



YORK UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

**Inventory of the
Herman Arthur Voaden fonds**

Inventory #F0440

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F0440 - Herman Arthur Voaden fonds

Fonds/Collection Number: F0440

Title: Herman Arthur Voaden fonds

Dates: 1854-1991

Extent: 33.0 m of textual records
ca. 300 photographs
ca. 70 glass plate negatives
42 audio discs
18 prints
15 audio reels
1 model

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** Herman Arthur Voaden (1903-1991) was a teacher, playwright, director, editor, and arts activist. Herman Voaden was born in London, Ontario in 1903. He graduated from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, with a B.A. (Honours) in 1923 and an M.A. in 1926. He also later pursued post-graduate studies at the University of Chicago and at Yale University. Voaden taught high school in Ottawa, Windsor, and Sarnia. Then, in 1928, he became head of the Department of English at the Toronto Central High School of Commerce. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1964. Voaden also served as Director of the Modern Drama Course at the University of Toronto in 1929 and as the Director of the Summer Course Drama and Play Production at Queen's University from 1934 to 1936. During the 1920's and 1930's, Voaden was recognized as an innovative playwright, director and editor. In 1934, he established the Play Workshop, the leading Canadian experimental theatre company of the 1930's. He also wrote seven major plays: *Rocks*, *Earth Song*, *Hill-Land*, *Murder Pattern*, *Ascend As the Sun*, *Emily Carr* and *Marie Chapdelaine*. Further, Voaden edited a dozen play anthologies and studies, beginning in 1930 with *Six Canadian Plays*. In addition to play writing and producing, he held several key administrative positions in Canadian arts organizations. He served as the first President of the Canadian Arts Council, 1945-1948; as a member of the Canadian Delegation to the First General Assembly of UNESCO in Paris, 1946; as the National Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, 1966-1968; and as the President of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, 1968-1970. He also ran on behalf of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in three federal elections and one by-election from 1945 to 1954. For his contribution to Canadian theatre and culture, Voaden received numerous honors: the English Centennial Award in 1965; the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 1977; an Honorary Life Membership in the Association for Canadian Theatre History in 1980; the Theatre Ontario Maggie Bassett Award in 1987; and a Diplome d'honneur from the Canadian Conference of the Arts in 1989. Further, Voaden was made a Fellow in the Royal Society of Arts in 1970 and a Member of the Order of Canada in 1974. He also received an honorary doctorate from Saint Mary's University, Halifax, in 1988. Herman Voaden was married to Violet Kilpatrick from 1935 until her death in 1984. Herman Voaden died in Toronto in 1991.

Scope and Content: Fonds consists of records pertaining to Herman Voaden's family life, education, teaching, play writing, directing and cultural lobbying activities. Also included are the private records of his wife, Violet Kilpatrick Voaden. Types of records include: correspondence, personal diaries, teaching notes, production notes, playbills, and photographs. Some material has been sorted and arranged according to subject by Anton Wagner, theatre historian and executor of Herman Voaden's literary estate.

The fonds is arranged into the following series:

S00123	Personal
S00124	Education
S00125	Teaching
S00126	Play writing
S00127	Acting, Directing and Producing
S00128	Publications
S00129	Research

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S00130	Critical Reception
S00131	Associations
S00132	Political
S00133	Playbills
S00134	Books
S00135	Violet Kilpatrick Voaden

Restrictions on Access and Use: No restrictions on access. However, researchers must sign the Access and Use Agreement form before access is granted.

Finding Aid: Series descriptions with associated file lists available.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000440.htm>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 1974-014, 1982-019, 1991-020. Further accruals are expected.

Virtual Exhibit:

URL of Virtual Exhibit: <http://www.library.yorku.ca/binaries/ArchivesSpecialCollections/Voaden/website/hvindex.h>

Provenance Access Points: Voaden, Herman Arthur, 1903-1991
Voaden, Violet Kilpatrick (d. 1984)

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