

THE BLANDING SLOAN COLLECTION

Papers, 1928-1939

1 linear foot

Accession Number 674
L.C. Number MS

The papers of Blanding Sloan were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in September of 1974 by Taylor Sloan and were opened for research in October of 1984.

Blanding Sloan was a puppeteer, architect, playwright, and director. In 1928-1929 he directed the Marionette Theatre of San Francisco, which was organized with the purpose of expanding the art of puppetry in the San Francisco Bay area.

In the 1930s, Sloan was involved with the marionette program of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP)--one of the cultural programs of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) created in 1935. Under the direction of Hallie Flanagan and comprising a series of regional theatres headed by professional directors, this first government sponsored theatre in American history created jobs for 10,000 unemployed actors and theatre technicians in forty states. Over four years, the FTP produced over 2,700 plays, most of them dealing with the social and economic issues of the New Deal. Within the FTP, there were 22 marionette units; they were an integral part of the FTP and they were extremely popular. In 1936, Sloan directed the Los Angeles County Marionette Theatre, an FTP program, and in 1939, he was the director of the eastern region of the FTP.

Throughout its life, foes of the FTP attacked it as being propagandistic. Investigated by the Dies House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1939, the FTP was the first of the New Deal cultural programs to be abolished when Congress eliminated funds for its continuation in the WPA appropriations bill that year.

Blanding Sloan was also involved in the Arts and Professions Co-operative, Unit 77 of the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association (UCDA) of Los Angeles in 1934. While with the UCDA, Sloan illustrated its journal The Clarion.

The papers of Blanding Sloan reflect his work in puppetry in San Francisco and in the Federal Theatre Project, and, to a lesser extent, his involvement with the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association.

Important subjects covered in this collection are:

History of the Federal Theatre Project
Marionette Design and Construction
Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association

An index to subjects will be found on p. 4.

Contents

1 manuscript box
1 oversize box

Series I, Papers, 1928-1939, Boxes 1-2:

Yearbooks, leaflets, scripts, musical scores, and other items used by Blanding Sloan in the Marionette Theatre of San Francisco in the 1920s and during his involvement with the Federal Theatre Project in the 1930s. Included in this series is information on the history of the FTP, other programs under the WPA, puppet and marionette programs throughout the country, and the creation of marionettes and stages. This series also contains information on the Arts and Professions Co-operative, Unit 77 of the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association of Los Angeles.

Non-manuscript Material:

Approximately 35 photographs relating to marionette construction and scenes from marionette productions, and six woodcuts done by Blanding Sloan depicting co-operative organizations on the West coast, have been placed in the Archives Audio-Visual Collection.

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Series I
Papers, 1928-1939
Boxes 1-2

Yearbooks, leaflets, scripts, musical scores, programs, and other material used by Blanding Sloan in the Marionette Theatre of San Francisco in the 1920s and during his involvement with the Federal Theatre Project in the 1930s. Included in this series is information on the history of the FTP, the other programs of the WPA, puppet and marionette programs throughout the country, and marionette and stage design and creation. This series also includes some information on the Arts and Professions Co-operative, Unit 77 of the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association of Los Angeles in which Sloan was involved. The folders are arranged alphabetically by type of material except for three folders which are stored in an oversize box.

Box 1

1. Invitations, 1930
2. Journals, The Clarion, Feb 1934
3. Journals, Federal Theatre, Apr 1936
4. Leaflets, Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association
- 5-9. Musical Score, Created Equal
10. Programs, 1939
11. Puppet Stage Design
12. Scripts, Created Equal, 1938
13. Scripts, 1001 Puppet Plays, 1938
- 14-16. Yearbooks, 1930, 1939, 1944-45

Box 2 (oversize)

1. Leaflets, Marionette Theatre of San Francisco, 1928-29,
- 2-3. Musical Score, Genesis, 1936

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