

**Laura de Turczynowicz fonds,
1915 -1919, 1924-1925, 1928-1932, 1934, 1938, 1940-1950,
n.d.**

RG 89

Brock University Archives

- Creator:** Turczynowicz, Laura de, 1878-1953
- Extent:** 0.33m textual records
14 b & w photographs
1 portrait, pencil on paper
- Abstract:** The textual and visual materials of Laura de Turczynowicz; including a portrait in pencil, correspondence, news clippings, photographs, theatre programs, and typed and handwritten manuscripts of plays, short stories and novels. The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence, news clippings and manuscripts.
- Materials:** Correspondence, private and professional; clippings; theatre programs and manuscripts.
- Repository:** Brock University Archives
- Processed by:** Edie Williams
- Finding Aid:** Edie Williams
- Last Updated:** June, 2006

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Preferred Citation: RG 89, Laura de Turczynowicz fonds, 1915 -1919, 1924-1925, 1928-1932, 1934, 1938, 1940-1950, n.d.

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Acquisition Info.: The materials were purchased from Mr. Richard Dugan of El Paso, Texas in May of 2005.

Administrative History:

Laura Blackwell was born August 28, 1878 in St. Catharines, Ont., the tenth child of Walter and Euphemia Blackwell. Laura's siblings were Hannah, John, Caroline, Mary, Keziah, Ella, Jay, Eva and Charles. Laura and her sister Keziah were trained vocalists and often gave performances in the St. Catharines area. Laura gave her final local performance in St. Catharines on September 27, 1900 at the Grand Opera House after which she was to make her debut at the Metropolitan in New York City. In the early 1900s she performed in Germany at Bayreuth and Munich. Her voice teachers were Ange Albert Pattou in New York and Brussels, Hermann in Munich, Lilli Lehman in Berlin and Jean de Reszke.

In 1907 Laura married Stanislaw de Turczynowicz, Count Gozdawa in Krakow, Poland. On June 16, 1908 her daughter Wanda Jolanda was born and June 28, 1909 her twin sons, Stanislaw Piotr (Peter) and Wladislaw Pawel (Paul) were born. After experiencing the invasion of Poland by the Prussian army Laura and her three children fled her home in Suwalki, Poland to the safety of Germany in 1915, arriving in New York on September 30, 1915. Laura de Turczynowicz wrote a book about her experiences during the Prussian invasion, *When the Prussians came to Poland*, and went on speaking engagements throughout the United States and part of Canada promoting her book. The proceeds from the sale of the book were to support the efforts of the Red Cross in Poland and Lithuania. Laura was instrumental in the training of young women in nursing to aid war torn Poland. This group came under the umbrella of the Y.W.C.A. and the American Relief Administration and was known as the Gray Samaritans.

From 1922 to 1927 Laura and her children resided in La Jolla, California. Laura was a voice teacher at Thearle's Studio and produced musical operatic performances in the area. In 1928 she assumed the position of director of the operatic branch of the Toronto Conservatory of Music under the leadership of Sir Ernest Macmillan. After the 1929

season Laura left Toronto for Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia where she held a similar position.

On June 15, 1935 Laura and her daughter Wanda crossed at Blaine, Washington on their way to Santa Monica, California where Laura was to live until her death on October 25, 1953.

Scope and Content:

The bulk of the materials consist of correspondence, news clippings and manuscripts. The majority of the correspondence is addressed to Wanda de Turczynowicz Hermann. A few letters addressed to Bud (Eliot) Hermann, her son-in-law and some letters to Wanda from her brothers Peter and Paul. A transcription of Laura's letters to Wanda is included. Other letters included correspondence related to Laura's writing and speaking engagements. The bulk of the news clippings promote either Laura's book, *When the Prussians came to Poland*, speaking engagements in support of the Red Cross and the Grey Samaritans and the Liberty Loan Campaigns. Other material includes theatre programs, photographs and various publications. The manuscripts include plays, shorts stories and full-length novels, including a manuscript written under the *nom de plume* Kirsty Brandon. Due to the frugality of the creator many pages were reused and other short stories and novels were written on the reverse. Copies of the reverse side were made and placed in folders. A copy of the published book, *When the Prussians came to Poland*, is included. F.1 indicates folio item located in large format storage cabinet 6-4. The photographs in this archive contain images of family members, actors in costume and groups. Some photos are in poor condition, torn and damaged by mold and light.

Organization:

The records are arranged alphabetically into three series. The contents of each file within Series II Correspondence and Clippings are arranged in chronological order.

Series I, Biographical

Series II, Correspondence and Clippings 1915-1919, 1924-1926, 1928-1932, 1934-1935, 1938-1944, 1946, 1948-1950, n.d.

- Series III, Publications and Writings, 1916, n.d.
Sub-series A: Novels, n.d.
Sub-series B: Plays, n.d.
Sub-series C: Published material, 1916
Sub-series D: Short stories, n.d.
Sub-series E: Untitled works, some fragments, n.d.

Inventory:

Series I. Biographical

- 1.1 Music, 1864 [1892], 1918
- 1.2 Personal documents and ephemera, including copies of documents from the Vatican, calling cards, application for naturalization and a copy of the marriage announcement of Wanda de Turczynowicz to Eliot Hermann, 1919, 1932-1934, 1939-1940, 1944
- 1.3 Photographs, n.d.
- F.1 Portrait, pencil on paper, signed W. de Turczynowicz, January 29, 1931 [separation sheet]
- 1.4 Publications, 1929, n.d.
- 1.5 Theatre Programs, 1918, 1924, 1926, 1927-1929, 1931-1933, n.d.

Series II. Correspondence and Clippings 1915-1919, 1924-1926, 1928-1932, 1934-1935, 1938-1944, 1946, 1948-1950, n.d.

- 1.6-1.12 Clippings, 1915-1919, 1924-1926, 1928-1932, 1934, 1938, 1942, n.d.
- 1.13-1.22 Letters from Laura de Turczynowicz to Wanda Hermann, 1940-1944, 1946, 1948-1950, n.d. (48 letters)

- 1.23 Letters to Bud (Eliot) Hermann, and letters from Althea Warren and Ada Albers, 1940, 1944, n.d. (3 letters)
- 1.24 Professional correspondence, 1917, 1935, 1939, n.d.
- 1.25 Transcription of Letters from Laura de Turczynowicz to Wanda Hermann, 1940-1944, 1946, 1948-1950, n.d. (48 letters)

Series III. Publications and Writings, n.d.

Sub-series A: Novels, n.d.

- 1.26-1.27 Strange Altars, fragments, n.d.
- 1.28-1.30 The Winding Thread [or Strange Altars] n.d.

Sub-series B: Plays, n.d.

- 1.31 Musical Barber, n.d.
- 1.32 Night Club in the Morning, n.d.

Sub-series C: Published material, 1916

- 1.33 *When the Prussians came to Poland* by Laura de Turczynowicz, 1916

Sub-series D: Short stories, n.d.

- 1.34 But for the Grace of God, n.d.
- 1.35 Butterfly Dust by Kirsty Brandon, n.d.
- 1.36 Butterfly Dust, copies made from the reverse of other pages, n.d.
- 1.37 Days beyond recall, or Out of the dreams [Original title: Title: The Wedding Gift] n.d.
- 1.38 How was I to know? n.d.
- 1.39 Magic of the moon goddess, n.d.
- 1.40 She trumped her partner's ace, n.d.
- 1.41 What shall it profit? n.d.

Sub-series E: Fragments, n.d.

- 1.42-1.48 Short stories; includes untitled and fragmented works, n.d.

Added Entries: 600 Turczynowicz, Laura de, 1878-1953

Subject Access: 650 Hermann, Wanda de Turczynowicz
650 Turczynowicz, Peter de
650 Turczynowicz, Paul de

Related Materials:

When the Prussians came to Poland, SPCL D 640 T8 1916

Material Held at other Repositories:

Grey Samaritans

Mickritz, Stella Mucha, Papers, Immigration History
Research Center, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota

Papers, 1919-1973. Stobba, Mary Andrezjewska, 1899- ,
Wisconsin Historical Society

American Relief Administration

Stanford University, Hoover Institution Library and Archives

Other

UCR/California Museum of Photography, Riverside, California 92521,
Keystone-Mast Collection, KU42380, Stereographic photoprint of Laura de
Turczynowicz aboard the "Lapland". Online image available at: Online Archive
of California, <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt3d5nc1r0/>