Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection:
Manuscript Collection

Special Collections
Middlebury College Library
Middlebury College
110 Storrs Ave.
Middlebury, VT 05753

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Flanders, Helen Hartness (1890-1972)
Title: Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection: Manuscript Collection.
Dates: 1930-1960
Abstract: This collection comprises manuscripts of 18th and 19th century folk songs along with their musical scores and context. The majority of these items were typescript copies of songs found in manuscript form in informants' homes and in library collections and typescript copies of songs sent to the collection by respondents to newspaper articles and advertisements which she wrote to solicit information on songs. There are also many handwritten songs (mostly lyrics, but some scores as well) and bound manuscripts.

Quantity: (7 boxes: 6 document boxes and 1 oversize)
Call Number: HHFMSS

Arrangement

This collection is mainly arranged by manuscript type.
Historical/Biographical Note

Helen Hartness Flanders was born in Springfield, VT in 1890. The wife of Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders, she split her time between Washington and their home in Springfield. She began identifying and collecting traditional folksongs from around New England in 1930 at the request of the Vermont Commission on Country Life. For over 3 decades, Flanders traveled throughout New England recording ballad singers at a time when radios were supplanting live performances as the major source of music in a home. She began by recording on wax cylinders, and then switched to acetate disks and reel-to-reel tapes as the technology improved. Her collection of field recordings eventually numbered over 4500.

In addition to collecting live performances, Flanders also wrote extensively on traditional ballads and published several books. She was an active contributor to conferences and exhibitions on traditional music and folklore. Her collection expanded to include songsters, broadsheets and chapbooks, photographs of informants as well as research into traditional music.

Helen Hartness Flanders died in 1972.

Scope and Content Note

The H.H. Flanders Manuscript Collection contains numerous bound, typescript and handwritten folksong manuscripts. Collected by Helen Hartness Flanders over a period of three decades from the 1930’s through the 1960’s, the manuscript collection consists of copybooks, diaries, letters, and miscellaneous sheets donated to or purchased for the Collection. Manuscripts include ballads and songs, fiddle and fife tunes dating from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. Typescript copies of twelve copybooks and ten collections of papers represent nearly 400 additional songs and tunes from the 18th and 19th centuries. Most of these songs originated in the British Isles and America. Some manuscripts are unidentified and undated. In addition, there are numerous photocopies of original broadsheets and manuscripts.

Of particular interest are two copy books belonging to Patty Mann of Medway, Massachusetts [one is dated 1806], a copybook belonging to Water E. Jones of Waitsfield, Vermont [probably from the late 18th century], a copybook belonging to Rosette Daily of Pittsburg, New Hampshire containing 45 pp. of tunes.
Access Points

**Special Topics:**
- Folk songs
- Ballads
- Irish music
- Scottish music
- English music
- Early American music

**Document Types:**
- Manuscripts
- Holographs
- Typescripts

Related Materials:

Helen Hartness Flanders Field Recordings Collection
Helen Hartness Flanders Manuscripts Collection
Helen Hartness Flanders Broadsides Collection
Helen Hartness Flanders Songsters and Hymnals Collection
Middlebury College Archives A-11.5 (Library-Special Collection-Flanders)

Administrative Information

**Provenance**

These manuscripts were donated to Middlebury College by Helen Hartness Flanders.

**Preferred Citation**

Published Citations should take the following form:

Identification of item, item number, date (if known); Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection: Manuscript Collection; (HHFMSS); box number

Special Collections, Middlebury College
110 Storrs Avenue
Middlebury, VT 05753
Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Open for research without restrictions.

Permission to publish materials must first be obtained in writing from the:

Special Collections
Middlebury College Library
Middlebury College
110 Storrs Avenue
Middlebury, VT 05753

Container List

Box 1       Bound Manuscripts
Box 2       Bound Manuscripts
Box 3       Musical Transcriptions
Box 4       Manuscripts- typescript copies
Box 5       Manuscripts- typescript copies
             Broadsides
             Miscellaneous Songs
Box 6       Manuscripts- typescript copies and holographs
Box 7       Oversize