

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ **Margot Sanger Papers, 1920-1967** ◀

MSS-140

Size: .5 linear feet

Provenance: Received from Mary Ruth Wotherspoon, daughter of Margot Heyn Sanger, April, 1999.

Access: open

Collection Summary: Prominent Toledo socialite, performer, and author (1890-1967) This collection documents Margot Sanger's career as a monologist and later as an author, containing handwritten notebooks filled with poetry; prose; and monologue scripts. Also included among these papers are newspaper reviews of her performances around the world, a description of how she talked her way out of a 1962 traffic ticket, and various photographs.

Subjects: [Music, Art, Drama, and Theatre](#), [Women](#)

Related Materials: The Ward M. Canaday Center has in its collection two books written by Margot Sanger: *Anne to Zonia*, c1950, and *Poems and Prose* c1979 which was selected, edited and illustrated by Mary Ruth Swigart, the daughter of Margot Sanger. Mary Ruth Swigart also illustrated *Johnny Bushtail* c1957, and wrote *So Here I Am! But Where Did I Come From?* c1994 under the name Mary Ruth Wotherspoon. All of her books can also be found in the Ward M. Canaday Center. The papers of Mary Ruth Wotherspoon (MSS-141) are also a part of the Canaday Center collection.

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Completed by: Maria Halovanic, April, 1999; last updated: July 2014

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Biographical Sketch

Even at a young age, Margot Sanger, born Mina Margaret Heyn on December 5, 1890 in Toledo, Ohio, had an affinity for performing. She is described in a childhood story as entering a theatre performance in the midst of applause, and shouted, "Wait 'til I take off my bonnet and you can see my pretty curls." This sense of humor and quick wit characterized her life-long performances, and also saved her from incurring a fine in a 1962 showing before a Toledo traffic court judge.

Margot Sanger spent the majority of her educational career in Toledo, first attending Jefferson Elementary School, and then graduating from Central High School. She spent one year at Ferry Hall, Lake Forest, Illinois, before returning to Toledo to teach Story-Telling Method at Dr. Mary Law's Froebel Kindergarten Training School and French at the University of Toledo. In 1914 she married Nathan Dreyfus, but became a widow two years later. In 1919 she married the attorney Sigmond Sanger, a partner in the law firm Brown and Sanger.

A few years after her second marriage, Margot Sanger began her entertaining career in Toledo, performing original, witty monologues. When she began touring in New York City in 1932, she legally changed her name from Margaret Sanger to Margot Sanger to avoid confusion with the radical Margaret Sanger of Planned Parenthood. One introduction for a Margot Sanger performance quips about this confusion,

"Around Toledo she is known
As Sigmond Sanger's wife
But when she leaves our countryside
She leads a different life.

She's Margaret Sanger in New York
Not she of birth control
Our Margot is of different ilk
Her object mirth control."

Besides writing her own original material, Margot Sanger also established The Margot Sanger Theater of Imagination, an agency which allowed her to arrange bookings for her performances. She performed to rave reviews throughout the United States, as well as in Paris, London and Bermuda. She also wrote *Anne to Zonia* in 1950, a compilation of her different character sketches. The name was chosen, Mrs. Sanger explained, because her characters are all kinds of women "from A to Z." Her daughter Mary Ruth Swigart selected, edited and illustrated a collection of Margot Sanger's written work that appeared posthumously in a book entitled in *Poems and Prose* in 1979.

"Because she is in demand all over the country as a diseuse," the Writers' Club Bulletin wrote, "because there has never been anything quite like her Theatre of the Imagination for sheer imagination, wisdom...because men's clubs are as keen about her as women's clubs, because she is the darling of dramatic celebrity chasers, and college professors...in short because she is her own scintillating self, we bow the knee to brilliant Margot Sanger. Margot Sanger passed away in 1967.

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Scope and Content Note

This collection follows the time-span of Margot Sanger's career as a performer and a writer. With the exception of the autograph collection, which is arranged alphabetically, the folders are all arranged chronologically by subject, although many of the folders overlap in dates.

Many of Margot Sanger's original works of poetry, prose, and scripts from 1923-1944 were handwritten in composition notebooks and scrapbooks. The original order and integrity of the scrapbooks have been maintained, except where papers and clippings have become separated from the original page. Those loose pages are in a folder that follows the scrapbook from which it originated, and are arranged in order of appearance in the scrapbook.

The progress of Mrs. Sanger's career as a monologist and her original Margot Sanger Theatre of Imagination can be followed through the programs of her performances from 1933-67, and in the myriad newspaper reviews which give praise to her performance, as well as highlighted Mrs. Sanger's socialite appearances around Toledo. There is a transcript of Mrs. Sanger's 1962 appearance before a Toledo traffic court judge, which shows how her wit and her performing abilities saved her from paying fines for an accident that she was in. There are also audio recordings of some of her better known sketches.

This collection also includes the photographs which her daughter, Mary Ruth Wotherspoon, included in *Poems and Prose*, a posthumous anthology of Margot Sanger's writings and monologues. All of the writings in this part of the collection are those that Mrs. Wotherspoon chose to omit from *Poems and Prose*. There is also a guest list for the party that Mary Ruth Wotherspoon held in honor of the publication of her mother's anthology.

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Folder List

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Autograph, Curie, Marie, 3/29/?
	2	Autograph, Harding, Warren G., 1920
	3	Autograph, letter from Harrington, Mrs. Belle Case to children, n.d.
	4	Autograph, Mesta, Perle, 6/26/1963
	5	Autograph, Piatigorsky, Gregor, 2/22/1957
	6	Signed book by Stevens, W. George, n.d
	7	Autograph, Toscanini, Arturo, 11/8/1952
	8	Scrapbook, Clippings of events, 1923 - 1935
	9	Loose papers from 1923-35 Scrapbook, 4/11/1928
	10	Scrapbook, poetry, 1924 - 1944, n.d.
	11	Loose papers from 1924-44 Scrapbook, 1924 -44
	12	Scrapbook, Scripts, c. 1935
	13	Loose papers from c.1935 scrapbook
	14	Scrapbook, Clippings (1 of 2) 1933-1935
	15	Scrapbook, Clippings (2 of 2) 1936-38
	16	Loose papers from 1933-38 scrapbook, 1933- 37
	17	Programs, 1933-1967, n.d.
	18	Newspaper clippings, reviews, 1933-64, n.d.
	19	Essay on Solipsism, n.d.
2	1	<i>Toledo Topics</i> , 1930
	2	Transcript of traffic court, 12/17/1962
	3	Guest list for publication party, n.d.
	4	Poems omitted from the book <i>Poems and Prose</i> , layout
	5	Poems omitted from the book <i>Poems and Prose</i> , originals
	6	Prose omitted from the book <i>Poems and Prose</i> (1 of 2)
	7	Prose omitted from the book <i>Poems and Prose</i> (2 of 2)
	8	Negative of photographs from <i>Poems and Prose</i>
	9	Photographs, 1920-1965
	10	"An Afternoon with Margaret Sanger," Audio Cassette and CD