



Jean Coover Babcock Papers (K0740)

Collection Number: K0740

Collection Title: Jean Coover Babcock Papers

Dates: 1928-1996

Creator: Babcock, Jean Coover, 1944-2012

Abstract: Family, personal, and professional materials of Babcock, a ballerina and dance instructor. Family papers include material regarding her father's job as a railroad engineer. Personal and professional papers include correspondence; photographs; clippings; programs from dance and theatre performances; material documenting her ballet career in Germany and Canada; and administrative and financial records of her Kansas City dance schools.

Collection Size: 5.5 cubic feet
(120 folders, 579 photographs, 20 negatives, 2 audio discs)

Language: Collection materials are in English, French, and German.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City](http://TheStateHistoricalSocietyofMissouriResearchCenter-KansasCity). If you would like more information, please contact us at kansascity@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Jean Coover Babcock Papers* (K0740); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Kansas City].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Jean Babcock on June 16, 1997 (Accession No. KA956). An addition was made on December 1, 1997, by Jean Babcock (Accession No. KA976).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the *Jean Coover Babcock Papers* can be found in the following collections:

Ula Sharon Robinson Bergfeldt Papers, (K1223)

Processed by: Processed by Sophia Southard, May 2023

Historical Note:

Donna Jean Coover was born in Parsons, Kansas, on September 1, 1944, the youngest child of Almon Baker and Mildred May Garrison Coover. In 1952, when Jean was in seventh grade, the family moved to Kansas City, where she began dance classes with Ula Sharon, a well-known ballet dancer, and artistic director of Kansas City Dance Theatre. Jean performed in several productions of the Kansas City Dance Theatre. In the summer of 1962, she studied in New York at the American Ballet Theatre and the Ballet Russe. When she was accepted to Rosella Hightower's Centre de Dance Classique in Cannes, France, a scholarship fund was established for her.

Jean spent two years in Cannes, finishing at the top of her class and then traveling throughout Europe. She accepted a contract in the corps of the Bremen Opera Ballet in Germany, and received enthusiastic reviews for a solo performance in which she replaced an injured principal dancer. After her contract with Bremen expired, she went to the Kassel Opera Ballet, where she met her future husband, Eckhard Heidrich, a member of the Kassel company. In 1969, the couple was employed by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in Canada and spent a strenuous year of touring.

In 1970, they returned to Kansas City, where they taught ballet at local dance schools and their own studios. They were also featured performers at Starlight Theatre. In 1972, they opened the Coover-Heidrich School of Dance in Shawnee, Kansas, and the Independence School of Dance. In 1980, they formed the Coover-Heidrich Ballet Workshop in the Norman School at 35th and Jefferson in Midtown. The Centre City Ballet was also a function of the school. In December of that year, the Heidriches divorced, and Jean renamed the school the Coover Ballet Workshop. In 1987, Jean married Frank O. Babcock, a Kansas City businessman. They moved to Lake Worth, Florida, in 1998. Frank died in 2003. Jean Coover Babcock died June 5, 2012, in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 6 series:

Personal
Business
Newspaper Clippings
Travel
Almon B. Coover
Photographs

Scope and Content Note:

Personal

This series contains materials related to Jean's personal life and her career as a ballerina, as well as personal correspondence. Of special interest are ballet and dance programs and publications

collected by Jean throughout her life, as well as materials related to her ballet career. Also included are materials related to Jean's work in journalism at Penn Valley Community College and *The Kansas City Star*. Series is arranged alphabetically.

Business

This series consists of materials pertaining to the Coover-Heinrich Ballet Workshop, later re-named the Coover Ballet Workshop. Included are class information, program invitations, printed materials about ballet teaching, and financial records. Series is arranged alphabetically.

Newspaper Clippings

This series contains newspaper clippings collected by Jean. Clippings cover a variety of topics, including articles written about Jean, her ballet career, and students, colleagues, and friends. Series is arranged alphabetically.

Travel

This series consists of materials collected during Jean's trips to France and Germany, as well as Arrow Rock, Missouri. Jean traveled to France to study at Rosella Hightower's Centre de Dance Classique in Cannes and later traveled to Germany to perform with the Bremen Opera Ballet and the Kassel Opera Ballet. Of special interest are programs and printed materials from ballet and dance productions performed in France and Germany. Series is arranged alphabetically.

Almon B. Coover

This series contains materials related to the career of Almon B. Coover, Jean's father, a railroad engineer. Series is arranged alphabetically.

Photographs

This series contains personal and travel photographs. The personal photographs are of Jean, family, and friends. Of special interest are photographs of dancers Jean Coover, Eckhard Heidrich, Alvin Ailey, and Rosella Hightower. The travel photographs document her travels to France. Series is arranged alphabetically.

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- f. 33 Eckhard Heidrich and Jean Coover Biographies (translated from German newspaper), no date
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