

# **Edith Wharton and Clyde Fitch typescript of "The House of Mirth: A Play in Four Acts, circa 1906"**

**Ms. Coll. 121**

**Finding aid prepared by Siel Agugliaro.**

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Last updated on March 29, 2018.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2018 February 27

## Table of Contents

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Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	4
Related Materials .....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	5
Collection Inventory.....	7

## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Fitch, Clyde, 1865-1909
<b>Creator</b>	Wharton, Edith, 1862-1937
<b>Title</b>	Edith Wharton and Clyde Fitch typescript of "The House of Mirth: A Play in Four Acts, circa 1906"
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 121
<b>Date</b>	circa 1906, undated
<b>Extent</b>	0.2 linear foot (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Edith Wharton (1862-1937) was an American novelist, best known for works that provided insightful representation of New York high society. In 1905, her novel, <i>The House of Mirth</i> , was published; and shortly thereafter, she worked with dramatist, Clyde Fitch (1865-1909), to develop a play adapted from the novel. The collection consists in the complete typescript of the play <i>The House of Mirth</i> , as well a photocopy made at a later date.

**Cite as:**

Edith Wharton and Clyde Fitch typescript of "The House of Mirth: A Play in Four Acts," circa 1906,

undated, Ms. Coll. 121, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts,  
University of Pennsylvania

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## Biography/History

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Edith Wharton (1862-1937), was a prominent American author. She published *The House of Mirth* in 1905, *Ethan Frome* in 1911, *The Custom of the Country* in 1913, and *The Age of Innocence* in 1920, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. She also authored short stories (some of which have been judged among the best American short stories of the twentieth century), poetry, and nonfiction works. The success of Wharton's novel *The House of Mirth*, published in 1905, led literary agent Elizabeth Marbury (1856-1933) to suggest to Wharton that the book be adapted as a theatrical work, with the collaboration of Clyde Fitch (1865-1909), a famous dramatist of the time, who also was one of Marbury's clients. Wharton and Fitch co-wrote the play during the summer of 1906; and on September 14 of that year, it premiered at the Detroit Opera House. The play *The House of Mirth* was never published during Wharton's lifetime. A critical edition of the play, edited by Glenn Loney, was published in 1981 (East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Presses). The edition is based upon the complete typescript held by the University of Pennsylvania, and on the four preliminary drafts of the play found at New York Public Library (Lincoln Center Library, Billy Rose Collection).

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of a complete typescript of the play *The House of Mirth*, co-written by Edith Wharton and Clyde Fitch. According to Glenn Loney, who edited the critical edition of the play in 1981, the typescript is probably the only copy of the final version of the drama, as it incorporates the additions and revisions which were added to the working versions of the play found at the New York Public Library. A photocopy of the whole typescript is also included in the collection. The typescript will provide insight on the collaboration between two celebrated authors of their time. Researchers interested in Fitch's work as a dramatist are recommended to consult the Clyde Fitch typescripts and letters, circa 1890-1925, (Ms. Coll. 1332), which includes ten unpublished plays, many of which were written during the same time frame as this adaptation of *The House of Mirth*.

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## Administrative Information

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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### **Access Restrictions**

This collection is open for research use.

### **Use Restrictions**

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### **Source of Acquisition**

The typescript was acquired on July 20, 1926 through the Benjamin Franklin Library Fund

### **Processing Information note**

Formerly Dewey 812.W5551H

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

Four preliminary typescript copies of the play can be found at the New York Public Library (Lincoln Center Library, Billy Rose Collection). The New York Public Library also holds the Clyde Fitch papers, 1887-1904 (Clyde Fitch papers, 1887-1904, MssCol 1014).

At Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library:

Edith Wharton collection, 1868-1981

At the University of Pennsylvania:

Clyde Fitch typescripts and letters, circa 1890-1925, Ms. Coll. 1332 (collection of other 10 typescript plays by Clyde Fitch).

At the Amherst College Library:

W. Clyde Fitch Collection, 1867-1986 (bulk: 1883-1909), MA.00116

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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## **FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Plays (performed works)
- Typescripts

## **SUBJECT(S)**

- Authors
- Authors, American--19th century
- Authors, American--20th century
- Playwriting
- Theater--United States
- Women authors

## Collection Inventory

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	Box	Folder
"The House of Mirth: A Play in Four Acts by Edith Wharton and Clyde Fitch", circa 1906.	1	1

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"The House of Mirth: A Play in Four Acts by Edith Wharton and Clyde Fitch", photocopy, undated.	1	2
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