

Shaw-Wells family papers, 1792-1977

Descriptive Inventory for the Collection at Chicago History Museum, Research Center
By Linda J. Evans, Richard L. Popp, July 1981; rev. 2007 by Christopher Tounsel.

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Main entry: Shaw, Frances Wells, 1872-1937

Title: Shaw-Wells family papers, 1792-1977

Inclusive dates: 1792-1977 (bulk 1885-1937).

Size: 8 linear ft. (18 boxes)

A&M accession number: 1979.0031

Restriction: Some additions to the collection is unprocessed and are not included in the description below.

This descriptive inventory includes:

Brief biography of Frances Wells Shaw and Howard Van Doren Shaw,

Description of the collection,

Description of archival series within the collection,

Description of some related material,

List of card catalog headings,

List of online catalog headings,

Provenance statement,

Storage designation,

Container list of box/folder numbers and titles.

Brief biography of Frances Wells Shaw and Howard Van Doren Shaw:

Frances Wells Shaw was a successful writer and her husband Howard Van Doren Shaw was a noted architect. Frances Lillian Wells Shaw was born in Chicago, April 10, 1872. She was the daughter of Moses D. Wells and Frances E. Searls. Her father was a pioneer boot merchant who had been a Chicago resident since 1852.

In 1893, Frances Wells married Howard Van Doren Shaw. They had 3 daughters: Evelyn Shaw McCutcheon, 1894-1977 (who married John T. McCutcheon); Sylvia Shaw Judson Haskins, a noted sculptor, 1897-1978 (who married Clay Judson and after his death, Sidney Haskins); and Frances Theodora Shaw King (known as Theodora), 1913-1996 (who married John Lord King).

Mrs. Shaw enjoyed some fame as an author as well as success with her plays written for her garden theater. She published early poems in *Poetry* magazine and other journals, some of which were reprinted in anthologies. Her most popular poem was "Who Loves the Rain." She also wrote and adapted plays that were private productions performed for family and friends in an outdoor theater constructed by her husband at Ragdale, the Shaws' estate in Lake Forest, Illinois. She traveled extensively in America and Europe with her husband. Following his death in 1926, she continued to travel, lecturing and publishing newspaper and magazine articles about her trips. She died October 12, 1937, at her home in Chicago.

Howard Van Doren Shaw was born in Chicago, May 7, 1869. His father, Theodore A. Shaw, was a wholesale dry goods merchant; his mother was Sarah Van Doren. After attending Harvard School on the city's south side, he graduated from Yale in 1890 and was trained in architecture at

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Upon completing his studies at MIT, Shaw returned to Chicago where he married Frances Wells and set up his offices in their home. Shaw, specialized in domestic architecture and soon attracted many clients, primarily from Chicago and its North Shore suburbs, but also in other parts of the country. The homes he designed were typically sturdy in their proportions and eclectic in style, influenced in their details by country houses he saw on his numerous trips to Europe.

In addition to a large number of homes which Shaw designed and supervised through construction, he designed a number of well-known Chicago buildings: Goodman theater, the Quadrangle Club, the University Church of the Disciples of Christ, and the Fourth Presbyterian Church (with Ralph Adams Cram). He also designed the Market Square shopping complex in Lake Forest and the model steel town of Indiana Harbor, Indiana.

Shaw was a critical success as well as a popular success. His work received favorable attention in architectural publications such as *The Architectural Record* and the *Western Architect*. Shortly before his death from pernicious anemia on May 6, 1926, the American Institute of Architects awarded him its Gold Medal. Many of Shaw's books were given to the Burnham Architectural Library of the Art Institute of Chicago, which Shaw had helped to establish.

Descriptions of the collection:

Correspondence, diaries, articles, poems, short stories, plays, clippings, mementos, estate documents, and other family papers of Chicago (Ill.) author Frances Wells Shaw and her husband, architect Howard Van Doren Shaw, and of their parents, daughters, other relatives, and ancestors. Topics include Mrs. Shaw's school days at Dearborn Seminary, Presbyterian Church activities, courtship and marriage, family matters, the publication of her poetry, short stories, and plays for children and for adults, the staging of garden theater performances at the family's estate, Ragdale, in Lake Forest (Ill.), and travel in Great Britain. The papers include relatively little unpublished information on Howard Van Doren Shaw's career as an architect.

Materials in the collection include death condolences; diaries (3 v., 1890-1913) of Mrs. Shaw's aunt Mary E. Wells of Lake Geneva (Wis.); Yale University mementos of Mr. Shaw (1886-1890); Theodore A. Shaw's wholesale dry goods business correspondence (1870-1889) and Christmas card for 50th anniversary in 1942 (showing building new in 1892); Moses D. Wells' boot and shoe trade correspondence with reactions to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 (1850-1907); and Mrs. Shaw's writings on Atlantic Ocean and Tennessee River travels (1920's-1930's).

Correspondents include Martha Wells Atkinson, Sylvia Shaw Judson Haskins, Theodora Shaw King, Evelyn Shaw McCutcheon, Searls family, Kate Sturges, Lily Sturges, Jane Van Doren Wright.

The papers consist of three series:

Series 1. Frances Wells Shaw, 1873-1938 (box 1-6)

Series 2. Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1885-1926 (box 7-9)

Series 3. Family papers, 1870-1932 (box 9)

Description of archival series within the collection:

Series 1. Frances Wells Shaw, 1873-1938 (box 1-6)

Series 1 contains papers relating to the life of Frances Wells Shaw from her early school days at Dearborn Seminary to her death. Box 1 contains courtship letters from Frances Wells to her fiancé,

Howard Shaw (Shaw's side of the correspondence is in Box 7, folders 1-3), and her wedding book and lists of gifts and of her trousseau. Also located in Boxes 1-3 is correspondence with her sister, Martha Wells Atkinson, her aunt, Mary E. Wells (who is also represented by travel diaries and an account book), her three daughters, and other friends and family members. Some clippings and other items pertaining to each of the Shaw daughters are also included, as are condolence letters and cards they received following her death.

Boxes 4-6 contain manuscripts and some correspondence related to Frances Shaw's writing; Manuscripts of poems and lyrics are found in Box 4, plays in Box 5, and stories in Box 6.

Series 2. Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1885-1926 (box 7-9)

Series 2 includes notebooks, Yale University mementos and other personal papers, his will, obituaries, biographies, and condolence letters to his family are located in Boxes 7, 8, and part of Box 9.

Box 8 contains architectural journals with commentary on Shaw's work by his contemporaries, but his only working papers as an architect in the collection are a few sketches of architectural details (Box 7, Folder 9) and four pocket notebooks with jotted reminders relating to building construction (Box 9, Folder 1). These materials have not been linked to specific projects.

Series 3. Family papers, 1870-1932 (box 9)

The remainder of Box 9 contains papers relating to earlier generations of both the Shaw and Wells families. They include papers from the wholesale dry goods business of Howard Shaw's father, Theodore A. Shaw, and letters from Frances Shaw's parents, Moses D. Wells and Frances E. Searls. Of special interest are letters from suppliers after Wells' shoe establishment burned in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Papers and genealogical information on earlier ancestors, some of whom came to America as early as the 17th century, are also found in Box 9.

Description of some related materials:

Related materials at Chicago History Museum, Research Center, include the Wells-Shaw family photograph collection (1980.0019) and the Sylvia Shaw Judson Haskins papers. Artifacts in the museum collection include a bullet mould that belonged to William H. Van Doren, ca. 1860.

Two printed volumes by Frances Wells Shaw, received with this collection, are cataloged separately at Chicago History Museum. They are *The Ragdale Book of Verse* (Lake Forest, 1911), and *Songs of a Baby's Day* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1917). Also cataloged with publications is the March 1914 issue of *Poetry* magazine (vol. III, no. 6) and other writings by Mrs. Shaw.

Lake Forest College, Donnelley Library collected materials by and about the family, especially items relating to the architectural designs of Howard Van Doren Shaw.

Art Institute of Chicago, Burnham Library received many of Howard Van Doren Shaw's books after his death.

The papers of Sylvia Shaw Judson located at the Archives of American Art in Detroit also contain some materials on her family.

List of card catalog headings:

The following headings were placed in the Manuscripts card catalog:

Main entry: Shaw-Wells family.

Subject entries:

1. Architects.
2. Authors and Publishers.
3. Boots and Shoes. Trade and Manufacture. Chicago.
4. Businesses. Chicago.
5. Chicago. Fire, 1871.
6. Children's Literature.
7. Costume.
8. Courtship.
9. Dearborn Seminary, Chicago (Ill.)
10. Death.
11. Deeds. Chicago.
12. Diaries.
13. Dry goods.
14. Family.
15. Gardens.
16. Great Britain. Description and Travel
17. Lake Forest (Ill.)
18. Lake Geneva (Wis.)
19. Marriage Customs and Rites. Illinois.
20. Poems.
21. Presbyterian Church in Chicago.
22. River Transportation.
23. Social life and customs.
24. Theater.
25. Yale University (New Haven, Conn.)
26. Youth

Added entries:

1. Atkinson, Martha Wells, 1867-1935.
2. Haskins, Sylvia Shaw Judson, 1897-1978.
3. King, Theodora Shaw, 1913-1996
4. McCutcheon, Evelyn Shaw, 1894-1977
5. Richards, Shaw, and Winslow.
6. Searls family.
7. Shaw, Frances Wells, 1872-1937.
8. Shaw, Howard Van Doren, 1869-1926.
9. Shaw, Theodore A., 1836-1906?
10. Sturges, Kate.
11. Sturges, Lily.
12. Van Doren Family.
13. Wells, Mary E.
14. Wells, Moses Dwight, 1837-1910.

List of online catalog headings:

The following headings were placed in the online card catalog:

Main entry: Shaw, Frances Wells, 1872-1937

Subjects:

Shaw family
Wells family.
Searle family
Searls family
Van Doren family.
Shaw, Frances Wells, 1872-1937
Shaw, Howard Van Doren, 1896-1926.
McCutcheon, Evelyn Shaw, 1894-1977
Haskins, Sylvia Shaw Judson, 1897-1978
King, Theodora Shaw, 1913-1996
Yale University
Dearborn Seminary (Chicago, Ill.)
Ragdale (Estate : Lake Forest, Ill.)
Family-Illinois-Chicago.
Family-Illinois-Lake Forest.
Women authors, American--Illinois--Chicago.
Amateur theater--Illinois--Lake Forest.
Architects--Illinois--Chicago.
Children's literature
Courtship--Illinois--Chicago.
Dry-goods--Illinois--Chicago.
Fires--Illinois--Chicago.
Great Fire, Chicago, Ill., 1871. Box 9.
Gardens--Design--Illinois--Lake Forest.
Marriage--Illinois--Chicago.
Presbyterians--Illinois--Chicago.
Shoe industry--Illinois--Chicago.
Voyages and travels
Women--Illinois--Chicago.
Women--Illinois--Lake Forest.
Women--Wisconsin--Lake Geneva.
Chicago (Ill.)--Social life and customs.
Chicago Metropolitan Area (Ill.)--Intellectual life.
Lake Forest (Ill.)--Social life and customs.
Lake Forest (Ill.)--Intellectual life
Lake Geneva (Wis.)--Social life and customs.
Tennessee River--Description and travel.
Great Britain--Description and travel

Form/genre:

Articles.
Christmas cards. 1942
Deeds.
Diaries.
Fiction.
Genealogies.
Manuscripts (for publication).
Poems.
Short stories.

Scripts.
Wills.

Added entries:

Atkinson, Martha Wells, 1867-1935.
Haskins, Sylvia Shaw Judson, 1897-1978.
King, Theodora Shaw, 1913-1996. Mrs. John Lord King.
McCutcheon, Evelyn Shaw, 1894-1977. Mrs. John T. McCutcheon.
Shaw, Howard Van Doren, 1896-1926.
Shaw, Theodore A., 1836-1906?
Sturges, Kate.
Sturges, Lily.
Wells, Mary E.
Wells, Moses Dwight, 1837-1910
Wright, Jane Van Doren.
T.A. Shaw & Company (Chicago, Ill.) Christmas card 1942 shows 1892
Richards, Shaw, and Winslow.

Provenance statement,

The majority of these papers were a gift of Sylvia Shaw Judson Haskins' daughter, Alice Ryerson, in 1980. (A&M accession number 1979.0031).

Alice Ryerson Hayes donated the Christmas card by T. A. Shaw & Co. 50th anniversary in 1942 showing its new building of 1892 (in box 9; A&M accession number: 2002.0001).

The following material has not been added to the description in this descriptive inventory yet::
Gift of John and Susan McCutcheon. 1994.0334: Papers of Evelyn Shaw McCutcheon (1894-1977).
Gift of John and Susan McCutcheon. 1994.0202: Letters exchanged between members of the Shaw, Wells, and McCutcheon families, including letters from architect Howard Van Doren Shaw to his wife, Frances Wells Shaw,
Gift of Alice Ryerson Hayes. 1991.0669: Typescripts of plays, etc.

Storage designation,

Collections: Shaw-Wells family.

This descriptive inventory by,

Linda J. Evans, Richard L. Popp., July 1981; revised 2007.

Container list of box and folder numbers and titles:

Series 1. Frances Wells Shaw, 1873-1938 (box 1-6)

Box 1

- 1 Youth: misc. notes, programs, friendship book re: Dearborn Seminary, The Wednesday Club, First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, 1880's-1890's
- 2 Frances Wells to Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1887-1892, 1906
- 3 Wedding book of F.W.S. and H.V.D.S. with family autographs, invitations, lists of gifts and trousseau, April 20, 1891
- 4 Jane Van Doren Wright (H.V.D.S.'s aunt) to F.W.S., 1890-1934
- 5 F.W.S. - Martha Wells Atkinson (her sister) correspondence, 1890-1932
- 6 F.W.S. - Lily and Kate Sturges correspondence, 1905-1938

7 Misc. correspondence, primarily incoming and undated

Box 2

- 1-3 F.W.S. to Mary E. Wells (her aunt), 1884-1912, primarily 1889-1891
- 4 Envelopes of above
- 5 Mary E. Wells to F.W.S. (4 letters), Jan.-May 1890
- 6 Mary E. Wells account book, 1873-1874, and English travel diary, 1890-1891
2 vols. Mary E. Wells personal diaries, 1905-1909, 1910-1913
- 7 Misc. books associated with F.W.S.

Box 3

- 1 F.W.S. to her daughter Evelyn (Mrs. John T. McCutcheon), 1927-1936
- 2 Evelyn Shaw McCutcheon correspondence and miscellany, 1926-1954
- 3 F.W.S. - her daughter Sylvia (Mrs. Clay Judson) correspondence, 1910-1935 plus misc. items pertaining to Sylvia Judson Haskins
- 4 F.W.S. - her daughter Theodora (Mrs. John L. King) correspondence, 1927-1936 plus misc. items pertaining to Theodora King.
- 5-7 Condolence letters and cards to F.W.S.'s daughters after her death, October 1937-1938.

Box 4

- 1 F.W.S. journals: July/Aug 1891, Magnolia Hotel, Mass.; June 1936 from Chicago River to London by ship; postcard photo of ship
 - 2-3 F.W.S. misc. notes, clippings, etc. about travel, mostly undated
 - 4 F.W.S. misc. notes, clippings, etc. primarily about philosophy
 - 5 F.W.S. misc. notes and programs relating to theater, mostly undated
 - 6 Letters re permission to publish poems by F.W.S., especially "Who Loves the Rain," 1910-1960 and undated
 - 7 Poems by F.W.S., mostly undated
 - 8 Poems by F.W.S. published in *Poetry*, 1914-1937 (photocopies only)
 - 9 Lyrics (for sheet music) by F.W.S.
- Plays written by or adapted by F.W.S.:

Box 5

- 1 "The Desk of Simeon Dark," by F.W.S. (6 typescripts)
- 2 "Djaddesde (or Philopena)," from a story by a Turkish authoress, adapted by F.W.S. (3 typescripts, 1 holograph copy)
- 3 "The Extra hand, A Farm House Drama," by (?) (2 typescripts)
- 4 "A Garden Drama," by F.W.S. (program: copies of play privately printed in 1913 and published by The Dramatic Publ Co., Chicago 1926)
- 5-7 "The Heir of Manville Grange, a Peripatetic Play in Four Acts," by F.W.S., performed at Ragdale, Lake Forest, Ill. in 1909 and 1922. (3 typescripts: programs; photographs; 1966 introduction by Louis Ellsworth Laflin, Jr., 2 pp.)
- 8 "Hetty of the Hovel, A Peripatetic play in Three Acts," by F.W.S.
- 9 "In the Pasha's Garden," by H. G. Dwight and adapted by F.W.S. ; (2 typescripts)
- 10 "The Noble Tzigane," from a Rumanian folk tale, by F.W.S. (1 typescript)
- 11 "The Person in the Chair, A Revelation in One Act, by F.W.S. (3 copies, publ in *The Drama* [vol. II, no. 5] February 1921)
- 12 "The Suicides in the Rue Sombre, an Episode in Two Scenes," from a story by Leonard Merrick, adapted by F.W.S. (2 typescripts)

13 "Three Plays for a Library: the Desk of Simeon Dark, The Person in the Chair, and The Drawn Curtain," by F.W.S. (1 typescript)

14 "Vagabond Loot, a Graveyard Fantasy," by F.W.S. (2 typescripts)

Short stories by F.W.S.:

Box 6

1 "A Letter from a Very Young Bride (typescript 11 pp.), "The Looking-Glass Lady" (typescript 13 pp.), "Dressing Olivia, a Monologue" (typescript 8 pp.), "The Face in the Tower" (typescript 14 pp.) "Her Picture" (typescript 7 pp.; holograph copy also), about her class at Dearborn Seminary [photograph in family photograph collection at Chicago History Museum]

2 "The Silver Beads," by Rance Haw (typescript 10 pp.), "Their Second Chance" (typescript 39 pp.), "The Doctors Story" (typescript 18pp.), "Fathers Unveiling Story (holograph copy, incomplete 2pp.)

3 Items published in *Child Life*, especially "The Changelings" in March-May 1932

4 "The Ragdale Book of Stories" (manuscript of *Essays, Plays, and Stories for Children* ?)

5 *Essays, Plays, and Stories for Children*, by F.W.S. Ragdale, 1872-1937 (2 copies)

6 "A Vacation on the Tennessee River" pub. in *The American Review of Reviews*, May 1925 pp. 506-512 (also postcard, photograph, reprints, and letter)

Series 2. Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1885-1926 (box 7-9)

Box 7

1-3 H.V.D.S. to Frances Wells Shaw, 1885-1891, Apr-July 1892-Aug 1892 and n.d

4-5 Envelopes for above

6-7 Misc. personal papers, 1890-May 1926, June 1926-1966 ?.

8 Biographical data; Last Will and Testament 1915; codicil 1918

9 Drawing

Box 8

1 Articles in architectural and other journals re H.V.D.S., 1905-1934 (chiefly whole issues of magazines)

Box 9

1 H.V.D.S. pocket notebooks, 1918-1925 (4 vols.); signature stamp

2-4 H.V.D.S. Yale University mementos, 1886-1890, 1893, undated

Series 3. Family papers, 1870-1932 (box 9)

Box 9 continued

5 Theodore A. Shaw business papers (wholesale dry goods), 1870-1889 and

T. A. Shaw & Co. 50th anniversary Christmas Card, 1942 (Print on front cover depicts the nine employees who started T. A. Shaw at the "opening of new quarters at 414 South Market Street, Chicago, 1892" [2002.0001 Christmas card was a gift of Alice Ryerson Hayes])

6 Moses D. Wells to F. W. S. (his daughter), 1888-1903

7 Moses D. Wells correspondence (boots and shoes trade), 1850-1907

8 Moses D. Wells obituaries, estate records, 1902-1913, 1932

9 Letter to Frances E. Searls Wells (Mrs. Moses D. Wells), 1863-1873

10-11 Misc. family papers (Shaw Wells, Van Doren, Searls, etc.), 1784-1913 and n.d.