

A Guide to the Delphine Hurst Parsons Papers, 1923-1976 (bulk 1923-1931) SC 0012

Delphine Hurst Parsons papers
1923-1976



Title Statement

A Guide to the Delphine Hurst Parsons Papers, 1923-1976 (bulk 1923-1931) SC 0012

Author: Ellen Blackmon

Publication Statement

Publisher: James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

820 Madison Drive
MSC 1706
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807
Telephone: (540) 568-3612
library-special@jmu.edu
URL: <https://www.lib.jmu.edu/special/>



June 2015

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-10-08 07:05:03 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0012

Unit ID

/repositories/4/resources/209

Unit Date

1923-1976

Unit Date

1923-1931

Language

English

Abstract

Materials include correspondence, paper ephemera, yearbooks, and memorabilia of Delphine Hurst Parsons from her time as a student at Maury High School in Norfolk, Virginia and at the State Teachers College (STC) at Harrisonburg, with one vinyl record of the Madison College Choir Concert of 1966, and a single photograph from the 1976 reunion of STC students. This collection also contains three yearbooks owned by Nellie Cowan Williams, a close friend and STC classmate of Delphine Parsons, and four yearbooks belonging to Hurst.

Creator

Parsons, Delphine Hurst, 1910-2001

source

Harper, Elizabeth

Extent

2.47 cubic feet 2 Hollinger boxes, 1 half-Hollinger box, 3 oversize boxes

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open to research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collection Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

Acquisition Information

Elizabeth Harper, Parsons' daughter, donated this collection to the James Madison University Special Collections Library in May 2013.

Processing Information

Nellie Cowan's 1931 *Schoolma'am* was removed from the collection due to lack of annotations and due to duplication elsewhere in Special Collections. Loose items found within yearbooks were removed and foldered separately. The scrapbooks remain intact with the exception of loose and oversized items which were removed and placed in folders; these folders are marked to indicate the original location of their contents.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Delphine Hurst Parsons Papers, 1923-1976, bulk 1923-1931, SC 0012, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Bio/Historical Note

Delphine Hurst Parsons was born Ida Delphine Hurst on February 21, 1910 to Bayard T. and Ida. L. Hurst of Norfolk, Virginia. Delphine attended Maury High School in Norfolk, graduating in 1928. In the same year, Hurst enrolled at the State Teachers College (later James Madison University) in Harrisonburg, Virginia. In addition to studying elementary education, Hurst participated in numerous extracurricular activities such as the university Bluestone Cotillion Club, Glee Club, Student Government, Lee Literary Society, and Debate Club. The financial constraints brought about by the Great Depression forced Hurst to return to Norfolk during what would have been her junior year at STC. Having already earned her two-year "normal degree," Hurst spent the year in Norfolk teaching fourth grade, taking courses through the College of William & Mary's extension program in Norfolk, and attending summer school at STC. By 1930, Hurst had earned enough money to return to STC and complete her bachelor's degree on time in the spring of 1931. Hurst was elected to serve as president of her sophomore class and, in spite of her absence, was reelected to the presidency of the senior class in 1931. The 1931 STC yearbook, *Schoolma'am*, lists Hurst as one of the "Most Intellectual" students of her graduating class.

Upon completing her degree in 1931, Hurst returned to Norfolk where she worked as an itinerant music teacher, traveling by streetcar between city schools. She married James Edward Parsons (January 16, 1912 - December 10, 1986), also of Norfolk, in April of 1941. Following the birth of their daughter in 1949, Delphine temporarily left teaching, but she made a return in 1958 as a teacher of history and English at Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia. Hurst continued working at Hargrave until her retirement in 1975. Just as it had been at STC, Delphine's spare time was filled with music. She directed the Hargrave glee club,

several church choirs, and she often played as a piano accompanist in Chatham.

Delphine passed away on December 14, 2001 and was buried alongside her husband in Hillcrest Memorial Park in Chatham, Virginia. She is remembered by her daughter Elizabeth Harper as a lover of music as well as travel and history.

Nellie Morgan Cowan Williams was the closest, lifelong friend of Delphine Hurst Parsons. Nellie was born in Norfolk, Virginia on November 2, 1908 to William J. and Mattie M. Cowan. Cowan and Hurst attended Maury High School and, later, the State Teachers College in Harrisonburg together, both completing their degrees in 1931. The two women shared a love of music, and Nellie in particular was known for her extraordinary singing voice. While enrolled at STC, Cowan was a member of music organizations such as the Aeolian Club, Choral Club, Glee Club, as well as the Y.W.C.A, Lee Literary Society and Cotillion Club. Nellie returned to Norfolk, and later Virginia Beach, where she taught upper elementary school. Nellie wed Frank Taylor Williams in the 1960s. At the wedding, Delphine stood as Nellie's maid of honor just as Nellie had done for her so many years before. The marriage was cut short by the untimely death of Frank Williams in June 1966. Nellie passed away on April 10, 1998 and is buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Norfolk.

Scope and Content

The Delphine Hurst Parsons Papers, 1923-1976, bulk 1923-1931, consist of one legal size half-Hollinger box containing folders of loose documents, two Hollinger boxes containing seven yearbooks from Maury High School and the State Teachers College, and three oversize flat storage boxes housing two scrapbooks and newspapers. Except for three yearbooks belonging to Nellie Cowan, this collection contains only papers created and collected by Delphine Hurst. The collection contains paper ephemera such as tickets, programs, calling cards, and nametags as well as correspondence, newspapers, and memorabilia acquired during Hurst's time spent at Maury High School (Norfolk, Virginia) and the State Teachers College in Harrisonburg. As such, virtually all of the material contained within covers a time period from 1923 to 1931. Two items fall outside of this time period: one vinyl record of the Madison College Choir Concert of 1966 and a single photograph from a 1976 reunion of STC students featuring Delphine Hurst and Nellie Cowan alongside several other former classmates.

Much of the correspondence contained within pertains directly to club, sorority, and academic activities; there is little personal (i.e. non-school related) correspondence. The bulk of the papers from Hurst's high school years (1924-1927) are contained in a green scrapbook. From her high school years, Hurst collected newspaper clippings covering Maury High School athletics, theater productions, debate club, and student academic activities. Hurst also collected postcards, brochures, and newspaper clippings pertaining to Camp Owaisa, a now-defunct YWCA camp in Virginia Beach. Loose and oversized items found within the front cover, back cover, and pages of the high school scrapbook were removed and placed within separate folders that are housed alongside the scrapbook in a flat storage box.

While attending the State Teachers College, Hurst collected dance cards from the Cotillion Club, score cards from the Debate Club, newspaper clippings covering the Glee Club, photos of campus and of classmates, notes and letters pertaining to student government, numerous playbills and programs from student theatrical productions, written feedback on her student teaching performance, letters relating to the Kappa Delta Pi honor society, and programs from university events such as alumnae banquets and the Wilson Hall dedication on 1931 (an event at which Hurst, the sitting senior class president, delivered an address). Most STC-related documents are secured within a blue scrapbook, while loose documents are organized by topic and housed within a single legal size half-Hollinger box.

The Hurst Parsons Papers also contains several issues of *The Breeze* from the years 1930 and 1931, as well as issues of the *Baltimore American* (5/24/1931), *Norfolk Ledger Dispatch* (5/27/1931), *Daily News-Record* (5/16/1931), and a special insert from the *Alexandria Gazette* (10/1931) dedicated to the bicentennial of George Washington's birth. Newspapers are housed within a single flat storage box. The vinyl record of the Madison College Choir Concert of 1966 is housed with the newspapers.

Rounding out the Delphine Hurst Parsons Papers are four yearbooks from Maury High School, entitled *The Commodore*, as well as three *Schoolma'am* yearbooks from STC. As indicated by signatures within the yearbooks, Delphine Hurst owned the following: *The Commodore* 1925, 1926, and 1927 as well as the *Schoolma'am* of 1931. Nellie Cowan owned *The Commodore* of 1927 and the *Schoolma'am* of 1928 and 1929. These yearbooks contain the signatures of their owners as well as well-wishes of classmates. Though few loose items were found within the pages of these yearbooks, some are of note, including a pamphlet by John W. Wayland entitled *A Bird's-Eye View of the Shenandoah Valley with Map* and a program from the State Teachers College commencement exercises of June 7, 1931.

Separated Materials

Nellie Cowan's 1931 *Schoolma'am* was removed from the collection due to lack of annotations and due to

duplication elsewhere in Special Collections.

Keywords

Harrisonburg (Va.) -- History

Universities and colleges -- Alumni and alumnae

Virginia -- Harrisonburg

Letters (correspondence)

Photographs

Memorabilia

Phonograph records

Yearbooks

Scrapbooks

Postcards

Newspapers

Place cards

Harper, Elizabeth

James Madison University

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.)

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- History

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Alumni and alumnae

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Students

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Students -- Social life and customs

James Madison University -- Students -- History

Bibliography

Harper, Elizabeth. Re: JMU Special Collections Donation. 2015. E-mail. "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2S-TYLQ> : accessed 9 July 2015), Nellie Cowan Williams, 1998; Burial, Norfolk, Norfolk City, Virginia, United States of America, Forest Lawn Cemetery; citing record ID 53808185, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>. "Find A Grave Index," index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVL1-DPZG> : accessed 15 June 2015), Delphine Hurst Parsons, 2001; Burial, Chatham, Pittsylvania, Virginia, United States of America, Hillcrest Burial Park; citing record ID 104919658, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>. *The Schoolma'am*, 1931. Harrisonburg (Va.): State Teachers College "United States Census, 1920," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MJJW-NP2> : accessed 9 July 2015), Nellie M Cowan in household of William J Cowan, Norfolk Washington Ward, Norfolk (Independent City), Virginia, United States; citing sheet 5B, family 111, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,821,901. "United States Census, 1930," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:CHLR-CN2> : accessed 15 June 2015), Delphine I Hurst in household of Bayard T Hurst, Norfolk, Norfolk (Independent City), Virginia, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 0004, sheet 3A, family 36, line 4, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 2469; FHL microfilm 2,342,203. "United States Census, 1940," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VTMM-GLD> : accessed 15 June 2015), Ida D Hurst in household of Bayard T Hurst, Area B, Norfolk, Norfolk City Voting Precinct 2, Norfolk City, Virginia, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 114-8, sheet 62A, family 167, NARA digital publication T627 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012), roll 4311.

Arrangement

This collections contains one legal size half-Hollinger box containing folders which are arranged topically. Items within each folder are arranged chronologically when possible. The scrapbooks remain intact with the exception of loose and oversized items which were removed and placed in folders; these folders are marked to indicate the original location of their contents. Yearbooks are arranged chronologically and are housed in two Hollinger boxes alongside folders containing loose items removed from their pages. Other oversize items, such as newspapers and the vinyl record, are housed in a separate oversize flat box.

The collection is arranged in four series:

- Letters and Memorabilia, 1926-1976

- Scrapbooks, 1923-1931
- Yearbooks, 1925-1931
- Ephemera, 1931-1966

Description of Subordinate Components

Ephemera

Unit ID 4

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/144

Unit Date 1931-1966

Language English

The Breeze

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2151

Unit Date December 12, 1930

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

The Breeze

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2152

Unit Date February 28, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

The Breeze (two copies)

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2153

Unit Date March 6, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

The Breeze

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2154

Unit Date May 22, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

The Breeze

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2155

Unit Date May 30, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Baltimore American

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2156

Unit Date May 24, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Norfolk Ledger Dispatch

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2157

Unit Date May 27, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Daily News-Record

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2158

Unit Date May 16, 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

George Washington Bicentennial News (by the Alexandria Gazette)

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2159

Unit Date October 1931

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Madison College 50th Anniversary Choir Concert Album

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2160

Unit Date 1965-1966

Mixed Materials [1000898349] OV 3 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Letters and Memorabilia

Unit ID 1

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/141

Unit Date 1926-1976

Language English

Travel Brochures and Postcards

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2117

Unit Date 1926

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Official State Teachers College Documents: Grades, Schedules

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2118

Unit Date 1930-1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Place Cards, Nametags

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2119

Unit Date 1927-1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

State Teachers College Event Programs: Banquets, Commencements

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2120

Unit Date 1929-1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

State Teachers College Athletics, Miscellaneous Events

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2121

Unit Date 1930-1932

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2122

Unit Date 1928-1932

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

State Teachers College Plays, Recitals

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2123

Unit Date 1930-1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

State Teachers College Student Government

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2124

Unit Date 1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Poetry, Lyrics

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2125

Unit Date 1927-1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

State Teachers College Clubs: Cotillion Club, Debate Club, Kappa Delta Pi

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2126

Unit Date 1930

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Student Teaching Documents

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2127

Unit Date 1930

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Wilson Hall Dedication Ceremony

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2128

Unit Date 1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

The Journal of the National Education Association, Vol. 20, No. 6

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2129

Unit Date 1931

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Reunion of Class of 1931

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2130

Unit Date 1976

Mixed Materials [1000886490] 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Scrapbooks

Unit ID 2

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/142

Unit Date 1923-1931

Language English

Maury High School Scrapbook

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2131

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Items removed from within front cover of scrapbook: Camp Owaisa brochure, newsletter, and newspaper clipping; theatrical programs; greeting cards

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2132

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Items removed from within back cover of scrapbook: Maury High School newspaper clippings; theatrical programs; greeting cards; Boy Scout banquet program; poetry, lyrics

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2133

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Items removed from pages 44-55 of MHS scrapbook: Program for "When Women Run Our City" and "Merry Girls Minstrel"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2134

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Items removed from pages 68-69 of MHS scrapbook: Lexington, VA brochure; brochure for the Colonial Hotel in Hagerstown, MD; sheet music, "Goodbye to Maury High"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2135

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Items removed from pages 74-75 of MHS scrapbook: Paper pennant reading "W.W.H.S;" fabric ribbon for "Guest Artist" at dedication of new studio space in Norfolk's National Bank of Commerce Building

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2136

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Items removed from pages 76-77 of MHS scrapbook: Body part riddle

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2137

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Items removed from pages 86-87 of MHS scrapbook: Red and white crepe paper, possibly a cap

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2138

Unit Date 1923-1928

Mixed Materials [1000898347] OV 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

State Teachers College Scrapbook

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2139

Unit Date 1928-1931

Mixed Materials [1000898348] OV 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Yearbooks

Unit ID 3

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/143

Unit Date 1925-1931

Language English

The Commodore, Maury High School, owned by Delphine Hurst

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2140

Unit Date 1925

Mixed Materials [1000886491] 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Item removed from The Commodore, corsage

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2141

Unit Date 1925

Mixed Materials [1000886491] 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

The Commodore, Maury High School, Delphine Hurst

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2142

Unit Date 1926

Mixed Materials [1000886491] 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

The Commodore, Maury High School, Delphine Hurst

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2143

Unit Date 1927

Mixed Materials [1000886491] 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

The Commodore, Maury High School, Nellie Cowan

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2144

Unit Date 1927

Mixed Materials [1000886491] 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Items removed from The Commodore, includes A Bird's-Eye View of the Shenandoah Valley with Map by John W. Wayland

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2145

Unit Date 1927

Mixed Materials [1000886491] 2 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

The Schoolma'am, State Teachers College, Nellie Cowan

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2146

Unit Date 1928

Mixed Materials [1000886492] 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

The Schoolma'am, State Teachers College, Nellie Cowan

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2147

Unit Date 1929

Mixed Materials [1000886492] 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Item removed from The Schoolma'am, 1929, program from STC commencement exercises

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2148

Unit Date 1931

Mixed Materials [1000886492] 3 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Items removed from The Schoolma'am, 1930, letter, senior recital program

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2149

Unit Date 1931

Mixed Materials [1000886492] 3 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

The Schoolma'am, State Teachers College, Delphine Hurst

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2150

Unit Date 1931

Mixed Materials [1000886492] 3 (box)

Container 5 (folder)