Hoffman, Richard Lee, collector.

Richard Hoffman Beth Henley collection
1981–1984

Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 550
Title: Richard Hoffman Beth Henley collection
Extent: .6 linear feet (2 boxes)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 550, Richard Hoffman Beth Henley collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.
Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes; Box 2: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch)
Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/
Source: Purchase, December 2006.
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Biographical Notes

Richard Hoffman

Richard Hoffman, the Brooklyn-based theater collector and book dealer, built a number of literary collections around American playwrights over a period of many years. Hoffman has said that he entered the United States Army in the 1950s as an actor and left as a writer. His military experience led to an assignment to create a television program titled "Your Army in View," which consisted of interviews and live drama. After his discharge from the service in 1955, Hoffman taught in the drama department of The City University of New York. During this period he was awarded a Eugene O'Neill fellowship for playwriting. He also seriously began to collect rare books and first editions of contemporary American dramatists, notably the playwrights Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Neil Simon. Richard Hoffman's interest in collecting first editions led to his career as an antiquarian book dealer.

Beth Henley

American playwright and screenwriter Beth Henley was born May 8, 1952, in Jackson, Mississippi. An aspiring actress, Henley earned a B.F.A. from Southern Methodist University. Her first play, *Am I Blue*, was written and produced at SMU in 1973. She joined actor/director Stephen Tobolowsky in Los Angeles in 1976, where they collaborated on the screenplay *True Stories*.

In 1978 her black comedy, *Crimes of the Heart*, won the Great American Play Contest sponsored by the Actors Theatre in Louisville, Kentucky. *Crimes of the Heart* debuted on Broadway at the John Golden Theatre on November 4, 1981, and was later awarded the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best new American play and the Pulitzer Prize for drama (1981). Henley wrote the screenplay for the movie version which appeared in 1986 and was nominated for an Oscar as best adapted screenplay.

Henley's next play, *The Miss Firecracker Contest*, was produced in Los Angeles and off-Broadway in New York in 1980. Again Henley adapted the play for the screen; with the movie produced in 1993.

Beth Henley has continued to live in California and write plays, including her latest, *Ridiculous Fraud*, which played at the McCarter Theatre in June 2006.

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

The Richard Hoffman Beth Henley collection spans the dates 1981–1984 and comprises eight items, including six playscripts and two film posters. Henley's play, *Crimes of the Heart*, is represented by two posters and four playscripts. Laid in one of these scripts is an inscription by Henley. The collection also includes playscripts for *The Wake of Jamey Foster* and *The Miss Firecracker Contest*. 
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names
Henley, Beth.

Topical Terms
American drama--20th century.
American drama--Women authors.
Women and literature--United States--History--20th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms
Scripts (documents)
Posters.

Occupation
Playwrights.
Screen writers.

Personal Contributors
Henley, Beth.

Related Materials in this Repository
MSS 484 Richard Hoffman Neil Simon collection
MSS 485 Richard Hoffman Arthur Miller collection
MSS 490 Richard Hoffman David Rabe collection
MSS 496 Richard Hoffman David Mamet collection
MSS 505 Richard Hoffman John Guare collection
MSS 508 Richard Hoffman Lorraine Hansberry collection
MSS 510 Richard Hoffman August Wilson collection
MSS 551 Richard Hoffman Woody Allen collection
Arrangement

The collection is arranged alphabetically by play title.
Detailed Description of the Collection


Includes playscripts, posters and an inscription by Beth Henley.

*Crimes of the Heart* playscript, 1981 [Box 1 F1]

New York: William Morris Agency. Original mimeographed manuscript in brown boards and bearing the label of the William Morris Agency. Author's agent copy which has an additional character (Uncle Watson) added that is not in the other scripts. Laid in is an inscription reading: "Crimes of the Heart Beth Henley" plus a drawing of a heart with an arrow through it. Title page bears in red the initials "MTC" and the number "13."

*Crimes of the Heart* playscript, 1981 [Box 1 F2]


*Crimes of the Heart* playscript, 1981 [Box 1 F3]

New York: Studio Duplicating Services, Inc. Original mimeographed manuscript in blue fabricord binder. Title page notes: "Property of: Claire Nichtern, Warner Theatre Productions, Inc." and bears the number "#86" in black marker and has penciled under the title: "Different scripts (separate copy)." The page 23–29 of Act III are revisions to the script in F2 and dated 9/18/81.

*Crimes of the Heart* playscript, 1983 April [Box 1 F4]

New York: Studio Duplicating Services, Inc. Original mimeographed manuscript in blue fabricord binder. Title page notes: "Property of: Claire Nichtern, Warner Theatre Productions, Inc." and bears the number "13-R" in blue pen and notes: "Revised April, 1983." Through out the script there are pages which are marked as revised.

*Crimes of the Heart* window card poster, 1981 [Box 1 F5]

New York: Golden Theatre, Warner Theatre Productions, Inc., November 14–February 13, 1981 Directed by Melvin Bernhardt, starring Mia Dillon, Mary Beth Hurt and Lizabeth Mackay, Raymond Baker, Sharon Ullrick and Peter MacNicol. Two copies of a poster both of which are illustrated with portraits of the leading actresses. The verso of one copy is stamped "Bill Posters Local 3038."

*Crimes of the Heart* poster, 1983 [Box 1 F6]

Los Angeles: Ahmanson Theatre, Center Theatre Group, April 14–May 28, 1983 Original colorful poster for the limited West Coast performance of the play. Features the original Broadway cast.

Series II. The Miss Firecracker Contest, 1984
Series II.

*The Miss Firecracker Contest* playscript, 1984 [Box 2 F7]

New York: Manhattan Theatre Club Original photocopied typescript in blue fabricord binder. Clean copy with the number 38 penned on the title page.

Series III. *The Wake of Jamey Foster*, 1982

*The Wake of Jamey Foster* playscript, 1982 [Box 2 F8]