

## PHOENIX LITTLE THEATRE COLLECTION-MSS 70

Dates: 1922-1956

No. of Items: 1 box, .5 cu. ft.

Provenance: Donated to the Arizona Historical Society in 2012 by the Arizona Historical Foundation.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Phoenix Little Theatre (PLT), the oldest amateur playhouse west of the Mississippi, was founded in 1922 by Harry Behn and Maie Bartlett Heard. It became popular immediately and attracted large and loyal audiences for its productions of both original plays as well as better known works. PLT moved into its current building in 1951, in the cultural complex which also houses the Phoenix Art Museum. Over the years, the theatre staged a variety of productions, with emphasis on comedies and musicals. In 1954, the PLT Children's Theatre was started as well.

By the early 1970s, however, the theatre faced both artistic and financial problems, the cause and effect of declining attendance. By the late 1970s, PLT added professional actors to its casts, which renewed public interest somewhat. The 1980s were more profitable for PLT. During this period the smaller "Theater One" program was introduced, which allowed PLT to produce an annual series of dramas in addition to their main stage productions. PLT shows have been virtually sold out in subscription since these changes were instituted.

The Phoenix Little Theatre Published its own extremely detailed history in 1985 entitled Phoenix Little Theatre: 65 Years of Memories, compiled and written by Tom Oldenick and Christine Uithoven.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Phoenix Little Theatre Collection consists almost entirely of theater programs. A second series, Miscellany, includes newsletters, membership brochures and reviews. This material was received through Mrs. J.L.B. Alexander.

### DESCRIPTION

<b>Series 1</b>	<b>Programs 1922-1956</b>
Folder 1	Programs, 1922-25
Folder 2	Programs, 1933-38
Folder 3	Programs, 1945-June, 1951
Folder 4	Programs, Nov. 1951 - March 1953 (32 <sup>nd</sup> season)
Folder 5	Programs, Oct. 1953 - May 1954 (33 <sup>rd</sup> season)
Folder 6	Programs, Oct. 1954 - May 1955 (34 <sup>th</sup> season)
Folder 7	Programs, Summer series, 1955
Folder 8	Programs, Oct. 1955 - Oct. 1956 (35 <sup>th</sup> /36 <sup>th</sup> seasons)

**Series 2      Miscellany 1933-1956**

Folder 1      Membership solicitation, 1933  
Folder 2      Newspaper reviews, 1934-1955  
Folder 3      Newsletters, 1956

Kris Darnall  
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