



## JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE COLLECTION

Coll2007-007

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### Date Completed

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## Descriptive Summary

### Title

Jacob's Pillow Dance Collection

### Creator

Unknown

### Extent

Number of containers: 1 archive box  
Linear feet: 0.2 linear feet

### Date

1934-1958

### Repository

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

### Abstract

Dance and souvenir programs for Ted Shawn and his Men Dancers, 1934-1938, and for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, 1954-1955 and 1957-1958; publicity materials and dance programs, circa 1940-1949, for dancers Barton Mumaw and Foster Fitz-Simons; stylized drawings, circa 1936, of Ted Shawn, Barton Mumaw, Frank Overlees, Dennis Landers, Foster Fitz-Simons, Fred Hearn, and Wilbur McCormack; and photographs of Ted Shawn (1954) and Barton Mumaw (circa 1941).



## Administrative Information

### Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

### Publication Rights

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### Preferred Citation

Folder #, Jacob's Pillow Dance Collection, Coll2007-007, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

### Indexing Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms:

Fitz-Simons, Foster, 1912-1991  
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival  
Male dancers—United States  
Mumaw, Barton, 1912-2001  
Shawn, Ted, 1891-1972  
Ted Shawn and his Men Dancers

### Acquisitions Information

Date of acquisition and name of donor not known

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Michael P. Palmer, March 14, 2007

## History

The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and School, in Becket, Massachusetts, in the southern part of the Berkshire Hills, traces its origins to the 1930 purchase of the Jacob's Pillow farm by dance pioneer Ted Shawn (1891-1972), who was in the process of separating, personally and professionally, from his wife and dance partner, Ruth St. Denis. Shawn had long harbored a dream of forging a new style of male dance that would challenge the "sissy" image of male dancers, and would legitimize dance in America as an honorable career for men. In 1933, he recruited eight men, including a former student at Denis and Shawn's Denishawn dance school, Barton Mumaw, and several physical education students from Springfield College (then a men's school) for his new company. In July 1933, Shawn and his Men Dancers began giving public "Tea Lecture Demonstrations" to promote their work, and to raise money to pay the expenses. In addition, from 1933 to 1940, Shawn and his Men Dancers toured throughout the United States and to Canada, Cuba, and England, performing more than 1,250 times in 750 cities. By the Fall of 1939, Shawn felt his personal and professional crusade had been a success—public, press, and educators were accepting the dance as an honorable profession for men—and he announced in October that the forthcoming tour would be the last. The Men Dancers disbanded in May 1940. Shawn leased the property, with the option to buy, to Mary Washington Ball, who produced the Berkshire Hills Dance Festival on the site in 1940. Although Shawn considered Ball's introduction of diverse programming an artistic success, the festival was a financial disaster. Shawn next leased the property to British ballet stars Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, whose 1941 International Dance Festival was so successful that local supporters formed the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Committee, raised \$50,000 to buy the property and to build a theatre, and made Shawn director in 1942. The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and University of the Dance, by combining daily classes and evening performances, became the first intensive summer dance program in the United States. Shawn remained director until his death in 1972.

### Source:

Jacob's Pillow, <http://www.jacobspillow.org/archives/history.asp>, accessed on March 14, 2007.

## Scope and Content and Container List

The bulk of the collection consists of dance and souvenir programs for Ted Shawn and his Men Dancers, 1934-1938, and for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, 1954-1955 and 1957-1958. The collection also contains stylized drawings, circa 1936, of Ted Shawn, Barton Mumaw, Frank Overlees, Dennis Landers, Foster Fitz-Simons, Fred Hearn, and Wilbur McCormack; two photographs of Shawn taken in Florida in 1954; and clippings relating to Shawn and his early career from two unidentified publications. Materials relating to Barton Mumaw (1912-2001), originally Shawn's student, later his colleague, lover, and companion, include illustrated publicity brochures prepared by his management firm when he launched his solo career shortly after Men Dancers disbanded in 1940; a dance program from April 1941; an announcement from Mumaw's 1949 South African tour; and eight 10" x 8" photographs. Materials relating to Foster Fitz-Simons (1912-1991), another member of Shawn's Men Dancers who struck out on his own after the company disbanded, includes an illustrated publicity brochure for Fitz-Simons and his dance partner, Miriam Winslow, prepared their management firm, and two copies (one signed "Foster Fitzsimons 1940") of a program given by the pair in New York.

### Folder

- 1-4 Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers. Souvenir Programs
  - 1 After Oct. 1934
  - 2 Between May 1935 and June 1936
  - 3 After June 1936
  - 4 After summer 1938
- 5. Shawn, Ted. *How Beautiful Upon the Mountain; a history of Jacob's Pillow*. 3rd edition, 1946.  
At least 1 leaf missing.
- 6-10. Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, 1954-1958
  - 6. 13th season. Souvenir Program and History of Jacob's Pillow; program; mimeographed program insert, 1954
  - 7. 14th season. Program; mimeographed program insert, 1955
  - 8. Ticket stubs, 1956
  - 9. Silver Jubilee Season, 1934-1957. Souvenir Program; mimeographed program insert, 1957
  - 10. Souvenir Program, 1958
- 11. Foster Fitz-Simons, circa 1940
- 12. Barton Mumaw, circa 1941-1949
- 13. Photographs and drawings, circa 1936, 1954
- 14. Clippings, no date