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MSS 96/ P 25/ POVA 23/ POVC 10

Irene Belcher Collection, 1916-1984

6 boxes; 4.4 cu. ft.

History

Irene Belcher was born in Muncie, the daughter of Joseph and Lola Howell Thompson. She attended Jefferson School and graduated from Muncie High School and the Indiana State Normal School, Eastern Division, (now Ball State University) in 1923. Mrs. Belcher taught at Lincoln School before marrying Aaron (Doug) Belcher in 1924. Mr. Belcher taught school and worked at Ontario as a foreman. He eventually joined the Muncie Fire Dept., serving as chief for several years. The Belchers had two daughters, Judy and Martha (Mollie).

Always interested in theatre, Irene Belcher played summer stock roles with the Princeton Players in Princeton, New Jersey, along with such stage notables as Tallulah Bankhead, Humphrey Bogart, Helen Hayes and others. She was also a charter member of Muncie Civic Theatre and very active in the organization, as actress, producer, membership volunteer and also president of the group. It was during her term as president that Muncie Civic Theatre moved from its former headquarters in the Masonic Temple to its present address, 216 E. Main St., the site of two former movie theatres, the Star and the Hoosier.

Irene Belcher operated an educational theatre program for school age children locally for thirty years. She opened her first children's studio in the 1930s, across from the old City Hall building, on the southwest corner of Jackson and Jefferson. From there she moved to the third floor of the Chamber of Commerce building, on the corner of Jefferson and Main St., where she had the entire top floor. Mrs. Belcher was also active in children's theatre groups nationally, being one of the original twenty members who formed the National Children's Theatre Conference in 1944. She served several times as advisor for children's theatres throughout the country.

Other organizations in which she was active included Muncie Matinee Musicale, for which she served one year as president. She directed, produced and acted in plays given by the High Street Players and served as director and producer of the community Easter Pageant from 1950-1960. Mrs. Belcher also acted in and directed productions of Little Shoestring Theatre, the summer theatre tent shows given on the Ball State campus by its Theatre Department.

In the early 1960s, she and her husband, along with Ruth Ball Harker and her son, Walter, operated a booking agency, bringing productions to Muncie, such as the San Francisco Ballet.

Irene Belcher died November 29, 1984, at the age of 82.

Scope and Content

This collection contains materials dealing mostly with her work with various local theatre

groups: Children's Playhouse, Civic Theatre, and Easter Pageant. Items include correspondence, news clippings, scripts and programs, as well as biographical information about Irene and Aaron Belcher. The collection includes three scrapbooks with newspaper clippings about the Muncie Civic Theater and Children's Playhouse Theater, as well as letters to Irene Belcher and several photographs. An autograph book signed by her students and a 1983 directory for High Street United Methodist Church.

P25 contains photographs depicting plays with which Irene Belcher was involved and people whom she knew. POVA 23 contains 33 photographs of the various plays with which Irene Belcher was involved. POVC 10 is a photograph of students of the Indiana State Normal School, Eastern Division, taken in front of the Administration Building, 1920s. Irene Belcher was one of these students.

Another related collection would be MSS 70, Muncie Civic Theatre, given Mrs. Belcher's long association with the local amateur group.

K. Dean, 18 April 1991
rev. A. Tonne, May 2004
rev. M. Newton, June 2004
Revised by M. Read, 7/17/2007

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	7	Awards, 1939-1964
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	10	Ball State Theatre, 1955-1976
	11	Ballet Theatre, 1947
	12	Biographical Information on Aaron Belcher, 1923-1969
	13	Biographical Information on Aaron Belcher-Clippings, 1947-1967
	14	Biographical Information of Irene Belcher, 1918-1984
	15	Biographical Information on Irene Belcher-Clippings, 1958-1966
	16	Biographical Information on Judith Belcher, 1939
	17	Brochure for Purdue's Theatre Major Program, ND
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	20	CPT, 1939-1972
	21	Aladdin & The Wonderful Lamp, 1944-1966
	22	Aladdin & The Wonderful Lamp-Clippings, 1944
	23	Ali Baba & The Forty Thieves, 1948
	24	Ali Baba & The Forty Thieves-Clippings, 1948
	25	Alice in Red Feather Land, ND
	26	Alice in Wonderland, 1952-1972
	27	An Arabian Night, ND
	28	An Arabian Night-Clippings, ND
	29	Belcher's Costume and Set Sketches, ND
	30	Belcher's Notebook I, c.a. 1954
	31	Belcher's Notebook II, ND
	32	Cinderella, 1953-1972
	33	Cinderella-Clippings, 1964
	34	The Clown Who Ran Away, 1959-1960
	35	The Clown Who Ran Away-Clippings, c.a. 1975
	36	Costume Catalog, ND
	37	Crazy Cricket Farm, 1945
	38	Dramatic Sketches, 1952-1955
	39	The Elves and the Shoemaker, 1953-1954 & ND

40	The Elves and the Shoemaker-Clippings, 1947
41	The Emperor's New Clothes, 1946-1967
42	Financial Record Book, 1965-1966
43	The Ghost of Mr. Penny, 1951-1952
44	The Ghost of Mr. Penny-Clippings, 1946-1952
45	The Golden Goose, 1965
46	Greensleeves' Magic, 1961
47	Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates, 1964
48	Hansel and Gretel, 1959-1965
49	Heidi, 1954-1955
50	Huckleberry Finn, 1965
51	The Indian Captive, 1960
52	The Indian Captive-Clippings, 1951
53	Infanta, ND
54	Jack and the Beanstalk, 1943-1958
55	King Midas and the Golden Touch, 1938-1958
56	The King's Balcony, ND
57	Little Black Sambo, 1949
58	Little Black Sambo-Clippings, 1949
59	The Little Mermaid, 1961
60	The Little Princess, 1944
61	Little Red Riding Hood, 1954-1965
62	Little Women, 1950-1963
63	Little Women-Clippings, 1950
64	Mary Poppins, 1950
65	Mary Poppins-Clippings 1950
66	Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers, 1951
67	The Mystery Rocket, 1953
68	Order Receipts, 1944-1962
69	Peter Pan, 1957 & ND
70	Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater, 1961
71	Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater-Clippings, 1948 & ND
72	Pictures for Programs and Publicity, c.a. 1958
73	Pied Piper of Hamelin, 1955
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75	Pinocchio-Clippings, c.a. 1951
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77	The Plain Princess-Clippings, 1944-1964
78	Play Descriptions, ND
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82	Program Images, ND
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86	Puss in Boots, 1963
87	Radio Rescue, 1940
88	Rama and the Tigers, 1956
89	Rapunzel, 1961
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91	The Red Shoes-Clippings, 1957
92	Regulations, ND
93	Rip Van Winkle, 1952
94	Rip Van Winkle-Clippings, 1952
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96	Robin Hood-Clippings, 1956
97	The Rose and the Ring, ND
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99	Rumpelstiltskin-Clippings, 1947-1955
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108	Snow White-Clippings, 1958 & ND
109	Stationary and Envelopes, ND
110	Tatterman Marionettes, 1952 & ND
111	Tatterman Marionettes-Clippings, 1946, 1952, & ND
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114	Ticket Stubs, 1945-1966
115	Tom Sawyer, 1949
116	Tom Sawyer-Clippings, 1949 & 1973
117	The Toymaker's Doll & Why the Chimes Rang, 1965
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120	The Wizard of Oz-Clippings, 1948 & ND
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122	Children's Theatre Conference, 1947-1967
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125	Correspondence of Aaron Belcher, 1940-1969
126	Correspondence of Belchers, 1939-1977
127	Correspondence of Irene Belcher, 1935-1957
128	Correspondence of Irene Belcher, 1940's
129	Correspondence of Irene Belcher, 1950's
130	Correspondence of Irene Belcher, 1960's

- 131 Correspondence of Irene Belcher, undated (ND)
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 134 Decals and stickers, ND
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- 2 1 Delaware Public Schools Directories, 1923-1924, 1925-1926
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 6 The Easterner, 1922-1923
 7 The Eatonian, vol. 1 no. 1, 1924
 8 The Forest Visit, 1973
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 13 The Highway, ND
 14 Home Health Aide Notes, 1983-1984
 15 "How to Get a Start in the Theater," ND
 16 How to Prepare Your 1959 Corporation Income Tax Return, 1959
 17 "S. Hurok Presents," 1958
 18 Indiana Fire Chiefs Association 1951 State Fire Prevention Convention
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 20 "J.B.," 1960
 21 Junior Civic Theatre of Indianapolis, 1954-1974
 22 Junior Matinee Musicale Group, 1939-1952
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 33 Mark Twain Tonight, 1961 & 1973
 34 "Martin Luther 1483-1546," ND
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49	Both Your Houses-Clippings, 1941
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78	The Fourposter-Clippings, 1960
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80	The Gazebo, 1961
81	Goodbye, My Fancy, 1959
82	Goodbye, My Fancy-Clippings, 1959

83	Good Housekeeping, 1956
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120	Mr. and Mrs. North-Clippings, 1942
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122	Mr. South-Clippings, ND
123	The Music Man, 1963
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129	No Time for Sergeants-Clippings,1972
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- 11 Watch on the Rhine, 1943
 12 Watch on the Rhine-Clippings, 1943
 13 Whistling in the Dark, 1933
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- 16 Muncie Civilian Defense, ND
 17 Muncie Matinee Musicale, 1939 & 1948
 18 Muncie Symphony Orchestra Programs, 1939-1959
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 11 Young April, 1943
 12 Your Social Security Account Card, 1954
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- 5 -- Muncie Civic Theater Life Membership(plaque), 1963
- Autograph Book, 1945-1948 FRAGILE
- High Street United Methodist Church Directory, 1983
- Musical America Program, 1960
- Decatur High School Yearbook, 1921 FRAGILE
- Muncie High School Yearbook, 1919 FRAGILE
- Muncie High School Yearbook, 1917 FRAGILE
- Muncie High School Yearbook, 1916 FRAGILE
- Star Showcase Finances I, 1959-1961
- Star Showcase Finances II, 1959-1961
- Children's Playhouse Theatre Photo Scrapbook, 1970-1977 & ND
- Children's Playhouse Theatre Scrapbook, 1943-1956 FRAGILE
- Children's Playhouse Theatre Scrapbook, 1935-1943 FRAGILE
- magazine tear-out??. ND
- "J.B." advertisement, ND

Legal sized materials

- 6 1 Muncie Northwest Territory Celebration, 1938
- 2 Muncie Community Easter Pageant, 1955-1959

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- 15 The Ghost of Mr. Penny, 1946
- 16 The Golden Goose, ND
- 17 Greensleeves Magic, 1961
- 18 Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates, 1964
- 19 Hansel and Gretel, 1959 & 1965

20	Heidi, 1947 & 1955
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22	Jack and the Beanstalk, 1943 & 1958
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24	Little Black Sambo, 1949
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26	Little Rabbit Who Wanted Red Wings, ND
27	Little Red Riding Hood, 1954-1965
28	Little Women, 1956 & 1963
29	Littlest Shepherd, ND
30	Mary Poppins, 1950
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32	Peter Pan, 1944-1965
33	Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater, 1948, 1961
34	Pied Piper of Hamelin, 1955
35	Pinocchio, 1951 & 1962
36	The Plain Princess, ND
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42	Rapunzel, 1961
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45	Rumpelstiltskin, 1947 & ND
46	Secret of the Circus, 1958
47	Seven Little Rebels, 1944
48	Simple Simon, 1953
49	Sleeping Beauty, 1946-1951 & ND
50	Snow White, 1945-1959 & ND
51	Tom Sawyer, 1945 & 1949
52	The Three Bears, 1959 & 1960
53	The Toymaker's Doll/Why the Chimes Rang, 1965
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57	Wizard of Oz, 1948 & ND
58	Creative Dramatic Class-Emerson, 1953
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63	Howie Miller, c.a. 1951
64	Japanese Evening, ND

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66 Larry Life, ND
67 Marian Anderson, 1959
68 Mark Twain Tonight, 1961 & 1973

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70 Arsenic and Old Lace, 1942
71 Backstage, ND
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76 Mad Woman of Chaillot, 1958
77 The Music Man, 1963
78 Newcomers Welcoming Party, ND
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80 Rehearsal, ND
81 The Vinegar Tree, 1942

82 Muncie Community Easter Pageant, c.a. 1956
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85 People-signed portraits of stars, ND
86 People-Unidentified, 1923-1968
87 Photo Postcards, ND
88 Roberto Iglesias Ballet, c.a. 1960
89 San Francisco Ballet, 1962
90 Set and Scenery, ND
91 Shoestring Theater-But Not Goodbye, ND
92 Tatterman Marionettes, 1953
93 Theater-Unidentified Productions, ND
94 Theatrical Productions, 1961 & ND

POVA 23

Photographs of performances

POVC 10

Students of the Indiana State Normal School, Eastern Division, 1920s