctor Family Members
2/1-2	Unidentified Hoctor Family Members
2/3	Identified Hoctor Family Members, including
	Anna Carney
	Elizabeth Kearney Hoctor (grandmother)
	Eloise Hoctor (sister)
	Frank Hoctor (brother)
	Frank Hoctor's children (Elizabeth, Frances, and Harriet)
	Fred Hoctor (nephew)
	John Hoctor (brother)
	Tim and Elizabeth (Libby) Hoctor (parents)
	Pat Kearney (uncle)
	Marguerite Sage Oetjen (niece)

PHOTOGRAPHS

<i>Box/Folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
2/4	Harriet Hoctor's Students and Dance School
2/5	Students and Dance School (Negatives, slides, and contact sheets)
2/6	Others-Identified, including The Bennetts, Tom Chatterton Dennis King Anna Ludmila (a.k.a. Jean Marie Gee) Mario and Desha Alicia Markova Edwin Tyler Walter Winchell
2/7, 2/12	Others-Unidentified
2/11	Others-Identified, including Lester Allen Edwin Booth Clarence Derwent Jimmy Durante Leon Errol Ruth Etting Rupert Hughes Marilyn Miller Wendy Toye

SCRAPBOOK

6 1923-1925

CLIPPINGS

10 1920s
11 1930s
12/1 1940s; 1970s
12/2 Undated clippings
12/3 Harriet Hoctor Ballet School
12/4 Fred Hoctor and John Hoctor
12/5 Miscellaneous typed reviews

POSTERS, PROGRAMS, AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS

Posters

4/1 Ballet Revue preview to W.C. Fields's film *It's a Gift*

POSTERS, PROGRAMS, AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS

<i>Box/folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4/2	The Manchester Hippodrome, June 1932
4/3	Leo Litwin and his Concert Orchestra, with the Harriet Hocter Dancers, n.d.
4/4	<i>The Three Musketeers</i> , Lyric Theatre, New York, 1928
	Programs
4/5	Souvenir program: Ziegfeld Follies, 1936
4/6	Harriet Hocter Presents <i>The Dollies' Follies</i> , Boston Opera House, 1945
4/7	Harriet Hocter Ballet (Dance Recitals), 1943-1972
4/8	The Boston Ballet Company, <i>The Nutcracker</i> [choreography and costumes for "Candy Canes" by Harriet Hocter]
4/9	<i>Simple Simon</i> , Majestic Theatre, New York City, 1931
4/10	Harriet Hocter and her Ballet Revue, Belasco Theatre, Los Angeles, n.d.
4/11	Souvenir program: <i>The Great Ziegfeld</i> (MGM, 1936)
4/12	Second Twilight Concert Benefit Building Fund, The University of the American Theatre, East Hampton, L.I., New York, n.d.
4/13	Unique Sunday Night Divertissements, Selwyn Theatre, 1928
4/14	Flyer: Ziegfeld Follies [1936]
4/15	<i>Topsy and Eva</i> , Sam H. Harris Theatre, New York City, 1925
4/16	<i>The Three Musketeers</i> , Lyric Theatre, New York City, 1928
	Other Publicity Materials
4/17	Post cards: The Manchester Hippodrome, 1932
4/18	Mail Order Application: Belasco Theatre, n.d.
4/19	Flyer: <i>The Three Musketeers</i> , 1928
4/20	Farewell supper in honor of the Duncan Sisters, 1923
4/21	Flyer: <i>The Three Musketeers</i> , 1928
4/22	Sample stationery: Harriet Hocter's Boston Ballet School, n.d.
4/23	Publicity materials, Harriet Hocter School of Ballet, 1969-1970;1970-1971

POSTERS, PROGRAMS, AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS

<i>Box/folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4/24	Miscellaneous Items: Students, Harriet Hoctor Ballet School

CHOREOGRAPHIC NOTES

4/25	Notes for <i>The Blue Danube Ballet and Hurdle Ballet</i>
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MONOGRAPHS AND POEMS

4/26	Poem: "To Harriet Hoctor Dancing"
4/27	Poem: "Dancer," by Jack Walsh
4/28	Poem: "A Ballade to Harriet Hoctor"
4/29	"Ballet is Magic: Harriet Hoctor," by Walter Ware
4/30	<i>The Ballet in England</i> (1932) "Dedicated to Harriet Hoctor," by Arnold L. Haskell
4/31	Unidentified

CORRESPONDENCE TO AND FROM HARRIET HOCTOR

	Family Members
3/1	Harriet [Hoctor Groeschel] (niece)
3/2	Eloise [Hoctor] (sister)
3/3	Elizabeth Kearney Hoctor (mother)
3/4	Frances H. Hoctor (niece)
3/5	John Hoctor (brother)
3/6	Tim Hoctor (father) to his sister
3/7	Laurel [?](niece)
3/8	Jane Moon Love (niece)
3/9	Nancie [?] (niece)
3/10	Jane Simms (niece)
	Others
3/11	Mrs. John W. (Maryann) Antoine
3/12	Marlena Atamanui
3/13	Gladys Balestrassi
3/14	Sandra Balestrassi
3/15	John Gibson Bliss
3/16	Marcy Blinderman
3/17	Edward Caton
3/18	Louis H. Chalif
3/19	Ed Corcoran
3/20	Frank Crowninshield
3/21	Joyce Cuoco
3/22	Mary H. Dockham
3/23	Renée George

CORRESPONDENCE TO AND FROM HARRIET HOCTOR

<i>Box/folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
3/24	Connie Herbert
3/25	Mrs. F. Sheppard (Emily) Holt
3/26	La Bossiere Family
3/27	Sophie S. McMillen
3/28	Mrs. Charles (Vivian) W. Middleton
3/29	Marilyn Miller
3/30	[Robert?] Newman (with synopsis for revue)
3/31	Mrs. Morgan (Gloria) Nilsen
3/32	Mrs. Gustav Octjen
3/33	Mary Pickford
3/34	Ted Shawn
3/35	Mary Vasel
3/36	Allen S. Wilber
3/37	Walter Winchell
3/38	Virginia [?]
3/39	Florenz Ziegfeld
3/40	Former students and fans
3/41	Business Correspondence to Hoctor (1931-1934)
3/42	Unidentified and Fragments
3/43	Telegrams from well-known producers, composers, photographers, performers, writers, film and stage directors, casting directors, and other show business luminaries: [John] Murray Anderson; Bobbie Arnst; Milton Berle; Ben Bernie; Anatole Bourman; Russel Crouse; Clarence Derwent ; Ralph G Farnum; Rudolf Friml; Daniel Frohman; Arnold Genthe; Billy Grady; Cornwell Jackson; Jules Lande; Arthur S Lyons; William Morris; Billy Rose; Madam and Monsieur Senia Russakoff; Milton Schwarzwald; Louis Shurr; Margit and Ivan Tarasoff; Ed Wynn.
3/44	Telegrams from Broadway and film performers
3/45	Telegrams, various
3/46	Various

MUSIC

5/1	"Petite Suite de Concert," S. Coleridge-Taylor Piano conductor's score with some choreographic notes
5/2	"I wish I had never seen sun shine" [Jimmy Davis] Piano vocal score
5/3	"Hora Staccato," Dinicu-Heifetz Piano score
5/4	"Tarentelle" op. 85, no. 2, Stephen Heller Piano part
5/5	"Gallop," Aram Khachaturian Piano conductor's score with choreographic notes

MUSIC

<i>Box/Folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
5/6	"Waltz at Maxims," Frederich Loewe Piano; for Hoctor Dancers
5/7	"Valse Bleue," A. Margis Paris
5/8	"Orpheus Can Can" [Jacques Offenbach] Parts (negatives)
5/9	"Poupée Valsante," Ed. Poldini Piano Score
5/10	"Pas de Quatre," Pugnî (Markova Dolin Ballet) Parts
5/11	"A Game of Tag," Geo. J. Trinkaus Piano conductor's score
5/12	"The Cockatoos" [unidentified] Piano part

MAGAZINE ARTICLES ABOUT HARRIET HOCTOR

9/1	<i>Theatre Magazine</i> , "The Homes of American Celebrities," December, 1928, no. 7, pg. 57.
9/2	<i>The Dance Magazine</i> , "The All-American Choice of Dancers for 1928," January, 1919, pp. 34-35.
9/3	<i>Vanity Fair</i> , "The Theatre," December, 1933, pp. 40-41.
9/4	<i>Picture Play</i> , February 1936, pg. 20.
9/5	<i>Motion Picture</i> , June, 1937, pg. 55.
9/6	<i>Dance</i> , June, 1937, cover and pg. 13.
9/7	<i>Dance Magazine</i> , December, 1965, pp. 112-117
9/8	Magazine clippings, 1920s
9/9	Magazine Clippings, 1930s
9/10	Magazine Clippings, n.d.

PERSONAL PAPERS, MAGAZINES, COSTUME DESIGNS

8/1	Newspapers, publications, and magazines relating to Hoctor's hometown of Hoosick Falls, New York
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PERSONAL PAPERS, MAGAZINES, COSTUME DESIGNS

<i>Box/folder</i>	<i>Contents</i>
8/2	Elementary school papers
8/3	Magazine covers
8/4	Costume sketches
8/5	Prints and postcards
8/6	Magazines, programs, and non-dance newspaper clippings