



Nanette Baz-Dresch Manuscript (S0024)

Collection Number: S0024

Collection Title: Nanette Baz-Dresch Manuscript

Dates: 1982

Creator: Baz-Dresch, Nanette

Abstract: This collection contains one manuscript titled “Shakesperean Plays in St. Louis in the Nineteenth Century”. Nanette Baz-Dresch wrote the manuscript for a class at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Collection Size: 0.01 cubic foot
(1 folder)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

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-St. Louis](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Nanette Baz-Dresch Manuscript* (S0024); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri on September 8, 1982, by Nanette Baz-Dresch (Accession No. SA2488).

Processed by: Processed by Rachael Heriford, March 2022

Historical Note:

On July 25, 1818, John H. Vos hosted the first Shakespeare play in St. Louis, with the production of *King Henry IV*. However, historians remain divided over the location of this play. Some

scholars claim Vos held the production at the Green Tree Tavern, while others contend that a blacksmith's shop was the venue. The first performance of *King Henry IV* was a groundbreaking event that launched a growth of Shakespeare performances in St. Louis throughout the 19th century. By 1825, James Caldwell added space to the already existing Old Salt Theater. Until a fire burnt down the theater in 1837, it was the popular theater for Shakespeare performances such as *Hamlet*, *MacBeth*, and *Merchant of Venice*. The first repertory troupe in St. Louis was formed in 1835 and performed over seventy-three plays and eighty-four productions that year. Six of the plays the troupe performed were Shakespeare's plays.

1837 was a watershed year for St. Louis's theater community, with nearly eighty-five different plays performed and the construction of the St. Louis Theater. The venue would host numerous Shakespeare plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *MacBeth*, before closing on July 10, 1851. After the closure of the St. Louis Theater, John Bates and his son James opened Bates' Theater on Pine Street. The Bates family eventually sold the theater to an actor, Ben Debar, who renovated the venue several times between 1855 and 1874. Other significant venues in St. Louis included Joseph M. Field's Varieties (eventually renamed the Grand Opera House) and the People's Theater, which opened to the public in 1852 to accommodate St. Louisans' growing interest in the theater. In the latter half of the 19th century, Pope's Theatre and the Second Olympic Theater were the significant venues added to St. Louis's expanding theater district, constructed in 1879 and 1882, respectively.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in one folder and kept in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

The Nanette Baz-Dresch Manuscript consists of an unpublished paper written by Nanette Baz-Dresch, a graduate English Student at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, titled "Shakespearean Plays in St. Louis in the Nineteenth Century". The manuscript chronicles the history of Shakespearean performances in 19th-century St. Louis. The first half of the manuscript gives an overview of the history of Shakespeare performances in the 19th century and the history of various theaters, such as the St. Louis Theater, the Grand Opera House, and Pope's Theatre. The second half of the manuscript covers actors popular in St. Louis during the 19th century such as John and Edwin Booth, Margaret Mather, and Mary F. Scott-Siddons. Finally, the last section of the paper contains the location, date, and lead actors of every documented Shakespeare play performance throughout the 19th century in St. Louis. Baz-Dresch finished the manuscript in May of 1982, and the contents of the collection have been kept in their original order.

Container List:

- f. 1 Shakespearean Plays in St. Louis in the Nineteenth Century, 1982

Index:

Index Terms	Folder
Bates Theater (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Booth, Edwin, 1833-1893	1

Index Terms	Folder
Booth, John, 1838-1865	1
DeBar, Benedict, 1812-1877	1
Grand Opera House (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Mather, Margaret, 1859-1898	1
Old Salt Theater (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
People's Theater (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Pope's Theater (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Scott-Siddons, Mary Frances, 1844-1896	1
Second Olympic Theater (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Stage history--Missouri--Saint Louis	1
St. Louis Theater (Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Theater--Missouri--Saint Louis--19 th century	1
Theater--Missouri--Saint Louis--History--19th century	1
Vos, John H.	1