

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

Finding Aids

Special Collections & University Archives

7-2012

Inge, William Motter (1913-1973), Collection, 1937-2005

Special Collections, Leonard H. Axe Library

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/fa>

Recommended Citation

Special Collections, Leonard H. Axe Library, "Inge, William Motter (1913-1973), Collection, 1937-2005" (2012). *Finding Aids*. 72.

<https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/fa/72>

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections & University Archives at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact lfthompson@pittstate.edu.

71 Inge, William Motter (1913-1973), Collection, 1937-2005
.5 linear feet

Introduction

The papers and materials in this collection pertain to playwright William Motter Inge. Included are professional correspondence, essays, contracts, photographs, clippings, programs, biographical and bibliographical materials, and items pertaining to the annual Inge Festival held in Independence, Kansas. An extensive collection of Inge's published works is also available in Special Collections at Pittsburg State University.

Donor Information

Most of the materials in the Inge Collection were compiled by the Leonard H. Axe Library at Pittsburg State University at various times from 1980 to 1997. Included are materials collected by Special Collections curator, Eugene DeGruson, during those same years. All of the materials in the "Come Back Little Sheba" series were purchased in December 2010, Accession 10-29.

Biographical Sketch

William Motter Inge was born in Independence, Kansas, on 3 May 1913. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1935 and went on to George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, for post-graduate work. He spent the school year of 1937 – 1938 at Cherokee County Community High School in Columbus, Kansas, as a teacher of English, speech and dramatics. He received his masters at Peabody during the summer of 1938 and taught at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, until 1949. From 1943 to 1946 Inge was also the drama editor of the Star-Times newspaper in St. Louis, Missouri.

While he was drama editor, Inge met his soon-to-be friend Tennessee Williams and was inspired to resume his writing career. Inge's first play, "Farther Off From Heaven" (1947), was produced in Dallas, Texas. Ten years later this play was revised for Broadway as "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs." In 1950 Inge wrote his first commercially successful play, "Come Back, Little Sheba." Inge followed this with other successful productions, including "Picnic" (1953) and "Bus Stop" (1955). His last successful script was "Splendor in the Grass" (1961), which won him an Academy Award for Best Writing, Story and Screenplay.

Before his death, Inge wrote several less successful plays, including "A Loss of Roses," "Natural Affection," "Where's Daddy?," and "The Last Pad." Inge also wrote two books titled Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff (1970) and My Son is a Splendid Driver (1971).

On June 10, 1973, Inge committed suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning at his home in Hollywood Hills, California. Inge is buried in his hometown of Independence, Kansas.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in the William Inge collection are incomplete; however, they give a good overview of his life and his writing. The materials are arranged into eleven series: **Biographical; Correspondence; Reviews; Cherokee County Community High School; Bibliographical; Come Back, Little Sheba; Playbills; Photographs; Writings; Inge Festival; and Inge Collection.** Each series is arranged in chronological order.

The **Biographical** series contains essays and clippings. There are excerpts from [A Life of William Inge: The Strains of Triumph](#) by Ralph F. Voss, and two research essays: “William Inge, Former Columbus Teacher, Became Famous Playwright” by Martha Ann Sanders and “The Independence, Kansas Theatrical Influence on Playwright William Inge” by Barbara Nell Harvey. The clippings are arranged chronologically and consist of newspaper and magazine articles about Inge and his career.

The **Correspondence** series includes letters collected by Eugene DeGruson, including correspondence with Helene Inge Connell and others who knew Inge during his years in Kansas. The letters also concern the Inge Festival, the William Inge Collection at Independence Community College, and research about William Inge’s life. The correspondence is arranged chronologically with undated letters at the end of the series.

The **Reviews** series consists of reviews of Inge’s plays in the form of magazine articles, clippings and essays. Articles from the [Saturday Review](#) (1956) and [Kansas Heritage](#) (2005) concern the making of the play “Picnic” into a movie. The essays discuss recurring themes Inge used in the plays “Bus Stop,” “Picnic,” “Come Back, Little Sheba,” and “Splendor in the Grass.” The essays also discuss how Inge dealt with success and failure in his personal life. The clippings primarily discuss how Inge broadened the public’s view of the Midwest, the successful Broadway production of “Dark at the Top of the Stairs,” and the role of the female leads in Inge’s plays.

The **Cherokee County Community High School** series contains lists of plays and musicals that Inge directed while teaching at CCCHS, including summaries of the plays. Other materials pertain to activities in which Inge participated, including the drama club.

The **Bibliographical** series contains several bibliographies of Inge’s plays and the music used in each production. There are copies of “William Inge: A Bibliography” by Frances Manley; copies of the Inge entry in [First Printings of American Authors](#), Volume 2; and copies of the [Porter Library Bulletin](#), volume 7, no. 3, Spring 1973, containing an Inge bibliography by Eugene DeGruson. Also included in this series is a list of books in the William Inge Collection at the Independence Community College, and lists of music used in “Picnic”, “The Lady Gay,” “Come Back, Little Sheba,” and “Bus Stop.” There is also a critical review written by Gene DeGruson about [A Bibliographical Guide to the Works of William Inge](#) by Arthur F. McClure and C. David Rice.

The **Come Back Little Sheba** series contains production notes, financial records, contracts, and correspondence for the Broadway production of the play. The correspondences between Inge and the Theater Guild and miscellaneous members of the Theater Guild are about finances, agreements, royalties, extending the production date, obtaining the music, memos and salary adjustments.

The **Playbills** series includes playbills from Inge’s years at the University of Kansas; for plays Inge wrote; and for plays based on Inge’s work. Included are playbills for “Picnic,” “Hot

September,” “Sheba,” “The Dark at the Top of the Stairs,” “Splendor in the Grass,” and “Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff.”

The **Photograph** series includes photos of Inge, a photographs of the original cast of “Splendor in the Grass,” and a photograph of Inge’s tombstone. Also included are photographs of sculptures of the human form attributed to Inge.

The **Writings** series includes photocopies of an introduction that Inge wrote for an art exhibit catalogue, William Theo Brown, and photocopies of Inge’s script for “Don’t Go Gentle.”

The **Inge Festival** series consists of invitations and brochures for the festival; an itinerary for the festival with a review by Gene DeGruson; photographs from the 1997 festival; and clippings about the festival.

The **Inge Collection** series pertains to the collection held by Independence Community College in Independence, Kansas. The series includes grant forms; budgets; correspondence between Tom Snyder and Eugene DeGruson; a plan for classifying, sorting and collecting data on Inge; a research room layout including specifications for humidity and temperature; and a inventory of items in the collection.

FOLDER LIST

Biographical Series

- f. 1 Article by Barbara Nell Harvey (1969)
- f. 2 Article by Martha Ann Sanders (1975) Research notes and drafts are included
- f. 3 Excerpts from The Strains of Triumph: A Life of William Inge by Ralph Voss
- f. 4 Clippings, 1950 – 1975, undated

Correspondence Series

- f. 5 1974 – 1984, undated

Reviews Series

- f. 6 Saturday Review (1956) and Kansas Heritage (2005)
- f. 7 Essays, 1973 – 1995, undated
- f. 8 Clippings, 1957 – 1980

Cherokee County Community High School Series

- f. 9 Plays, 1937 – 1938
- f. 10 School activities and records, 1937 – 1938

Bibliographical Series

- f. 11 Frances Manley; First Printings; McClure; 1961 – 1996
- f. 12 Porter Library Bulletin, 1973

Come Back Little Sheba Series

- f. 13 Miscellaneous notes
- f. 14 1949
- f. 15 1950
- f. 16 1950
- f. 17 1950 – 1963

Playbills Series

- f. 18 1934 – 1980, undated

Photograph Series

- f. 19 Photographs of Inge; Cast for “Splendor in the Grass”; Inge’s headstone
- f. 20 Photographs of sculptures

Writings Series

- f. 21 Inge introduction for William Theo Brown catalogue
- f. 22-24 “Don’t Go Gentle”

Inge Festival Series

- f. 25 Programs, 1981 – 1986
- f. 26 Photographs, 1997
- f. 27 Clippings, 1982 – 2010

Inge Collection Series

- f. 28 Plans, 1979 – 1982
- f. 29 Invitations and clippings, 1981 – 1986

INDEX ENTRIES

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| “Among us Girls” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| Anderson, Phyllisf. | 12, 13, 15-17 |
| Booth, Shirley | f. 13, 14, 16 |
| “Breakfast at Eight” | f. 2, 9, 10 |

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Brown, William Theo | f. 12, 21 |
| “Bus Stop” | f. 1, 3, 4, 7, 11-13, 27 |
| Cherokee County Community High School, Kansas, Cherokee | f. 2, 9, 10, 12 |
| “Come Back, Little Sheba” | f. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11-18, 25, 27, 29 |
| Connell, Helene Inge | f. 5 |
| “Dark at the Top of the Stairs” | f. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11-13, 17, 18, 27 |
| DeGruson, Eugene | f. 5, 26-28 |
| “Don’t Go Gentle” | f. 22- 24 |
| Dramatists Guild | f. 3, 13, 14 |
| “Etiquette” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| “Fame and the Poet” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| “Full House, A” | f. 2, 9, 10, 12, 25 |
| Greenspan, Sara | f. 13, 14, 16, 17 |
| “His First Shave” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| “Hollywood Bound” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| Independence, Kansas | f. 1, 2, 4, 8, 24-29 |
| Inge, William Motter (1913-1973) | f. 1-29 |
| “Kempy” | f. 2, 9, 10, 12 |
| Lawrence, Jerome | f. 25, 27 |
| Langer, Lawrence | f. 13, 14-17 |
| “Maid Service” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| Mann, Daniel | f. 13, 14, 16, 17 |
| “Money Shouts” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| “Picnic” | f. 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 12, 13, 17, 18 |
| “Sit-Down Strike” | f. 2, 9, 10 |
| Snyder, Tom | f. 5, 25, 28 |
| “Splendor in the Grass” | f. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19 |
| “Stranger Passes, A” | f. 2, 9, 10, 12 |
| Theatre Guild | f. 13, 14, 15-17 |
| William Inge Festival, Independence, Kansas | f. 25-27 |
| Wood, Audrey | f. 13, 14, 16, 17 |
| Wood, Mike | f. 5, 13, 25, 29 |