



Greer Garson and Henry Travers
in *Mrs. Miniver*

*"A radiant rose of a woman,
Greer Garson scatters her
delightful personality like a
handful of petals. 'But
that's my symbol - the rose,'
said Miss Garson, resigned
to being everybody's Mrs.
Miniver forever."*

— Cobey Black,
Honolulu Star Bulletin,
June 9, 1967

*B*eginning in 1992, Greer Garson

Fogelson, donated scrapbooks,

photographs, correspondence, and

other papers documenting her career

to SMU's Hamon Arts Library. This

collection consists of approximately sixty

linear feet of archival materials, including

over 100 scrapbooks. The goal of this

exhibition is to trace the outlines of her

career and to convey a sense of the wealth

of materials contained in the Greer

Garson Collection, the most extensive

gathering of primary materials

documenting the life of one of the most

honored actresses in the history of film.

The Greer Garson Collection is housed in the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections Wing of the Jake and Nancy Hamon Arts Library, which houses several archival collections concentrating on the visual and performing arts, especially in the American Southwest. Holdings include photographs, correspondence, scrapbooks, art exhibition catalogs, sketches, lithographs, slides, theater programs, playbills, scripts, set designs, movie stills and posters, and manuscripts.

The Jerry Bywaters Special Collections Wing is open weekdays from 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Researchers are requested to make reservations in advance so that the required materials can be assembled and the appropriate curator made available. Access to some materials, such as many of the Greer Garson Collection's scrapbooks, may be restricted due to their fragile condition. Efforts are underway to raise funds for conservation of the scrapbooks, so that they may be made more accessible to researchers.

Hawn Gallery Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 10:00 A.M.-10:00 P.M.

Friday: 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

Saturday: 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.

Sunday: 2:00 P.M.-10:00 P.M.

Exhibition curated by Ellen Buie Niewyk and Sam Ratcliffe

The opening and closing quotations in the brochure text appear in Michael Troyan's *A Rose For Mrs. Miniver: The Life of Greer Garson*, University Press of Kentucky, forthcoming in October 1998.

A Greer Garson Scrapbook.

Selections from the
Greer Garson Collection



Greer Garson, 1936
(during her role in *Mademoiselle*)

Mildred Hawn Exhibition Gallery
Jake and Nancy Hamon Arts Library
Southern Methodist University
September 8-November 1, 1998

Although Greer Garson is best known for her film roles, she had a notable theatrical career in her native London during the 1930s. She had graduated with honors from the University of London and did postgraduate studies at Grenoble University in France. Her early career in art research and editing for Encyclopedia Britannica, and later with Lever's International Advertising Service in London, honed her writing skills so well that, in later years, she had a standing job offer from the MGM

script writing department if she ever tired of acting. But the stage had been her first love ever since she did a poetry recitation at the age of four and, in 1931, she



Greer Garson, 1938

decided to pursue acting as a full-time career, joining the Birmingham Repertory Company. Then, beginning in May 1935, she enjoyed a virtually uninterrupted two-year run of leading roles in London's West End. She was cast in the first of these productions, *Golden Arrow*, by the play's director and leading man, Laurence Olivier. Even though none of the productions met with general critical acclaim, her work was praised by critics and Greer Garson proved to be popular with audiences. During this time, she also appeared in a few of the first productions of BBC Television. Finally, in the autumn of 1937, Louis B. Mayer was impressed by her performance in *Old Moliere* and signed her to a long-term contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Despite Mayer's enthusiasm, Greer Garson spent a frustrating year without even a bit part in Hollywood. But the wait proved to be worthwhile, as her first starring role, in *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (1939), resulted in a nomination for Best Actress. This honor would be followed by six more nominations in this category for her work in *Blossoms in the Dust* (1941), *Mrs. Miniver*

(1942), *Madame Curie* (1943), *Mrs. Parkington* (1944), *Valley of Decision* (1945), and *Sunrise at Campobello* (1960). *Blossoms in the Dust* followed upon the heels of Miss Garson's sophisticated, witty performance in *Pride and Prejudice* (1940), which reunited her with Olivier as her leading man. But it was her portrayal in *Blossoms in the Dust* of Edna Gladney, who took her campaign for more humane treatment of illegitimate children to the Texas Capitol, that earned her next Best Actress nomination.

The following year marked the release of the film for which Greer Garson won the Best Actress award and the role for which she is most remembered, *Mrs. Miniver*. It may well have been her most famous pairing with Walter Pidgeon, with whom she had first worked in *Blossoms in the Dust*. This story of English civilians' determined resistance during the Battle of Britain struck a resonant chord with American audiences, prompting Winston Churchill to proclaim that the film was as important to the Allied war effort as "a whole fleet of destroyers." But Greer Garson's contributions to the war effort extended far beyond acting, as she was one of the most frequent participants in nationwide tours by film stars to sell war bonds. These tours visited relatively small cities as well as large urban areas, and she frequently delivered speeches that she had written herself, urging audiences to buy bonds.

Despite the success of *Mrs. Miniver*, Miss Garson always remembered her other 1942 film, *Random Harvest*, as her favorite role. Set at the end of World War I, this role did not win any awards for her, but she did give a solid performance and surprised filmgoers with her dancing abilities. The next year, her portrayal of the title role in *Madame Curie* landed her on the cover of *Time*



Greer Garson and Buddy Fogelson, 1951

magazine, as she and Walter Pidgeon played the husband-and-wife scientists who discovered radium.

Following her film triumphs of the 1940s, Miss Garson made a successful transition to television, notably in several productions in the critically acclaimed "Hallmark Hall of Fame" series. She also returned to her original acting medium, live theater. Beginning in December 1958, she held the title role in the Broadway production of *Auntie Mame* for a year. She left this production to play Eleanor Roosevelt in *Sunrise at Campobello*, for which she received her final Best Actress nomination.

In 1949, Greer Garson had married Dallas oilman-rancher-lawyer, Colonel E. E. "Buddy" Fogelson, who had been in charge of oil procurement for the Allied forces in Europe during World War II. They had been introduced two years earlier on the set of *Julia Misbehaves* by Peter Lawford, one of her co-stars in the film. For several years, the Fogelsons divided their time between Los Angeles, Dallas, and their historic Forked Lightning Ranch near Pecos, New Mexico. Mrs. Fogelson (as she preferred to be known) became enthralled with the Southwest in general and Forked Lightning in particular, as she involved herself with her husband's interest in raising Shorthorn and Santa Gertrudis cattle and in the life of the community. One token of the esteem for the actress by the Pecos community was the naming of its jail (constructed of pink adobe) after her; she proclaimed it to be the "Friendliest Jail in the West."

Forked Lightning also served as an expression of the Fogelsons' interest in environmental and wildlife protection and historic preservation. The ranch is now a U.S. national wildlife refuge and the Fogelsons also



Greer Garson and Cary Grant, n.d.

donated funds and ranch property to the Department of the Interior to ensure the protection of Spanish and ancient Indian ruins (since designated a National Historic Monument). The Fogelson Visitor Center and Museum was opened in 1984 near the site of these ruins. For their conservation and preservation efforts, the couple was presented the highest award given by the Department of the Interior, a citation "for exceptional service in the protection of the environment and the preservation of our heritage."

A few years before Colonel Fogelson's death in 1987, the couple began residing full time in Dallas, where Mrs. Fogelson embarked on a number of projects to benefit the community and to honor her husband. Together, the Fogelsons already had supported education and opportunities for young people. For example, they celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary by endowing a fund at Southern Methodist University to provide annual scholarships for drama students.

Following Colonel Fogelson's death, she financed construction of Fogelson Forum, a medical education center at Presbyterian Hospital. The final example of her generosity during Greer Garson Fogelson's lifetime was funding the construction of the Greer Garson Theatre at SMU, which opened in 1992.

"Well, after all I lead a quiet life and have no children. And then, when I started out in the theatre no one helped me. I'm always suspicious of people who say that they had it tough starting out and add that they wouldn't have it any other way. So maybe that's why I'm doing this, to give young aspiring artists some sort of helping hand."

—GREER GARSON'S COMMENT ON FUNDING THE GREER GARSON THEATRE