

# Dorothy Maud Somerset fonds

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University of British Columbia Archives



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



The Library

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# Fonds Description

**Dorothy Maud Somerset fonds.** – 1900-1991.

62 cm of textual records.

81 photographs.

## Biographical Sketch

Born in Perth, Australia, Dorothy Somerset came to Vancouver to attend Braemer School. In 1921, she received an A.B. from Radcliffe. She returned to Vancouver and acted in the Little Theatre. After studying in Europe, she began directing UBC Players' Club productions. In 1938, she was appointed supervisor for drama in the Extension Department, in which capacity she founded and directed the Summer School of Theatre. A Rockefeller Foundation grant in 1945 enabled her to study drama departments at leading American universities. Somerset became the first head of the newly-formed Department of Theatre in 1959 and played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Frederic Wood Theatre. She retired in 1960, but continued to teach courses at UBC. She was awarded an honorary degree by UBC in 1965. Somerset died on August 11, 1991.

## Scope and Content

The fonds consists of correspondence from 1929 to 1990; biographical data/information from 1921 to 1991; literary works from 1938 to 1984; photographs from 1898 to 1984; interviews and talks/speeches given from 1942 to 1984; newspaper clippings from 1920 to 1990; newsletters and theatre souvenirs from 1922 to 1987.

## Notes

File list available.

The fonds were donated to the University Archives by Jack Stuart Clyne in 1992.

File List available. Photographs are catalogued as part of UBC Archives' [Historical Photograph Database](#) under [UBC 20.1](#), and are stored separately.

## Series Descriptions

**Correspondence series.** – 1929-1990.

12 cm of textual records.

Series consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence, arranged in two sub-series: Letters to Dorothy Somerset, and Letters Written by Dorothy Somerset.

**Biographical Information series.** – 1921-1991.

12 cm of textual records.

Series consists of CV's, certificates, and memorabilia.

**Literary Works series.** – 1938-1984.

12 cm of textual records.

Series consists of manuscripts, arranged in two sub-series: Works by Dorothy Somerset, and Comments by Dorothy Somerset on Others' Work.

**Interviews, Talks, and Speeches series.** – 1942-1984.

8 cm of textual records.

Series consists of lecture notes, transcripts of interviews, and written notes on interviews and speeches given by Somerset.

**Newspaper Clippings series.** – 1920-1990.

6 cm of textual records.

Series consists of newspaper and magazine clippings about Dorothy Somerset and collected by her.

**Newsletters/Theatre Souvenirs series.** – 1922-1987.

6 cm of textual records.

Series consists of published materials, including the UBC Alumni Chronicle and theatrical publications.

**Miscellaneous series.** – [19-?].

4 cm of textual records.

Series consists of assorted memorabilia collected by Somerset, including a photocopy of a land grant to John Somerset and other related documents.

**Photographs series.** – 1898-1984.

81 photographs.

Series consists of photographs of Somerset's family, and people and events at UBC. They are catalogued as part of UBC Archives [Historical Photograph Database](#) under [UBC 20.1](#).

# File List

## BOX 1

### CORRESPONDENCE SERIES

Letters to Dorothy Somerset

1-1 Letters from friends and colleagues 1929-1990

1-2 George Bernard Shaw 1940

1-3 Congratulatory letters 1958-1963

1-4 Congratulatory letters 1965

1-5 Christmas poems

1-6 Correspondence relating Sydney Risk 1985

Letters written by Dorothy Somerset

1-7 Travel letters from Europe 1954

1-8 Travel letters from Europe 1954

1-9 Travel letters from Europe 1954

1-10 Travel letters

1-11 Travel letters 1966

1-12 Travel letters 1966-1967

## BOX 2

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SERIES

2-1 Biographical data, curriculum vitae 1982

- 2-2 Autograph book
- 2-3 Vancouver Little Theatre Association 1921  
Golden Anniversary Life Membership, 18 September 1921 (stored in memorabilia cupboard)
- 2-4 Simon Fraser University 1924
- 2-5 Harvard University (stored in OVR 9-5, University Archives / Rare Books and Special Collections vault) 1927
- 2-6 Community Art Council of Vancouver 1962  
Certificate of appointment of continuing Honourary Director (stored in OVR 9-5, University Archives / Rare Books and Special Collections vault)
- 2-7 Doctor of Letters, UBC 1965
- 2-8 Vancouver Little Theatre Association 1979
- 2-9 Association for Canadian Theatre History 1983
- 2-10 Canadian Actors Equity Association 1983
- 2-11 City of Vancouver, Civic Merit Book 1984
- 2-12 City of Vancouver, Distinguished Pioneer Award 1986
- 2-13 The Sam Payne Award 1991 (stored in memorabilia cupboard)
- 2-14 Canadian Drama Award n.d.
- 2-15 UBC Faculty Association, Hon. life membership n.d.

BOX 3

LITERARY WORKS SERIES

Works by Dorothy Somerset

- 3-1 Draft copy of part of Marilyn Benson's MA thesis "The Birth of the Frederic Wood Theatre" [originally labelled "History of UBC Extension Department"] 1991
  - 3-2 Cock-a-doodle, play adapted by Dorothy Somerset
  - 3-3 Red Cross is You, written and produced by Dorothy Somerset
  - 3-4 Drama School in the Air, a play 1938
  - 3-5 Report on work undertaken under the terms of the Canadian Government Overseas Fellowship awarded by the Royal Society of Canada
  - 3-6 History of the Theatre in Vancouver, some milestones 1921-1984
  - 3-7 The Japanese evacuation - After Pearl Harbour 1984
  - 3-8 The Party
- Comments by Dorothy Somerset on others' work
- 3-9 West Kootenay by Simma Holt
  - 3-10 Hamlet (new interpretation) by Maria Stone
  - 3-11 This is my life, based loosely on the life and times of Dorothy Somerset by E.G. Perrault 1958
  - 3-12 "Richard" a modern tragedy by Vian Andrews



## BOX 4

### INTERVIEWS, TALKS, AND SPEECHES SERIES

- 4-1 Four tapes, Dorothy Somerset interviewed by L. Daniells 1988
- 4-2 Travel notes, transcripts of tapes 1 - 4
- 4-3 Travel notes, transcripts of tapes 5 - 6
- 4-4 Travel notes, transcripts of tapes 8 - 9
- 4-5 Travel notes, the Middle east
- 4-6 The UBC Players' Club: the early history, Dorothy Somerset, Sydney Risk and Harry Warren; introduction by L. Daniells 1984
- 4-7 Reminiscing about the theatre in Vancouver and UBC, Dorothy Somerset and Sydney Risk introduction by L. Daniells 1979
- 4-8 Theatre under the Blitz
- 4-9 Congregation address by Dorothy Somerset at UBC Congregation, 27 May 1965 1965
- 4-10 Gala opening of the new Frederic Wood theatre, 19 September 1963 1963
- 4-11 A few hints on speaking in public 1942

### NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS SERIES

- 4-12 Newspaper clippings of Dorothy Somerset

## BOX 5

- 5-1 Newspaper clippings of Dorothy Somerset

## NEWSLETTERS, THEATRE SOUVENIRS SERIES

- 5-2 UBC Alumni Chronicle, Winter 1952
- 5-3 UBC Alumni Chronicle, Fall 1953
- 5-4 UBC Alumni Chronicle, Winter 1956
- 5-5 UBC Alumni Chronicle, Autumn 1965
- 5-6 UBC Alumni Chronicle, Winter 1965
- 5-7 Photocopies of the UBC Alumni Chronicles for the years 1951, 1953, 1956, 1959, 1963, 1965 and 1980
- 5-8 The way we were, UBC Alumni Association 1987
- 5-9 McGill News, June-July 1965
- 5-10 Theatre Souvenirs, Europe
- 5-11 Theatre Souvenirs, Vancouver -- UBC Players' club and theatre associations 1922-1963

## MISCELLANEOUS SERIES

- 5-12 The work of the Actor, I. J. Rapoport
- 5-13 Xerox copy of a land grant to John Somerset and other related documents
- 5-14 Miscellaneous items

## PHOTOGRAPHS SERIES

Photos [UBC 20.1/1-28](#) comprise a series of UBC related images. Scanned images of the photos and their corresponding bibliographic records may be accessed on UBC Archives' [Historical Photograph Database](#).

20.1/29p Ethel Somerset and Edna Coin 1898

20.1/30sp Views of Perth (3 views) 190-?

20.1/31sp Dorothy giving "baby Betty" her bottle - Perth 190?

20.1/32p [House in Perth] (Christmas card) 1912

20.1/33sp Vacation to Quidaloup (7 views) 19??

20.1/34sp London, 1913 (3 views) 1913

20.1/35sp Photo of house in France 1913

20.1/36p Dorothy Somerset, Toronto 1914

20.1/37p H.R. Somerset 1915

20.1/38sp Alec Rocke Robertson - 1st World War 191-?

20.1/39sp [Men in uniform aboard ship] 191-

20.1/40sp [Family photo] 191?

20.1/41sp [Family photo] 191?

20.1/42p Mildred Boyle (Robertson) 191-

20.1/43sp Radcliffe graduation 1921

20.1/44p Dorothy Somerset (2 views) 1922

20.1/45p Dorothy Somerset in Vancouver Little Theatre publicity photo for Ibsen play (2 views) 192-?

20.1/46p Dorothy Somerset and E.V. Young (3 views) 192-?

20.1/47sp Libby and Barbara Collard 192-?

20.1/48sp Family at Lake Kenda 192?

- 20.1/49sp Aunt Ethel and family with their caravan 1934
- 20.1/50sp M.H. Somerset 1935
- 20.1/51p Lake Windermere Camp weekend drama school (5 views) 1937
- 20.1/52sp [Publicity photos of Somerset for Vancouver Little Theatre] (2 views) 193-?
- 20.1/53p Dorothy or Betty Somerset on holiday 193-
- 20.1/54p Dorothy Somerset in Vancouver Little Theatre publicity photos (2 views)  
ca. 1940
- 20.1/55sp,p Epidaurus December 1954
- 20.1/56p Dominion drama festival 195-?
- 20.1/57p,d Vacation to Egypt 195?
- 20.1/58sp,d [Theatre production including Somerset] (3 views) 1963?
- 20.1/59sp Holiday (4 views) 1966
- 20.1/60sp Holiday 196?
- 20.1/61sp Trip to Afghanistan (5 views) 196?
- 20.1/62sp Dorothy Somerset with Jessie, Dorothy Pech, Dorothy Darlius and  
Sydney Mosh 196-?
- 20.1/63sp Beth and ?? Finch 196-?
- 20.1/64sp The Tomilins (4 views) ca. 1970
- 20.1/65sp T.S.L. at Schoolhouse January 1971
- 20.1/66p Dorothy Somerset with man (2 views) 197?
- 20.1/67p Dorothy Somerset with man in academic regalia 197?

20.1/68sp S. Creighton, Z. Woodward, J. Creighton, B. Harris, L. Harris 197-?

20.1/69p Civic recognition ceremony (4 views) 1984

20.1/70sp Dorothy Somerset and Jack Clyne (2 views) 1985

20.1/71p Dorothy Somerset receiving award from Jean Sauve 198-?

20.1/72sp Trip to Karacasu, Turkey n.d.

20.1/73sp Tannis School House (2 views) n.d.

20.1/74sp Binty with his pony n.d.

20.1/75sp Ruth Kelly, Barbara Calland? and Binty - Summer cottage up North Arm  
n.d.

20.1/76sp [Jack Clyne?] n.d.

20.1/77sp Unidentified group n.d.

20.1/78sp Unidentified man and woman looking at view n.d.

20.1/79sp Teddy Boyle and Rocke Robertson at "farm on Sea Island" n.d.

20.1/80p My beloved Bronte sisters n.d.

20.1/81p Joy Coghill n.d.