

# Guide to the Winifred Smith Papers, 1904-1959

## Biographical Note

Winifred Smith (1897-1967) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was the daughter of Henry Preserved Smith, a leading Biblical scholar, and the sister of Preserved Smith, noted historian of the Reformation. After graduating from Vassar in 1904 and spending a year as a tutor at Mt. Holyoke College, and a year of student at the Sorbonne, Winifred Smith earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1912.

In 1911 Miss Smith came to Vassar as an instructor in English, rising to the rank of professor. In 1916 she started a theatrical museum at Vassar and, with Emmeline Moore, a Shakespeare Garden to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. Winifred Smith's scholarly interest was in dramatic literature. She wrote books on The Commedia dell-Arte and Italian Actors in the Renaissance and numerous articles and reviews for periodicals such as *The Nation* and *The Dial*. She also translated many futurist plays from the French and Italian. When the Division of Drama was organized in 1938, she became its chairman, working closely with Hallie Flanagan Davis during the years of the Experimental Theatre.

Professor Smith was also active in the suffrage movement and participated in local civic activities, including the Community Theatre, the Women's City and County Club, and the Citizens Better Housing League. She was the first president of the Dutchess County local of the American Federation of Teachers. She was interested in such social issues as disarmament and child labor.

Her retirement in 1947 was marked by an only slightly slower pace in a career outstanding for her willingness to act on a broad range of social concerns and scholarly interests. In a faculty memorial minute, Winifred Smith was named "one of Vassar's great teachers" and "one of its great rebels." She had an adopted daughter, Ann Veronka, who graduated from Vassar in 1938.

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## Scope and Content Note

Papers include letters received regarding her books, fellowships, teaching and research opportunities, and other professional concerns; manuscripts on life at Vassar College, review of Vassar theater presentation, articles on plays and literature, and a lecture on the "Usefulness of Brains;" copies of her publications; Vassar reading lists and assignments; and a copy of a Vassar senior thesis by Mary Arnold Sykes, 1946. Also includes a card file of descriptions of college as well as local productions and notes on Vassar classes and curricula.

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## Administrative Information

## Preferred Citation

Winifred Smith Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

## Processing Information

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## Acquisition Information

Gift of Priscilla Smith Robertson (VC 1930) and other donors. Card file transferred from VC Drama Department in 2007 (M2007-015)

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## Correspondence

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## Biographical Materials

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## Manuscripts and Published Works of Winifred Smith

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### **Vassar Related Materials**

Folder 15.54 Reading lists and assignments, 1940-1944 Folder 15.55 Teaching notes Folder 15.56 Senior thesis, by Mary Arnold Sykes (VC 1946), 1946

### **Drama Card File**

Box 1 "Russian Drama" Box 1-2 "U.S.A. & its drama, Melodrama, 18th & 19th c. Federal Theatre, Irish Theatre" Box 2-3 "German Drama, Modern" Box 3-4 "Shaw and background" Box 4 "Scandinavian, Spanish, Dutch, Czech, Irish Drama & G.B.S. Life" Box 4-5 [Shaw, Italian Literature and Theater] Box 5 "French Drama, Medieval 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th c." Box 5-6 "French Drama – Modern" Box 6-7 "English Drama – Modern" Box 7 "Greek Drama, Comedy, Tragedy, Criticism" Box 8 "Italian Drama (1500-1600), Actors, Theatres, Scenery, Masks" Box 8-9 "American Drama (l-w)" Box 9-10 "19th & 20th c. Theatre, Movies" Box 10 "Modern Drama, Background, science, philosophy, psychology, social life" Box 10-11 "Modern Drama (Don Juan), Theories, Style, Background (aesthetic), Poetry" Box 11-12 "19th Century Drama (early through Strindberg)" Box 12-13 "American Drama (a-k)" Box 13 "Italian Drama, Modern" Box 13-14 "Modern Plays, Bibliography, Theme, Pageantry groups, Marionettes, Capeks – Molnar, Munk & Dutch, Holberg" Box 14 "Aesthetics & Poetics, Epic, Comedy – Burlesque, Tragedy (classical), Pantamine"