1972

A History of the Southwest Theatre Conference.

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A HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural
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A HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

The Department of Speech

by

William Patrick Harrigan III
M.F.A., Tulane University, 1960
May, 1972
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Dr. Claude Shaver, the director of this dissertation, for his guidance and encouragement in the preparation of this dissertation.

Appreciation is also expressed to the many members of the Southwest Theatre Conference who supplied information to complete this study.
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ABSTRACT

The states of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana comprise what is referred to as the Southwest. Theoretically, this area is among the most active in the country. During the 1930's and 1940's numerous amateur drama groups sprang up to fill the area residents' desire for theatrical entertainment. Many groups experienced great difficulties because they lacked adequate knowledge about theatre and its management. In 1948 the Southwest Theatre Conference (SWTC) was formally organized to help these groups.

SWTC exists on two planes. One contains the organization with its bylaws, officers, and members; the other contains the primary activity of the organization, its annual convention. The study treats each plane separately. Chapters II through VI discuss the founding and growth of the organization.

Chapter II relates the events which led to the founding of SWTC at the University of Oklahoma in 1948.

SWTC grew rapidly between 1949 and 1954 (Chapter III). It began providing services for its members other than the annual convention and it became the rallying point for the region's theatres in their relationships with the American National Theatre and Academy and the National Theatre Assembly.

The enthusiasm generated by the founding of SWTC waned over the next few years (Chapter IV). Since only organizational members could vote, individual members began to lose interest in SWTC. Between 1955 and 1960 membership dropped and financial problems arose.
In order to renew itself, SWTC revised its membership structure in 1961 and made individual membership more attractive. Over the next few years the membership grew and SWTC became an association primarily of individuals rather than of organizations (Chapter V).

The administration of SWTC was on a yearly basis from the time of its founding. In 1966 SWTC incorporated to provide itself a stronger, central administrative structure (Chapter VI).

Over the years SWTC attempted to provide services for its members. The two more successful endeavors were Topics, the Conference newsletter, and the New Plays Library.

Chapters VII through IX discuss the Conference's annual conventions. These gatherings provided four types of activities: general sessions, special interest sessions, guest speakers and theatrical productions. General sessions were devoted to subjects of interest to all members of SWTC. They were scheduled so that the entire membership could attend each session. Special interest sessions were devoted to subjects of limited interest and were usually scheduled concurrently. Prominent theatre personalities brought their knowledge and experience to the conventions as guest speakers. From the early years of SWTC, performances by the host institutions were important events on the convention programs.

Chapter X contains a summary and analysis of SWTC's development as an organization and of the annual convention programs. Appraisal of SWTC's accomplishments and consideration of its future activities complete the study.
SWTC fostered conditions which contributed to the growth of theatre in the region. It helped theatre workers increase their competency and thereby improve production standards. As a result an audience for live theatre was maintained in the region.

It served as a channel through which the region's theatres maintained contact with one another and also with theatrical developments around the country.

In spite of several attempts to provide year-round services, SWTC remains basically what it originally was: an annual activity. It probably will continue to provide a yearly convention at which theatre people can be inspired to improve their work.
inadequate records were kept of the early years of the Conference, there was a need to gather the information about these years from the scattered sources and fill in the picture.

No contributory SWTC studies exist in writing. Two parallel works which were helpful in organizing the plan of study were The History of the National Theatre Conference by Tino Balio and Lee Norvelle published by the National Theatre Conference in 1968, and an unpublished thesis, "A History of the Children's Theatre Conference, 1944 - 1955," by Dorothy Thames Schwartz at the University of Alabama in 1956.

Southwest Theatre Conference Archives deposited in the Drama School Library of the University of Oklahoma served as the major source of material for this study. Incomplete records in the archives were supplemented extensively by items collected by the author. Among the primary sources in the archives are minutes for Conference meetings, including business meetings, "Quo Vadis" meetings, and several executive and planning committee meetings; the papers of Rupel Jones; programs for the annual conventions and for the theatrical productions at the conventions; copies of Southwest Theatre Conference Bulletin, Southwest Theatre Topics, SWTC Newsletter; and several addresses delivered at annual conventions. Secondary sources in the archives consist of newspaper clippings concerning the Conference.

Primary sources for this study not found in the Archives are personal interviews and correspondence with past presidents and other important figures of the Conference. Persons interviewed for the study include Paul Baker and John Wray Young, two of the founders of the
the incorporation of the Conference and recent attempts to expand Conference services.

Part Two, Chapters VII through IX, covers activities at the Conference's annual conventions. Chapter VII includes the conventions for the years 1948 - 1954. During these years the university theatres were the dominant convention hosts. Chapter VIII covers 1955 through 1961 when the community theatres were dominant as hosts for the annual conventions. Chapter IX covers the conventions for 1962 through 1969 when the universities again dominated as hosts. The final chapter of the study, Chapter X, contains a summary and analysis of the development of the Conference as an organization and of the annual convention programs. Appraisal of the accomplishments of the Conference's projects thus far and consideration of future activities of the Conference complete the study.
Chapter II

THE BIRTH OF THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the structure of the American theatre changed from one based on performances by professional touring companies to one based on performances by local amateur organizations. As the touring system waned, local community and educational theatres advanced to satisfy the populace's desire for theatrical entertainment. Unfortunately many of the amateur organizations which sprang up were poorly prepared to meet the artistic and financial challenges which lay before them. Eventually they came to realize that, if the American theatre was to survive and maintain artistic standards, a large degree of organization and cooperation was necessary. Several groups attempted to organize the amateur theatres in America but only one group, the National Theatre Conference, succeeded.¹

The National Theatre Conference was organized in 1931 "to act as a means of cooperation between organized theatres already established; as opportunity develops, to serve newer theatres and to broaden and strengthen the field for dramatic education."² To achieve these ends, the National Theatre Conference divided the country into nine regions, each with a regional center and a director who would be National Theatre Conference's regional liaison to promote theatrical development in the region and organize a regional conference.³

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³ Balio and Norvelle, pp. 17 - 19.
This chapter covers the activities which occurred prior to the establishment of one regional conference, the Southwest Theatre Conference. It includes information concerning two regional meetings in the 1930's and discusses the specific events which led to founding the Conference in 1948 and the philosophy which guided the founding.

Early Regional Meetings in the Southwest

The National Theatre Conference divided the country into nine regions to facilitate the development of local theatre organizations and selected directors from the regions to supervise the development. Rupel Jones of the University of Oklahoma became the regional director for the Seventh Region, which was commonly referred to as the Southwest.

Following the wishes of the National Theatre Conference, Jones held a regional convention at the University of Oklahoma on April 13 and 14, 1934. Delegates to this convention participated in round table discussions for the little theatres, the college and university theatres, the high school theatres, and the drama study clubs. They attended a puppet show produced by Woodson Tyree of Ponca City, Oklahoma; a production of The Witch directed by Miss Ida Z. Kirk at the Playhouse, University of Oklahoma; and a Studio Theatre production of an original play, The Breaking Point, by Sam Kraecker of Oklahoma City. Thomas Wood Stevens, a pioneer in educational theatre and a community theatre director, addressed the delegates. He observed that the legitimate stage was in a transitional period and that it would be carried through this period by the little theatres and the college groups. He also encouraged them
not to worry about the growth of the movies. Stevens accurately forecast that "the movies should not hurt the legitimate stage since the fields of the two are entirely different. Their objectives and their media of expression are so different that there is little conflict." 4

The National Theatre Conference abolished the office of regional director in 1935 and attempted to reorganize itself. For the next few years the Conference struggled to resolve internal differences and accomplished very little toward encouraging regional development. 5

Rupel Jones, seeing the need for regional activity and encouraged by his experience in 1934 decided to sponsor another convention in 1938. With support from the University of Oklahoma and its Extension Division Jones called a convention for Friday and Saturday, March 4 and 5, 1938.

The convention opened Friday with a session at which E. C. Mabie, director of the School of Drama at the University of Iowa, discussed problems of the theatre and William N. Robson, director of Columbia Workshop, Columbia Broadcasting System, New York City, discussed developments in the field of radio. A banquet and a production of Maxwell Anderson's High Tor directed by Rupel Jones in the University Playhouse competed the first day of the convention.

Two simultaneous round table discussions, one on theatre and the other on radio, were held Saturday morning. Garrett H. Leverton, director of Northwestern University Theatre, Evanston, Illinois, presided over the theatre discussion and Homer Heck, program director,


5 Balio and Norvelle, p. 29.
WNAD, University of Oklahoma, presided over the radio discussion. Mable and Robson participated in the discussions.

After lunch, John W. Dunn, director of Oklahoma Federal Theatre, presided over a session devoted to puppets. Three puppet shows were presented by the Oklahoma Federal Theatre and Earl Siegfred of Washburn College was a special guest speaker at this session. 6

Much expanded over the one held four years earlier, this convention reflected the rising interest in broadcasting by including delegates who were interested in radio as well as those interested in theatre. The scope of the convention was expanded by bringing in several authorities from outside the region to address the delegates. Unfortunately, a decade elapsed before another conference was held.

**Founding of Southwest Theatre Conference**

When the United States entered World War II, the National Theatre Conference devoted most of its energy and finances to help the War Department maintain morale in the armed forces. A Training Camp Entertainment Project, Camp Shows, the Army Hospitals Project, and the Veteran's Counseling Service became the chief concerns of the Conference. 7 Regional conferences had to wait until after the country demobilized and the veterans returned home.

At the 1947 National Theatre Conference meeting in New York, several members from the Southwest revived the idea of organizing a conference

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7 Balio and Norvelle, pp. 45 - 66.
for their region. They gathered in the hotel room of John Wray and
Margaret Mary Young of Shreveport Little Theatre on Thanksgiving night to
discuss the idea with Sawyer Falk, president of the National Theatre
Conference, and E. C. Mabie. Paul Baker of Baylor University, Ted
Viehman of Tulsa Little Theatre, and Paul Carpenter, dean of Fine Arts,
University of Oklahoma, attended the meeting. They decided that the
most feasible course to insure a stable organization was to affiliate
it initially with a strong institution such as a state university. The
group met Barclay S. Leatham, executive secretary of the National
Theatre Conference, for breakfast the following morning to discuss finan­
cial support from the National Theatre Conference for their project.8

To get the project started the group decided to hold an organizing
meeting the following spring at the University of Oklahoma with Rupel
Jones as host since he had experience in organizing conventions. Dean
Carpenter relayed the decision to Jones who had been unable to attend
the meeting in New York. Jones was enthusiastic about the project and
immediately sent his suggestions for the first meeting and a request
for financial support to Mabie for submission to the National Theatre
Conference Board of Trustees.

Jones envisioned a conference similar to the two he had organized
in the 1930's with round table discussions, play productions, and
guest speakers. Consequently he suggested that Mabie request $1,500
from the National Theatre Conference. Mabie felt that this amount was

8 E. C. Mabie, telegram to Rupel Jones, December 1, 1947. In
SWTC Archives. And John Wray Young, personal interview, April 11,
1970.
too high so he suggested the Board allocate $1,000 to the Southwest region.9

The Board of Trustees was not scheduled to meet until late January. Without a firm commitment from the Board before the end of January, Jones had little more than a month to make definite preparations for the meeting tentatively scheduled for March. He felt that this would not be sufficient preparation time and wrote Sawyer Falk on December 11, requesting action by the Board before January.10

To conserve time, Jones and Ted Viehman began making preliminary plans while awaiting the Board's action. Viehman came to Norman, Oklahoma, site of the University of Oklahoma, during the Christmas holidays to help Jones begin planning. They decided to invite Paul Baker and John Wray Young to serve on a committee with them "to help start the organization and to plan the program."11

Baker and Young willingly accepted the invitation. However, before any further planning ensued, the course of events took an unexpected turn.

The National Theatre Conference Board of Trustees disregarded Jones's appeal for early action on his funds request. When Jones had not received a reply from the Board by January 23, he decided to postpone

9 Frederick McConnell, memo to Sawyer Falk and Barclay Leatham, December 13, 1947. In SWTC Archives.


11 Rupel Jones, letter to John Wray Young, January 12, 1948. In SWTC Archives.
the organizing meeting until late October and to call a planning session during May. Efforts to confirm a May meeting date failed because of the conflicting schedules of all four members of the committee. When Jones saw that the same situation would be true for the summer, he suspended planning until the fall and called a meeting for September 7. This date was unfortunate since neither Young nor Baker could attend. Young had out of town engagements to fulfill but he sent encouragement and some suggestions. Baker was out of town during the latter part of the summer and just returned to Waco on September 7 so he telephoned his encouragement and suggestions to the meeting.

Jones and Vissman were the only ones able to attend the planning session. They spent several hours considering possible subjects for panel discussions and whom to invite as guest speakers. Jones relayed their suggestions to Baker and Young, both of whom concurred with the planning thus far. On October 8 and 9, Baker managed to come to Norman and helped to finalize some of the preparations.

Such were the trials and tribulations of planning the organizing meeting of the Southwest Theatre Conference. But planning was not the only subject that concerned Jones. The other subject was financing. While he was waiting for word from the National Theatre Conference,


13 Marcheta Ernst, Secretary to School of Drama, University of Oklahoma, letters to Paul Baker and John Wray Young, August 25, 1948. In SWTC Archives.

Jones managed to secure $500 from the University of Oklahoma. He hoped to put this sum and the support he would get from the Extension Division of the University together with the $1,000 from the National Theatre Conference to finance the conference at Norman.  

The National Theatre Conference Board, however, allocated only $500. This amount was supposed to sustain the Southwest Conference for a year. Falk explained this fact in a letter to Jones in which he stated:

> The Southwest Theatre Conference can call upon the Treasury for any amount up to $500 for its maintenance during the current fiscal year. This means that within the stipulated amount you are supposed to set up and maintain something of a permanent organization. . . if you spend all of it on your October session, you will have no money to run on the rest of the year which ends March 1, 1949. . . We hope. . . your group will set itself up on a more or less permanent basis and ultimately seek affiliation with NTC.

Two factors influenced the Board's allocation. The first factor was one of economy. It stemmed from the experience of Falk (Syracuse University) and Drummond (Cornell University) in establishing the New York State Conference. Falk felt that since they had been able to establish a satisfactory conference on a $500 allocation, other conferences could be started with similar funding. Consequently only $2,500 was allocated by the National Theatre Conference for supporting all regional conferences during fiscal 1948. That the National Theatre


16 Sawyer Falk, letter to Rupel Jones, October 7, 1948. In SWTC Archives.
Conference could not allocate to the Southwest as much as had been requested was obvious.¹⁷

A second factor influencing the $500 allocation revolved around a difference of philosophy concerning regional conferences. Falk and the National Theatre Conference looked upon the regional conferences as National Theatre Conference satellites which, "although they are autonomous, will desire to become sustaining members [of National Theatre Conference] and perhaps have their individual members pay a nominal annual fee for which, among other things, they would receive subscription to the [National Theatre Conference] Bulletin."¹⁸

Falk felt that the regional conferences should have a simple organizational structure and that their gatherings should not be elaborate affairs. Using the New York State Conference as an example, he claimed that "the chief glory... of what has been done rests in the associations that have been set up, rather than in the gathering with speakers which was merely a token of such organization."¹⁹

Falk's idea that a conference for the Southwest could be patterned after the one for New York State was considered unrealistic because of two basic differences. First, and most obvious, was the difference in population density. New York had a high population density. Conse-

¹⁷ Sawyer Falk, letter to Rupel Jones, February 20, 1948. In SWTC Archives.

¹⁸ Ibid.

quently the theatre organizations were relatively close to one another. On the other hand, the population density of the Southwest was low, theatre organizations there were scattered and had very little contact with one another. The second difference was one of emphasis. Because of its proximity to Broadway, the New York State Conference emphasized the professional theatre and the establishment of useful contacts with it through numerous social functions. The Southwest, being far from Broadway, had no close ties with the professional theatre, so it emphasized amateur theatre.

Jones felt that the needs of the Southwest were different from those of New York and that the Southwest Conference should emphasize activities such as group discussions and guest speakers who could help the fledgling amateur theatres in the region improve their standards and grow. Time proved Jones correct in his appraisal of the region. Falk recognized this fact when he attended the convention the following year but that was too late to affect the Board's action in 1948.

The $500 allocation from the National Theatre Conference together with allocations from various budgets at the University of Oklahoma financed the initial meeting of the Southwest Theatre Conference on October 29 and 30, 1948.

First Meeting of Southwest Theatre Conference

Invitations had gone out to university and college theatres in

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the region and to thirty regional community theatres. High school drama groups had not been invited because the planning committee (Rupel Jones, Ted Viehman, Paul Baker and John Wray Young) feared that if too large a group with varied interests came together, very little would be accomplished. Their idea was to get an organization started and then expand the membership.

When the meeting convened at Norman the educational theatres were well represented. In fact, high schools from Tulsa and Enid, Oklahoma and Las Cruces, New Mexico sent representatives even though they were not officially invited. Several students from colleges and high schools attended the meetings with their instructors. Unfortunately very few community theatres sent delegates.

On Friday, October 29, 1948, Ted Viehman presided as temporary Chairman over the first business meeting held to discuss the organization of a Southwest Theatre Conference. He read a list of five questions that the delegates were to consider. They were:

(a) Should a Southwest Theatre Conference be organized?
(b) What could such an organization do for you?
(c) Who should be eligible for membership?
(d) What states or areas should be included?
(e) When should these meetings be held?21

Little disagreement concerning the first two questions occurred. Delegates all realized the value of the Conference and were interested in perpetuating it. Ben Henneke, University of Tulsa, moved that "the temporary chairman appoint a committee of three to frame a statement of

purpose and objective for a Southwest Theatre Conference, such committee
to report at the business meeting October 30." 22 The motion passed. Ted
Viehman appointed Henneke as chairman of the committee with Paul Baker
and John Wray Young as members.

Delegates then expressed their ideas concerning membership and the
geographic area to be included in the Conference. These ideas were
incorporated by Henneke's committee into its statement.

At the beginning of the Saturday afternoon meeting, Ben Henneke read
the "statement of purpose and objective for a Southwest Theatre Con­
ference" which he, Baker, and Young had framed the previous night after
several hours of intensive thought. The statement was as follows:

The purpose of the Southwest Theatre Conference is to share
the results of our several experiences, researches, and
knowledge and by such mutual interchange to foster and im­
prove the theatre in this southwest region.

The time of the meeting each year shall be at a time con­
venient, prior to the meeting time of the National Theatre
Conference, the time of the meeting to be set before
adjournment.

Membership shall be limited to those people actively engaged
in theatre practice in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana,
New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

Dues shall be assessed to organized theatre groups and
shall be five ($5.00) a year to be paid by the first of
February each year. Conference registration fees will
be assessed each individual in attendance.

Officers. The elected officers of the organization shall
be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
An advisory committee of all National Theatre Conference
members in the region shall assist the elected officers
determine the policies and program of the conference. 23

22 Ibid., p. 7.
23 Ibid., p. 17.
Each paragraph was discussed and voted on separately. The first three paragraphs were accepted without much discussion other than brief interpretations by Henneke. He explained that a meeting time prior to the National Theatre Conference meeting would facilitate reports on regional activity to the national organization. Concerning the states included in the Conference, he suggested that membership be limited to the five states named but that interested theatre people from neighboring states might attend the Conference conventions as visitors.

The paragraph on dues engendered lengthy discussion on both the amount of dues and the classification of membership paying the dues. Although the paragraph mentioned only "organized theatre groups," the committee's intention was to include individual membership for the same fee. Several delegates felt that $5.00 was too much for an individual to pay. Finally a motion was passed "that the matter of yearly dues and classification of membership and registration fee be left in the hands of the officers to be elected."

The paragraph on officers was adopted and an election was held. The first four officers of the Southwest Theatre Conference were Rupel Jones, president; John Wray Young, vice-president; Ben Henneke, secretary; and Paul Baker, treasurer.

Summary

Fourteen years had elapsed since the first Southwest regional conference was held in 1934. During those years the need for such a con-

24 Ibid., p. 18.
ference grew with the development of educational theatres and the increase of community theatres in the area. The Southwest Theatre Conference was formally organized at the University of Oklahoma on October 30, 1948, to help improve and encourage theatre in the region. Paul Baker, Rupel Jones, Ted Viehman, and John Wray Young were the guiding forces behind the permanent organization. Rupel Jones and the University of Oklahoma provided the leadership to establish the Conference and also sponsored the only two earlier conferences held in the region.
Chapter III
EARLY YEARS, 1949 - 1954

The Southwest Theatre Conference grew rapidly during the six years after its founding. This chapter covers the events of the years between the framing of the first "constitution" in 1948 and the 1955 constitutional revision to reflect the organization's growth. Important affairs which came before the Conference were its relationship with the National Theatre Assembly and the American National Theatre and Academy. The Conference's early attempts to provide year-round services for its members complete the picture of the early years.

Conference Membership

The delegates attending the Southwest Theatre Conference in 1948 did not agree on whether Conference membership would consist of individual theatre people or theatre organizations or a combination of the two. They decided to allow the first executive committee to determine the classification of membership. The committee in turn chose theatre organizations rather than individuals as the basis for membership. In this action the committee mirrored the membership policy of the National Theatre Conference.¹

The executive committee further decided that although Conference membership would be open only to organizations, attendance at the

¹ For a discussion of National Theatre Conference membership policy see Balio and Norvelle, pp. 74 - 75.
annual conventions should be open to any individual paying a registration fee. Many took advantage of this policy and attended the conventions to learn more about theatre, to become acquainted with colleagues in the region, and to discuss mutual problems.

Dues and Financing

Delegates at the 1948 meeting discussed yearly dues but did not agree on a figure. The first executive committee became responsible for deciding the matter. They established dues at an annual rate of five dollars for each theatre organization belonging to the Conference.

The Conference charged a registration fee for each individual who attended the annual convention. The fee helped defray some convention expenses but scarcely all of them. Financial support for the conventions came from two courses: the National Theatre Conference and the convention host institutions.

The National Theatre Conference contributed $500 a year to help establish the Southwest Theatre Conference. This assistance lasted until 1951 after which NTC's Rockefeller Foundation grant ran out and no other monies were available to continue this project.²

Various institutions which held the conventions were the major source of financial support for the annual gatherings. When educational theatres held the convention they usually drew funds from theatre department budgets and occasionally from special appropriations by the institutions. Community theatre hosts relied on their city's business-

² Balio and Norvelle, p. 95.
men for financial assistance. The convention expenses covered by the host included fees for guest speakers, printing of programs and brochures, and postal costs. At the early conventions the host also covered the production expenses for plays performed. The delegates attended the plays as guests of the hosts.

American National Theatre and Academy and National Theatre Assembly

The American National Theatre and Academy, the national theatre chartered by the United States Congress in July, 1935, proposed the establishment of a National Theatre Assembly. Purpose of the assembly was to bring together theatre organizations and theatre workers from all over the country so that they could analyze and solve their common problems. ANTA called an organizing meeting for January 2 - 4, 1951, at its Playhouse in New York City.

At the 1950 convention in Waco, the Southwest theatres met to consider their relationship with the National Theatre Assembly and to choose delegates to the Assembly's organizing meeting. Two items suggested for consideration by the proposed Assembly were government subsidy of the theatre and union labor in regional theatres. Conference members decided that they were definitely against any subsidy from

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5Clarence Derwent, "Why the National Theatre Assembly?" Theatre Arts, XXXV (January, 1951), 46 - 47.
governmental sources. Concerning union labor, they felt that each theatre should be allowed to decide its own policy in this matter. They incorporated their ideas into a resolution for presentation to the Organizing Committee of the National Theatre Assembly.

The Conference members then elected delegates to the National Assembly. Edwin Snapp, University of New Mexico, and Paul Baker were elected to represent the Southwest Theatre Conference as an organization. Six delegates were elected to represent the different classes of theatres in the region. Margo Jones, Dallas Theatre '50, and John Rosenfleld of The Dallas Morning News represented the professional theatres; John Wray Young and Theodore Vlehman represented the community theatres; and Rupel Jones and Monroe Lippman, Tulane University, represented the educational theatres.

The Assembly met in New York as scheduled. After much discussion the delegates passed resolutions concerning the development of a national theatre and the role ANTA should play in that development. The feeling was that ANTA was the logical organization to supervise national theatre activity but it was not truly representative of the national theatre scene since all theatre interests were not represented on ANTA's Board of Directors. The Assembly urged ANTA to reorganize itself.

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Lack of representation on ANTA's Board of Directors was not the only source of regional displeasure. Projects sponsored by ANTA were focused on Broadway and all membership dues went to New York to help finance these projects. Regional theatres felt that ANTA should institute projects to help them also. Members of Southwest Theatre Conference passed a resolution in 1951 to force ANTA to see matters their way. The resolution requested

all cooperate [sic] members of ANTA in this Southwest region to place dues due ANTA for 1952 in the hands of the Southwest Theatre Conference treasurer to be held in escrow until the ANTA Board of Directors has made clear the philosophy in its direct relationship to the Southwest region and its specific objectives for this area.\textsuperscript{9}

ANTA sent Robert C. Kase, its field secretary, to the 1952 Southwest convention to plead its case but the region was not convinced. Finally, ANTA made some concessions to the wishes of the regional theatres. It enlarged its Board of Directors "to achieve greater representation of all theatre interests."\textsuperscript{10}

It also created regional chapters and allowed them to retain a portion of the dues from members in their areas.\textsuperscript{11} Consequently, members of the Southwest Theatre Conference decided to give ANTA a second chance and not withhold dues any longer.\textsuperscript{12}


\textsuperscript{10} John, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid. pp. 180 - 181.

ANTA held a second National Theatre Assembly on January 1 - 3, 1953, in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Assembly passed resolutions to continue encouraging non-professional theatre groups throughout the country and to encourage permanent, resident professional theatres financed by non-profit corporations. ANTA made several plans, none of which ever materialized. It was always hampered by a lack of funds and inadequate staff to handle the activities it proposed.

Southwest Theatre Conference Bulletin

The Southwest Theatre Conference was established as a once-a-year convention. Early attempts, however, were made to provide members with a year-round service through the publication of a bulletin. Southwest Theatre Conference Bulletin first appeared at the 1951 convention and was published sporadically under numerous editors through 1953.

Texas Christian University published the first issue in which Walther Volbach stated, "This first issue represents an enlarged program of our meetings rather than a periodical with a clearly cut policy. It offers a Querschnitt [cross-section] of our activities in general and of those in Fort Worth in particular." The second issue which came out in April, 1952, was edited by Paul

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14 John, pp. 204 - 205.
15 Ibid., p. 2.
Baker and published by Baylor University. This issue was devoted largely to looking back at the Fort Worth convention through reports and observations, and to looking forward to the Shreveport convention.

The last issue of volume one was published by the University of Oklahoma in September, 1952. Carl B. Cass acted as editor in the absence of Rupel Jones. While this issue also looked forward to Shreveport, it devoted itself mainly to a report on the 1951-52 theatre seasons of Conference members and three articles, one of interest to high school theatres, another for community theatres, and the last for college theatres.

Volume two, number one, was issued after the Shreveport convention and contained some of the papers delivered at the convention. This issue was published by the Shreveport Little Theatre and edited by John Wray Young.

The last issue of the Bulletin, Volume two, number two, appeared in September, 1953. Published by the University of Arkansas, it contained a tentative program for the convention to be held there the following month. This last issue also contained reprints of two short articles of general interest entitled "Comedy of Mass Murder," and "Modern Dance in the Arena Theatre."

The Conference intended that the editing and publishing of the Bulletin rotate among the members. Having a different institution publish each issue carried out the plan of sharing the work and the financing. But rotation was not conducive to a unified philosophy of editing or the development of a truly year-round service for the members.
A few articles were published but the majority of the contents focused on the annual convention and emphasized this once-a-year activity.

Services Committee

In 1952 the Conference established a Service Committee to provide the membership with services between the conventions. Monroe Lippman of Tulane was chairman; Gene McKinney, Baylor University, and James Hull Miller, University of New Mexico, were members. Over the next few years the Conference provided partial financing for two publications under the auspices of the committee. A Directory of Southwest area theatre groups and the first installment of Planning and Equipping the Theatre were issued. Both works were edited by Miller, whose primary interest was theatre architecture for the Southwest.17

Second Vice-President

The constitution adopted in 1948 provided for four officers: a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer. The Conference felt that since five states comprised its region, it would be appropriate to have each state represented on the executive committee. Therefore it added a second vice-president in 1952 to raise the number of officers to five. Selection of officers required that the domicile of each nominee be considered in order to insure representation from each state.18


The practice of electing an officer from each state in the region continued after the 1955 constitutional revision, which did not include it as official policy. It survived unofficially until 1959, when the Conference elected two officers from the same state and initiated an unofficial policy of reelecting both the secretary and the treasurer.

Constitutional Revision

From the first meeting in 1948, the Conference was established as a once-a-year affair. The delegates came together in the fall for the annual programs but went their separate ways during the remainder of the year. The only function of the slate of officers elected each year was to plan and provide the program for the annual conference. Before long, members began requesting the establishment of the Conference on a year-round basis with services and activities between the annual meetings.

At its annual convention in 1954, the Conference passed a motion appointing a committee to consider such matters as the duties and responsibilities of the officers, the need for greater continuity of officers from year to year, the financial structure of the Conference, and the classification of membership and the dues structure.19

Monroe Lippman, Conference president, appointed Claude Shaver, Louisiana State University, to chair the committee and Maydelle Jones, Mayde Mack Mumpers, Oklahoma City; Loren Winship, University of Texas; and Jean Yell, University of New Mexico, to serve as committee members. Blair Hart, University of Arkansas, as Conference secretary was an ex-

19 Business Meeting Minutes, 1954, p. 3.
officio member. The committee was empowered to propose constitutional revisions if necessary and to report such revisions to the Conference members by mail no later than September 15, 1955, so that action could be taken at the regular meeting in 1955.20

To fill the gap until the committee presented its report in 1955, the Conference passed motions concerning classes of membership. For the first time, membership was opened to individuals both professional and lay, but on a non-voting basis. Membership was also extended to organizations and individuals outside the five-state Southwest region. This latter action was taken to accommodate theatre people from states such as Mississippi and Tennessee, who found it easier to attend some of the Southwest meetings rather than those of the Southeast Conference, which were usually held in North Carolina.21

The Conference also passed a motion providing for a convention planning meeting. Previously the planning and production of the annual convention was the responsibility of each president.22 Planning the conventions was a tremendous job and it became more enormous as the Conference grew and moved about the region. To assist the president the Conference decided that the entire executive committee should share responsibility for the convention. This posed a travel problem since there was an officer from each of the five states in the region. To help alleviate this problem, the Conference passed a motion to pay each

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 John Wray Young, letter to the author, August 2, 1970.
member of the executive committee attending the planning meeting travel expense of six cents per mile.

Summary

The Southwest Theatre Conference grew rapidly during the years from 1949 through 1954. It began to provide services besides the annual convention for its members. *Southwest Theatre Conference Bulletin* was one such service. By the fifth annual convention, the Conference had become strong enough to leave the shelter of the universities and take residence with a community theatre. Perhaps an even greater testimony of the Conference's strength was the fact that the theatres of the region used it as a rallying point to make their wishes known to two national organizations, the American National Theatre and Academy and the National Theatre Assembly.
Chapter IV
GRADUAL DECLINE, 1955 - 1960

The Conference, like most new organizations, generated much interest and enthusiasm during its formative years. After it grew and its novelty wore off, however, the Conference experienced a period of flagging interest. This chapter covers the years 1955 through 1960 during which membership decreased and financial problems increased.

The picture is not entirely bleak, however. The Conference began publishing a newsletter, it suggested minimum standards for theatre curricula, and it proposed a play selection policy for high schools. Each was a plus on the Conference's record.

A New Constitution

The committee chaired by Claude Shaver was charged with considering the need for greater continuity of officers from year to year, the duties and responsibilities of the officers, the classification of Conference membership, and the dues and financial structure of the Conference.

Administration of the Conference lacked continuity since each year it started afresh with a new slate of officers. To remedy this situation and to profit from the experiences of former officers, the proposed constitution expanded the executive committee to include "two past presidents who will be appointed by the president" (Article V). The two experienced officers would furnish the desired continuity by providing guidance for the new administrations. The Constitution also supplied a degree of administrative continuity by structuring the nominating
committee to include "the three immediate past presidents" (Bylaws Section 2). Here the experienced officers would provide guidance for the selection of future officers.

The proposed constitution did not detail the duties and responsibilities of the officers but it did consider the difficulties experienced by the president and the secretary in performing their duties. Difficulties arose since the two officers were usually many miles distant from each other. The constitution proposed to lessen the difficulties by creating an executive secretariat to be filled by executive committee appointment (Article IV). Angus Springer, Southwestern University, served in this office for 1956. Cherry Jacobson, Tulsa Little Theatre, served in the capacity of executive secretary the following year, although she was officially called "Assistant to the President." The executive committee did not appoint an executive secretary after 1957. This omission was probably the effect of characteristic Conference forgetfulness. Unfortunately, the theme of forgetfulness runs through Southwest Theatre Conference history. Forgetfulness and poor communication marred many Conference projects. John Rosenfield, drama critic for The Dallas Morning News, observed, "The Conference... never remembers its actions from one meeting to another."¹

To comply with the wishes expressed at the 1954 meeting, the constitution created individual Conference membership not only for people engaged in creating theatre but also for laymen interested in theatre (Article III). Two kinds of individual memberships existed, depending

on the amount of dues. For $4.00, the member received all Conference printed materials but for $2.00 the member received no materials. Neither membership, however, entitled the individual to a vote in Conference affairs (Bylaws, Section 3).

The bylaws established the amount of convention registration fees for the first time. Fees were $3.00 for members and $1.00 for students (Bylaws, Section 3). The bylaws also incorporated the provision authorizing the treasurer to pay travel expenses for persons attending the planning session (Bylaws, Section 4).

The Conference adopted the entire proposed constitution and four of the proposed bylaws. A section of the bylaws concerning standing committees on promotion, service, and publication was tabled in 1955 because meeting time was being exhausted. This section, however, was never brought before the Conference at any subsequent meeting.

New Plays Contest

At the 1954 meeting the Conference asked Gene McKinney, Baylor University, to chair a committee to encourage the writing and production of new plays. John Rosenfield of The Dallas Morning News served with McKinney on this committee. They decided to encourage playwriting by conducting a contest with a novel twist. Both men realized that numerous contests existed with winning plays but that few of these plays were ever produced. The prize in this contest, therefore, would go not to the playwright but to the first Southwest Theatre Conference member.

2 Business Meeting Minutes, 1955, p. 3.
producing the play on a royalty basis.  

McKinney and Rosenfield enlisted the aid of the New Dramatists Committee, New York, in securing judges for the contest. The New Dramatists Committee in turn selected playwrights Howard Lindsay, Robert Anderson, and George Hamlin as judges. Two years lapsed while the judges considered the merits of the contest plays. Finally they decided that none of the plays submitted were worthy of production. The decision engendered much discussion at the 1957 meeting. Several Conference members questioned the selection of Broadway people to judge a play for the Southwest area since tastes would probably be different. A member claimed that one of the plays he had read was worth producing but he did not offer to produce it.

McKinney recommended that the New Play Committee be discontinued because he felt the Conference membership was not truly interested in encouraging inexperienced and experimental playwrights. The Conference, however, decided to continue the committee and asked McKinney to continue as chairman. McKinney reluctantly agreed and urged the majority of the Conference to cooperate with the committee. Too few of the members, however, were willing to cooperate by producing a new play so McKinney dissolved the committee before the 1958 meeting.

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4 "Playwriting Contest," Topics, IV (March, 1956), 2.
5 "Quo Vadis" Minutes, 1957, p. 4.
7 Business Meeting Minutes, 1958, p. 3.
A year passed and the Conference decided to revive the New Play Committee. Membership of the committee appointed in 1959 included McKinney, Virgil Baker, University of Arkansas, Art Cole, Midland Little Theatre, Don Clark, University of Oklahoma, and E. P. Conkle, University of Texas, as chairman. The chairman, however, did not call a meeting before the 1960 convention.

After six years of trying, the Conference failed in its attempt to encourage new playwrights. Although the members recognized the need for such a project, the majority were content to support it "for the record" but that was all. Lack of interest among the Conference members caused the project to fail.

Southwest Theatre Topics

In 1952, Walter Jensen, director of the Corpus Christi Little Theatre, began issuing a monthly newsletter "as a way of bringing theatres closer together and act as an information center." He called this newsletter, Texas Topics and concentrated on news of Texas theatre groups. His effort was well received throughout the area. He decided to expand the newsletter's coverage by including the whole region and by changing the title to Southwest Theatre Topics. He financed this newsletter out of his theatre budget until 1955 when the Conference decided to recognize it as an official publication for its members and to back

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8 Business Meeting Minutes, 1959, p. 2.
Jensen edited *Topics* until the spring of 1957 when he resigned his post at Corpus Christi and moved out of the Southwest region. Angus Springer of Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, volunteered to edit *Topics* and published the newsletter for the next eight years. In 1960, he changed from the policy of issuing *Topics* monthly to issuing only three times a year, "one... preceding the annual conference; one after the conference with abstracts of major addresses.... and one in May containing a review of the season."

The publication of *Topics* gave the Conference the first real year-round service for its members.

Planning Committee

In 1957, the Conference amended the 1955 bylaws to provide added continuity for its future development. It amended the Nominating Committee section to create a Planning Committee and to make the Nominating Committee a sub-committee under it. The Planning Committee assumed the responsibility of taking up matters not constitutionally delegated to other committees. All past presidents, the current president, and two members-at-large elected annually by the Conference constituted the Committee. Some continuity for the Conference's future development was provided by having past presidents serve on this committee.

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Although the Conference could not enforce the minimum curriculum, the fact that theatre groups in the region expressed their attitudes on the matter through the Conference was significant.

Winship, Springer, and Volbach were influential in similar curriculum committees for the Texas Educational Theatre Association and the American Educational Theatre Association during this same period.

Conference Historian and Archives

Improving theatre by sharing knowledge at annual conventions was the primary objective of the Conference. All the Conference's energy went into the convention each year and little concern was given to preserving a record of Conference activities. Theodore Viehman stressed this point when he welcomed the delegates to the 1957 convention. He said, "Where SWTC has been is hard to summarize. The scarcity and incompleteness of our records is appalling."\(^\text{18}\)

The Conference took steps the following year to correct this omission. It created the office of historian to gather what records existed and designated the University of Oklahoma library as depository for the Conference's Archives. It then elected Rupel Jones to the new post of historian.\(^\text{19}\)

An Irregular Election

In 1958, the Conference decided officially to recognize John 


\(^{19}\) Business Meeting Minutes, 1958, p. 3.
Rosenfield as past president for 1955 rather than Ramsey Burch. Burch, associate director of Margo Jones' Theatre '55 in Dallas, was elected to hold the 1955 convention. All went well until Miss Jones died suddenly in July, 1955, and Burch succeeded her as managing director. The added obligation was more than he could manage so he neglected his duties as Conference president. He did little to help plan the convention and did not even remain until it was over. Since Rosenfield had done much of the planning and even represented Burch at later committee meetings, the Conference decided to acknowledge officially Rosenfield's work in the capacity of past president.

**Play Selection Policy**

For several years unscrupulous publishers inundated high schools and other theatre groups with inferior, mostly non-royalty, plays. Winship, Springer, and Volbach, who had worked to standardize theatre curricula, now joined forces to enlist the Conference's aid in promoting the selection of better quality plays. They made a study of publishers' catalogues and drafted a "Play Selection Policy." The Conference then sent every high school, college, community, and other theatre group in the region a copy of the "Play Selection Policy" with an endorsement of acceptable publishers. This project helped many inexperienced dire-

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20 Business Meeting Minutes, 1958, p. 4.


23 Business Meeting Minutes, 1960, p. 2.
tors improve the quality of theatre they offered their students and audiences.

Financial Problems

The Conference found itself attempting to finance a newsletter, a playwriting contest, and the travel expenses for planning committee members. All this was in addition to its expenses of helping support the annual convention and buying office supplies.

In 1957, Ted Viehman pointed out the financial problems of the Conference when he observed, "We are lucky at present to have roughly $500 per year from dues. Most of this is used up for the traveling mileage of executive and planning committee members. So we cannot hope to plan much expansion until some other source of financing is found."24

The Conference, however, did not act to increase its income until 1959 when it raised the convention registration fee. Previously, the Conference had retained all income from membership dues and turned over the registration fees to the convention host to help finance the annual convention. The host bore the convention expenses not covered by these fees. Now the Conference added a dollar to the registration fees of members and a half-dollar to that of students. These additional fees were not turned over to the convention host, but were retained by the Conference "to take care of additional expenses."25

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Flagging Interest

Financial problems were not the only difficulties facing the Conference. A drop in membership, which contributed to the financial problems, and a drop in convention attendance began to plague the Conference. Both membership and attendance problems were effects of a general lessening of interest in the Conference during the latter half of the 1950's.

Change occurred in an external factor which had contributed to the early cohesiveness of the Conference. When the Conference began, educational and community theatres of the region were still developing, so they welcomed the opportunity to band together for mutual support and improvement. The Conference's annual conventions offered regional theatre people an opportunity to become better acquainted and to improve their theatre knowledge. Gradually as the theatres became firmly established in the region, they no longer desired the support furnished by the Conference. The external force which had made Conference membership attractive ceased to exist.

The Conference lacked an internal cohesive force to replace the external one. It was still oriented toward strengthening theatre organizations even after the majority of them were very sound. This emphasis on organizations caused the Conference to treat its individual members as second class citizens by not allowing them to vote. Without a voice in determining the future course and development of the Conference, individuals were not interested in membership.

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Summary

By 1955, the Conference had outgrown the simple statement of purpose drafted in 1948, and was ready for a more structured constitution and bylaws. The casual administrations of the early 1950's were gradually replaced by more formal ones. Also, more attention was given to preserving the Conference records. Although its attempts to promote playwriting failed dismally, the Conference was successful in two other efforts to encourage and improve theatre in the region. These were the establishment of minimum standards for university and college theatre curricula and the publication of a "Play Selection Policy" for high schools. The Conference also succeeded in providing a year-round service for its members in the form of a newsletter. The newsletter, Southwest Theatre Topics, kept the members informed and in touch with the Conference between the annual conventions.

After the initial enthusiasm for establishing it, interest began to decline as the Conference matured and lost its novelty. Membership dropped and financial problems arose.
Chapter V

REVITALIZATION, 1961 - 1965

A significant turning point occurred in the life of the Southwest Theatre Conference during 1961 - 1962. Interest in the Conference and annual membership decreased alarmingly in the latter 1950's through 1961. Seeking to revive interest in itself, the Conference returned to the site of its first convention for a symbolic rebirth in 1962. The following years witnessed the rebuilding of the Conference.

This chapter discusses the Conference's revitalization during the years 1961 through 1965. The Conference revised its membership structure to attract more members and expanded its services. It also encouraged training for community theatre personnel.

Vital Turning Point

The year 1961 was a pivotal year in the Conference's history. It was the year in which both the decreasing membership and convention attendance fell to a record low, but it was also the year in which a spark of understanding was struck among the members. This spark eventually blazed into renewed interest.

The members whose interests had been lagging took the opportunity presented by a particularly dull convention to express their disenchantment more loudly. The exchange of ideas that ensued made it clear that each member had a stake in the Conference and that he should make his interest known. If members wished to improve the Conference, they should be prepared to work for it during the year and not just attend
the annual conventions. It also became clear that the planning group was doing a job primarily because there was no one else to do it.\footnote{Gynter Quill, "On the Aisle," Waco (Texas) Tribune-Herald, November 5, 1961, Section E, p. 3.} This exchange of ideas produced better understanding among the members and eventually led to an increase in interest and membership.

### Constitutional Revision

In 1959 the Conference delegated the Planning Committee with Monroe Lippman, Tulane University, as chairman, to re-evaluate the bylaws and propose revisions if necessary.\footnote{Business Meeting Minutes, 1959, p. 1.} The Planning Committee included Don Clark, University of Oklahoma; Robert Tobin, San Antonio, Texas; Lee Edwards, Baton Rouge Little Theatre; Joe Salek, San Antonio Little Theatre; Oma Rowley, Amarillo Little Theatre; Lyle Hagan, Eastern New Mexico University; Theodore Viehman, Tulsa Little Theatre; Loren Winship, University of Texas; John Rosenfield, The Dallas Morning News; Virgil Baker, University of Arkansas; John Wray Young, Shreveport Little Theatre; Walther Volbach, Texas Christian University; Paul Baker, Baylor University; Rupel Jones, University of Oklahoma.

The committee's report was not completed in time for consideration at the 1960 meeting and action on it was delayed.\footnote{Business Meeting Minutes, 1960, p. 1.} The report and its proposed constitutional and bylaw revisions were adopted by the Conference in 1961. The revisions made individual membership more attractive than it had been earlier and specified the duties of Conference...
officers for the first time.

Shift in Composition of Membership

The Conference realized that it had stagnated and decided to bring in a new flow of members by encouraging more individual memberships. Originally, organizations were the only members of the Conference. Organizational membership predominated even after the Conference instituted individual membership in 1955. The dearth of individual members was understandable, however, since they had no vote in the Conference and since membership was not required for attendance at the annual conventions. The Conference took steps to remove these deterrents and made individual membership more attractive.

The revised bylaws adopted in 1961 enfranchised individual members and required all non-students attending the convention to become members. They also decreased individual dues by one dollar.4

The Conference reduced individual dues by one dollar again in 1963.5 Although these reductions decreased the Conference's revenue from each individual, the overall effect was a revenue increase since the number of individuals rose. Between 1961 and 1964 individual membership rose 500 percent.6 Efforts to rebuild Conference membership by encouraging individuals to join were a success.

5 Business Meeting Minutes, 1963, p. 2.
6 Individual membership rose from 16 in 1961 to 97 in 1964. Information from lists of Conference members in SWTC Archives.
To promote membership, the second vice-president encouraged more
local meetings which would acquaint prospective members with the Con-
ference. A local meeting of this kind held in Beaumont, Texas, two
years earlier proved successful since several new members were added
from that area.

Only three one-day conferences were held, however. The Baton Rouge
Little Theatre responded first. The San Antonio Little Theatre and the
Wichita Falls Civic Theatre followed closely behind. These meetings
seemed to generate some enthusiasm in their areas, but were not repeated.
No one-day conferences were held in other areas.

The second vice-presidential duty of maintaining liaison with other
regional theatre organizations was not fulfilled. This omission resulted
from the fact that some vice-presidents lacked sufficient time for all
their duties and others were not informed of their exact duties.

**Topics**

*Topics*, the major service of the Conference, continued under the
editorship of Angus Springer. In 1961 Springer changed the format from
mimeographed sheets to a printed pamphlet.

To supplement *Topics*, the Conference authorized Springer to issue a
newsletter consisting of "lists of items that may be needed by members

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8 Business Meeting Minutes, 1961, p. 3.
11 Bill Crawford, letter to the author, September 1, 1971.
of the Conference for play producing purposes."

Only two newsletters were issued, however, one in January, 1964, and the other in April, 1965. These two newsletters consisted primarily of conference membership lists, since no one sent Springer information on play production items which they could lend or needed to borrow.

Liaison Committee Between Educational and Community Theatres

The Conference became concerned about the problem of training personnel for the community theatre at its 1962 convention. Most theatre training in the region prepared students for careers in either educational theatre or professional theatre. No training prepared personnel to work in the community theatre milieu.

To solve this problem the Conference appointed a committee with representatives from both educational and community theatres to formulate courses and establish internships for prospective community theatre directors. The committee, which became known as the "Liaison Committee," included Jack McCullough, Wichita Falls (Texas) Civic Theatre, Chairman; Art Cole, Midland (Texas) Community Theatre; Howard Orms, Tulsa (Oklahoma) Little Theatre; Jennie Louise Hindman, Midwestern University, Wichita Falls, Texas; and Charles Suggs, University of Oklahoma. Although the committee became defunct before the 1963 meeting because of its chairman's exodus.

14 Business Meeting Minutes, 1963, p. 3.
It did inspire two projects: Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas, offered six-week summer workshops in community theatre for college credit during 1963 and 1964.\textsuperscript{15} And Art Cole at Midland, Texas, initiated a community theatre director's intern program in 1963 which has since received national publicity.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1964 the Conference reactivated the Liaison Committee. Members of the new committee were Claude Shaver, Louisiana State University; Don Clark, University of Oklahoma; Burnet Hobgood, Southern Methodist University; Blair Hart, University of Arkansas; Howard Orms, Tulsa Little Theatre; and Joe Salek, San Antonio Little Theatre.\textsuperscript{17} The committee presented no report at the 1965 meeting and later fell into oblivion amid the discussion centering on incorporation at the 1966 meeting.

New Plays Committee and the New Plays Library

As 1962 Conference President, Don Clark, University of Oklahoma, appointed James D. Baines of McMurry College, Abilene, Texas, to the New Plays Committee. Baines submitted a comprehensive printed report on Conference theatres that professed a policy of considering new plays for production and a list of names and addresses of new playwrights with the titles and categories of their plays.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Business Meeting Minutes}, 1964, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Business Meeting Minutes}, 1962, p. 2.
In 1963 the Conference expanded the new plays project to include a lending library. The library collected and catalogued new manuscripts which it shipped to Southwest college and community theatres for productions. Baines organized the library at McMurry College and served as its first director until 1965.

Jeanne Adams Wray, who had done an outstanding job of encouraging new plays at the Ada (Oklahoma) Community Theatre, became chairman of the New Plays Committee in September, 1965. She moved the New Plays Library to Ada, Oklahoma.

Public Relations Committee

In 1964, the Conference established a Public Relations Committee "to promote SWTC on a national level" and allotted $100 a year to finance it. Jeanne Adams Wray was appointed chairman for a three-year term.

Unfortunately nothing came of this committee. Mrs. Wray was not aware of the funds allocation since she was unable to remain for the 1964 business meeting. Also her duties at the Ada Community Theatre and on the New Plays Committee left her little time to promote the Conference nationally.

Executive Secretary - Treasurer

The Conference decided to experiment with an executive secretary-

treasurer. At the 1965 convention, William Shapard, Southern Methodist University was elected to serve in this office for one year in order for the Conference to evaluate the idea. Southern Methodist University and the Dallas Theatre Center, co-hosts for the 1966 convention financed the office. Results of this experiment would determine future arrangements for financing. 23

The experiment was successful but the Conference's decision to incorporate the following year changed the administrative structure and the office of executive secretary-treasurer was forgotten.

Summary

The years covered in this chapter were largely ones of rebuilding for the Conference. After the slump in interest and membership, the Conference had to rebuild if it was to survive as the vibrant institution it had been. It rebuilt by encouraging more individual membership. Organizations no longer dominated the Conference.

The Conference continued publishing Topics as a newsletter for its members. It instituted a New Plays Library to foster playwrighting and encouraged college training for community theatre personnel.

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Chapter VI
INCORPORATION, 1966 - 1969

The Conference had rebuilt itself sufficiently by 1965 to turn its attention to increased projects and services for its members. This chapter covers the years 1966 through 1969, during which the Conference incorporated itself and endeavored to expand its activities. It began to draw revenue from sources other than membership dues and convention registration fees. It attempted several projects but successfully accomplished just a few. Notwithstanding several endeavors to become a year-round organization, the Conference remained basically a yearly activity, the annual convention.

Incorporation

The Conference had made several attempts over the years to develop a strong administrative structure with officers serving one-year terms. The attempts were not always successful. The Conference also wanted to increase the services for its members but it could not until additional sources of income were found. To eliminate these obstacles to its growth, the Conference considered incorporating itself. Benefits derived from incorporation were that the Conference would have "a distinct legal structure, a greater strength in organization, and the capacity of receiving gifts or grants from individuals or groups."\(^1\)

The Planning and Executive Committees of the Conference felt these

\(^1\) "Incorporation of SWTC?" Topics, I, 1 (May, 1966), 8.
benefits were what the organization needed. They authorized Burnet Hobgood, president for 1966, to draft a new constitution. Professors Alan Bromberg and Jerry Wolens, both corporation law specialists at Southern Methodist University Law School, assisted Hobgood in preparing the document.2

The Conference membership ratified the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws proposed by Hobgood at the annual meeting in 1966 and sent them to the State of Texas for approval. On January 16, 1967, the Southwest Theatre Conference officially became a Texas non-profit corporation.3

The "greater strength in organization" effected by incorporation was a central administrative body in the form of an elected Board of Directors. The Board consisted of the corporation president, one vice-president, the secretary, and six directors elected by the membership. The six directors were to serve three-year staggered terms so that two would be replaced each year.

The first slate of corporation officers elected at the 1966 meeting were the following. President: Richard O'Connell, Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico; vice-president: Nat Eek, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; secretary-treasurer: Jim Baines, Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, Arkansas; directors for one-year terms: Marilyn Pool, Amarillo Little Theatre; John Wray Young, Shreveport

2 "Incorporation?" Topics, I, 2 (October, 1966), 9.

3 "SWTC Is Now Southwest Theatre Conference, Inc.," Topics, I, 3 (February, 1967), 1.
Little Theatre; directors for two-year terms: Burnet Hobgood, Southern Methodist University; Bill Crawford, Lawton Constitution-Press, Lawton, Oklahoma; directors for three-year terms: Bernard Thomas, Albuquerque Little Theatre; Ruth Denney, Houston School District, Houston, Texas.

The Board of Directors provided the Conference with its first truly continuous administration. However, it was continuous only in the sense that a group of officers served for multi-year terms. It was not continuous in the year-round sense of an officer devoting his full energies to the Conference. All officers squeezed their Conference duties between their full time university or community theatre duties.

New Classes of Membership

The Conference instituted student and honorary memberships when it incorporated. Students had attended the Conference's annual conventions since the first one in 1948 but they had never held membership in the organization. Honorary membership was instituted to recognize outstanding individuals or organizations in drama, arts, education or social activities. The new classes of membership carried no voting rights, however.4

Spring Employment Clinic

The Conference attempted to provide a service for its student members by conducting a clinic devoted to employment problems facing

4 Article VII, Sections 2 and 3, Articles of Incorporation of Southwest Theatre Conference, Inc. In SWTC Archives.
the various theatres in the region. Paul Baker planned a two-day series of meetings including prospective employer-employee interviews. The clinic was scheduled for May 13 and 14, 1966, at the Dallas Theatre Center. Registration was so disappointingly small, however, that Baker cancelled the project.⁵

Conference Finances

Additional sources of revenue were a benefit the Conference hoped to gain through incorporation. Income from membership dues increased under the new fees proposed in the bylaws. Individual membership dues remained at $5.00 but organizational dues rose from $5.00 to $10.00. Student dues of $3.00 a year were initiated.⁶

Convention registration fees which had been eliminated as a separate item and included in the membership dues were reinstated. The Conference, however, continued to contribute a percentage of its income from dues to the convention host. The host's share became "$3.00 of each $5.00 dues, $6.00 of each $10.00 dues, and $2.00 of each $3.00 dues."⁷

The host financed the annual convention with a share of the membership dues, registration fees, and allocations from his institution. All these funds did not cover the expenses of the 1967 convention, however.

⁵ "Minutes of 18th Annual Meeting of the Southwest Theatre Conference," Topics, I, 3 (February, 1967), 9.

⁶ Section 2.2, Bylaws Southwest Theatre Conference, Inc. In SWTC Archives.

⁷ "Minutes SWTC Joint Committee Meeting," Topics, I, 5 (May, 1968), 7.
Hershel Zohn, New Mexico State University, held the convention in 1967. Since this was the only one ever held in New Mexico, the New Mexicans naturally made it a grand affair. The convention developed a deficit which normally would have been absorbed by the host institution. Zohn could get no more funds from the University, however, so he requested assistance from the Conference. The Conference Board of Directors decided to help Zohn out of his difficulty by awarding him $150.00.  

New Plays Library

The New Plays Library, which had been established in 1963, continued to provide its service to the Conference members. Jeanne Adams Wray, library director, published and distributed a catalogue of fifty-one long plays and forty-four short ones in 1966. James D. Baines, who had moved from McMurry College to assume the managing directorship of the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, became library director again in 1967 and moved the holdings to Little Rock.

The following year Clinton Bradford, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, became director of the library and moved the holdings to Baton Rouge. In 1969 Bradford published a catalogue which included the plays from the 1966 catalogue plus an additional fourteen long and eight short plays.

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The Library provided a valuable service by screening new plays for theatres in the Southwest. Unfortunately the theatres have not availed themselves of this service. Theatre directors in the region frequently vocalized about the importance of producing new plays but too few were prepared to produce them.

A Plethora of Committees

Richard O'Connell, first Conference president after incorporation, initiated projects he hoped would make the Conference "a year-round service-giving organization." He created ten new committees in addition to the Planning and Nominating Committees, and charged each with specific duties. The committees and their chairmen appointed by O'Connell were Constitutional Revision, Burnet Hobgood; History and Publications, Donald Clark; Government, State and Private Grants, Bob Stecker; Theatre Plant and Equipment, James H. Miller; Community Theatre Organization, Bob Stecker; Drama Teacher in High School and College, Lyle Hagan; Drama Teacher in Primary, Elementary and Children's Theatre School, Nat Eek; Public Relations, Publicity, Awards and Membership, Jim Baines; Placement Service, Bob Stecker; SWTC Repertory Company, Kenneth Barry.

Many of the committees experienced a very short life. The Drama Teachers in Primary, Elementary and Children's Theatre School, in fact,

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never functioned. One reason suggested for this committee's inactivity was the possibility that region five of the Children's Theatre Conference assumed its function.12

Three committees ceased to exist after the first year. The Committee on Community Theatre Organization and the Placement Committee each suggested possible activities for themselves at the 1967 meeting but neither of them functioned after that. No one in the region seemed interested enough to sustain either committee's activities.13 James Miller, on the other hand, terminated the Theatre Plant and Equipment Committee because he thought its work would prove meaningless.14

The Repertory Company and the Government, State, and Private Grants Committees both survived for two years. The Repertory Committee endured primarily because of its chairman, Ken Barry. He was attempting to establish a touring repertory company, Texas Rep, and hoped to use the committee as a booking agent. The organization was a paper one, however, and regional theatres were not disposed to book an untried group. No Texas Rep productions materialized and after two years Barry discontinued his efforts. The committee ceased to function when Barry withdrew.15

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13 Robert Stecker, chairman of both committees, did not belong to the Conference after 1967.


The Grants Committee announced it would help any organization wishing to apply for a grant but would not itself initiate any applications. The organizations were surprisingly uninterested in the project so after two years this committee also ceased to function.

Several factors contributed to the demise of committees. General apathy toward the goals of some committees led to their expiration. Insufficient time to fulfill all their duties hampered many committee chairmen from guiding their committees. And the total lack of Conference financial support for their activities stifled many committees.

A few of the committees initiated by O'Connell survived. The Drama Teacher in High School and College Committee continued to function after a late start. It was influential in having a panel on "Teaching Drama in High School and College" included in the 1968 convention program. And in 1969 it reported on a survey concerning the status of drama teachers in secondary and higher education.

The Publicity, Awards and Membership Committee managed to remain active. In 1967 it encouraged the establishing of "half-year meetings," small area meetings held between the annual Conference meetings in the fall. These mini-conferences did not materialize, however, because

"no one on the planning committee wished to undertake the responsibility to follow through with such a conference." At the 1968 meeting, the committee recommended that its duties be distributed over a number of committees by establishing a Public Relations and Publicity Committee, an Awards Committee, and a Membership Committee. It further recommended the latter be assigned to the Conference Secretary-Treasurer.

Another committee which remained extant was the Constitution Revision Committee. It proposed several bylaw revisions which the Conference ratified in 1967. The revisions allowed individuals outside the Southwest region to be members of the Conference; they deleted any reference to the residence or citizenship of honorary members; and they made it illegal for a business meeting to continue if attendance dropped below quorum because of an exodus of members. No revisions to the constitution and bylaws were made after 1967. Burnet Hobgood, committee chairman, attributed this to the excellent help his colleagues at Southern Methodist University Law School provided in drafting the documents.

The History and Publications Committee also retained its vitality. Its major activity was overseeing the publication of the Conference's periodical, *Southwest Theatre Topics*.

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24 Burnet Hobgood, personal interview, October 31, 1970.
The Conference reviewed the Ad Hoc Committee Structure in 1969 because it felt the structure was "somewhat vague with some committees not functioning and others not practical." It polled the membership for suggestions on the kind of committees needed and for recommendations on committee membership. Results of the poll were to be used in establishing a more realistic committee structure.25

A President - Elect

Although the Board of Directors provided it with an uninterrupted administration, the Conference took a further step to insure administrative continuity. It made the succession of the first vice-president to the presidency official Conference policy. In 1967 the Board of Directors passed a motion "to instruct the Nominating Committee. . . to designate the First Vice-President as President-Elect pending approval of the nominee's employing institution."26 Since the president customarily held the annual convention, approval by his employer indicated a willingness to assume responsibility for the convention.

Ironically the first year that the Conference made this succession official policy, events took a turn making it impossible. The Conference elected Nat Eek, University of Oklahoma, first vice-president for 1968. Eek also became vice-president of the International Association of Theatres for Children and Youth in the spring of 1968. Fearing


26 "Minutes SWTC Joint Committee Meeting," Topics, I, 5 (May, 1968), 7.
that his numerous duties might interfere with his being a good president
of the Southwest Theatre Conference, Eek tendered his resignation to
Claude Shaver, Conference president, in the summer of 1968. The
Conference chose Stocker Fontelieu, second vice-president, as its
president for 1969. Since then the succession has worked as planned.

**Topics Merge with Southern Theatre?**

The newsletter, *Southwest Theatre Topics* continued to keep the Con­ference membership informed. In 1966, Angus Springer, who had published
*Topics* since 1957, resigned as editor and William Shapard, executive
secretary-treasurer assumed the position. Shapard changed *Topics'*
format from pamphlet to quarto and began numbering the issues. He
published three issues at Southern Methodist University.

Richard Wiles, designer-technician at New Mexico Highlands Univer­sity, became editor of *Topics* under Conference president O'Connell in
1967. He published only one issue. R. Lyle Hagan, Eastern New Mexico
University, volunteered at the 1967 convention to publish *Topics*.

In 1967 the Conference received a proposal from the Southeastern
Theatre Conference that *Topics* be merged with its magazine, *Southern
Theatre*. The Southeastern Theatre Conference, an organization of edu­cational and community theatre people in the Southeastern states, had
been publishing articles as well as news items in its magazine. It

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27 Nat Eek, letter to Claude Shaver, August 5, 1968. In the files
of Claude Shaver at Louisiana State University.

28 "Minutes SWTC Joint Committee Meeting," *Topics*, I, 5 (May,
1968), 8.
suggested the merger of Southern Theatre with Topics primarily for economic reasons. The merger would cut production costs in half and also attract more advertising. The merger would also triple circulation since Topics circulated almost twice as many copies as Southern Theatre did.

The terms of the merger were for three years during which the title of the magazine would remain Southern Theatre but have a sub-title recognizing the Southwest Conference as an associate. The editor, managing editor, and two associate editors, were to be designated by the Southeastern Conference. Two associate editors and an assistant advertising and circulation manager were to be designated by the Southwest Conference. 29

Several Southwest members encouraged the merger since Southern Theatre was considered a more prestigious publication than Topics. Many Southwest members opposed the merger, however, because they feared Topics would lose its identity in the transaction. Their fear was founded on the fact that the Southeastern Conference would virtually control the editorial and managerial policies of the merged publication. In 1968, Don Clark, chairman of the History and Publications Committee, reported that "a poll of the members of the committee... indicated a majority... were strongly in favor of... continuing the autonomous publication of Topics." 30


Lyle Hagan continued publishing *Topics* under its regular format.

New Sources of Revenue

The Conference began receiving income from sources other than membership dues. Advertising in *Topics* was one source. Although the Conference had considered selling advertising space in *Topics* as early as 1961, it was not successful in attracting advertisers. Before 1966 only two advertisements appeared in *Topics*: one in January, 1963 issue and another in the October, 1965 issue. During 1966, however, advertisements began to increase and provide added revenue for the Conference.

Rental of exhibition space at the annual conventions was another source of income. Renting space to commercial exhibitors had been profitable for other organizations and was suggested to the Conference in 1959. Nine years passed before the Conference accepted the suggestion. It began renting exhibition space at the 1968 convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Other hoped-for revenue did not materialize. Although incorporation made it legally capable of receiving grants and other gifts, the Conference has made no application for any grant nor has it received gifts from any group or individual.

31 Business Meeting Minutes, 1961, p. 3.


Relations with Other Organizations

The Conference remained informed about other organizations primarily through its own members who also held membership in various national and regional groups. Art Cole reported on the activities of the American Community Theatre Association at both 1967 and 1968 meetings. Joe Salek reported on the ACTA Regional Play Festival and Angus Springer reported on the American Educational Theatre Association's American College Theatre Festival in 1969.34

Summary

In 1966 the Conference incorporated to provide itself a stronger, central administrative structure. It also instituted student membership to encourage more student participation in its activities.

Numerous committees attempted to expand Conference services to the region; however, few of them survived. Two projects from earlier years continued through this period. The New Plays Library expanded and Topics continued to keep the membership informed.

New sources of revenue, in the form of advertising in Topics and renting commercial exhibit space at the annual conventions, began to augment the Conference treasury. Unfortunately, private grants and gifts have not been forthcoming.

Through the years the Conference's attempts to be a year-round

organization met with little success. Since the officers and members belonged to other organizations and had other duties to perform, they could not support more than an annual convention.
Chapter VII
THE ANNUAL CONVENTIONS, 1948 - 1954

The following is a list of the conventions covered in this chapter with their locations, hosts, and presidents.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>HOST AND PRESIDENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Norman, Oklahoma</td>
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<td>1949</td>
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<td>University of Oklahoma</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rupel Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Waco, Texas</td>
<td>Baylor University</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paul Baker</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Ft. Worth, Texas</td>
<td>Texas Christian University</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walther Volbach</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Shreveport, Louisiana</td>
<td>Shreveport Little Theatre</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Wray Young</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Fayetteville, Arkansas</td>
<td>University of Arkansas</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Virgil L. Baker</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
<td>Tulane University and Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monroe Lippman (Tulane)</td>
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When the Southwest Theatre Conference was founded in 1948, Paul Baker, Ben Henneke, and John Wray Young framed the following statement.

The purpose of the Southwest Theatre Conference is to share the results of our several experiences, researches, and knowledge and, by such mutual interchange, to improve the theatre in the southwest region.

The time of the meeting each year shall be at a time convenient, prior to the meeting time of the National Theatre Conference, the time of the meeting to be set before adjournment.

Memberships shall be limited to those people actively engaged in theatre practice in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Dues shall be assessed to organized theatre groups and shall be $5.00 a year to be paid by the first of February each year. Conference registration fees will be assessed each year for each individual in attendance.

The elected officers of this organization shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. An advisory committee of all National Theatre Conference members in this region shall assist the elected officers determine the policies and program.

The statement reveals the goal of the Conference, "to foster and improve the theatre in the Southwest region," and the proposed means, "to share the results of our several experiences, researches, and knowledge." On close analysis, one finds that the practical framers structured the statement to emphasize the means. The resources by which the Conference would reach its goal would be the mutual sharing of theatre knowledge among the membership.

Annual conventions at which members could share ideas became the major project of the Conference. Through the years, the convention retained its status as the Conference's most important project.
To provide opportunities for the members to share ideas, the convention programs included four activities: general sessions, special interest sessions, guest speakers, and theatrical productions. General sessions were devoted to subjects of interest to all members of the Conference. They were scheduled so that the entire membership could attend each session. Special interest sessions were devoted to subjects of limited interest so they were usually scheduled concurrently. Guest speakers and theatrical performances rounded out the convention agenda. Prominent theatre personalities from the Southwest and the entire nation spoke as guests at the conventions. And from the early years of the Conference, performances by the host institutions were important events on convention programs.

This chapter and the two which follow take a detailed look at convention activities through the years. Annual convention programs and newspaper accounts of the conventions were the basic sources of information for these chapters.

From the early years of the Conference the convention site and the Conference presidency were closely linked. The president served for one year and was responsible for planning the convention program for that year. Also the institution which employed the president held the convention in the city where he taught or directed.¹

After its first two years at Norman, Oklahoma, the Conference moved the annual convention site to other locations in the region. At

¹ John Wray Young, letter to the author, August 2, 1970.
first it did not venture any further than Waco and Fort Worth, Texas, both centrally located in the region. But by its fifth convention the Conference began moving to sites more remotely located. A pattern was eventually established whereby several conventions were held at sites near the periphery of the region before one returned to a central site like Dallas, Texas. In this way the membership got an opportunity to really see what their colleagues were doing.

This chapter covers the first seven annual conventions of the Conference. University theatres held the majority of the conventions and helped the Conference become firmly established. The general and special interest sessions of the conventions covered a wide range of subjects as did the guest speakers. The productions at the conventions were usually original plays.

General Sessions

At the organizing convention in 1948 the first general session was devoted to acquainting the delegates with several national theatre organizations and explaining the idea for a Southwest Theatre Conference. Theatre architecture, children's theatre, building an audience, and what the colleges and universities can do for the community theatres were the subjects of other general sessions.

The following year, 1949, theatre organizations were again the major subject of the general sessions. This time, however, local as well as regional organizations were included. Several member theatres of the Conference reported on their activities since the previous
convention. Monroe Lippman reported on the establishment of a South­
eastern Theatre Conference. Sawyer Falk, president of National Theatre
Conference, discussed the New York Theatre Conference and the National
Theatre Conference. Robert Gard of the University of Wisconsin explained
the Wisconsin Idea Theatre, which had contributed greatly to the advance­
ment of theatre in that state.

After two years of learning how other regional theatre organiza­
tions functioned and how national theatre organizations could help local
theatre groups, the Conference felt that it was established well enough
to turn to other subjects in the general sessions. Therefore in 1950,
when the Conference moved from its birthplace to Waco, Texas, the major
subjects covered in the general sessions were theatre history and
theatre in America and Europe. Barclay Leathem, secretary of the
National Theatre Conference, and John Rosenfield, drama editor for The
Dallas Morning News, delivered papers on theatre history. Leathem
discussed "Growth of the Off-Broadway Theatre in America" and Rosenfield
spoke on "The Development of Theatre in the Southwest." There were
three talks on "Aspects of the Theatre at Home and Abroad." Monroe
Lippman, president of the American Educational Theatre Association,
reported on the Association's projects and plans for the year. Reynold
Armould, designer for the Paris Opera Comique, spoke on "Theatre Design
in France" and Peter Quinton, of the Old Vic Theatre School, London,
spoke on "The Old Vic's Approach to Theatre."

The following year acting and the relationship between religion
and drama were the two topics at the general sessions. The art of
acting was examined from the actor's, the director's, and the critic's points of view. An interfaith panel composed of Protestants, Catholic's and Jews discussed the relationship between religion and drama. Henry Schnitzler, University of California at Los Angeles, came to participate in both general sessions.

In 1952 the general session was given over entirely to Robert C. Kase, field secretary for the American National Theatre and Academy, to plead ANTA's case before the Conference. The Conference's relations with ANTA were discussed in Chapter III.

Theatre inter-relationships and theatre promotion and development were the topics of general sessions in 1953. Representatives of the educational, the community, and the professional theatres discussed the roles they should play in inter-relationships among themselves and with non-theatrical groups. The community, the university, and the children's theatres discussed theatre promotion and development. Two speakers followed this general theme at a box-lunch picnic. Paul Baker spoke on "The Importance of Experiment in Theatre" and Mrs. Johnny George discussed "The Problems Involving the Establishment of Theatre Inc. in Houston."

The Conference took stock of itself at the seventh convention in 1954. It looked back at its past and forward into its future; it recognized its achievements and discussed the problems of its future development. An interesting event on the program of the 1954 convention was the appearance of several laymen on panels. Hitherto, only people with theatre training participated. For the first time the
businessmen who supported the theatre but had no theatre training also participated. They composed a panel to discuss the importance of laymen to the development and maintenance of community and professional theatres.

Special Interest Sessions

In 1948 there was one session for the community theatre interest group and one for the college and university theatre group. The community theatre session discussed business and artistic problems. The educational theatres discussed curriculum, pedagogy, the prospects for drama graduates, and the benefits of an educational theatre magazine.

Sufficient interest in high school theatre was generated at the first convention so that a high school session was included along with the community theatre and college and university theatre sessions the following year.

In 1950 the educational theatres concentrated on discussing the drama curriculum. Technical and artistic aspects of arena theatre, and the civic theatre's obligations to the community were subjects of two other sessions that year.

The number of special sessions was increased in 1951 to include discussions on television, children's theatre, and college and community opera. The sessions on opera were no doubt influenced by the fact that the host, Walter Volbach, specialized in opera. The high school group considered drama workshops; the community theatres con-
centrated on technical theatre; and the colleges again, for the fourth straight year, discussed curriculum. For the first time students were included in the program. They participated on panels with faculty members to discuss the needs of drama students.

The 1952 convention was different from the other conventions in that the special interest sessions were not scheduled concurrently but separately. In a sense they all became general sessions since everyone could attend all if he wished. There were seven sessions, each an hour long. Subjects for the sessions were church and drama, avocational and professional relationships in theatre, methods of play selection, dance and music in theatre, theatre and the press, the drama student meets the faculty, and how can Southwest Theatre Conference serve members on a year-round basis? Two sessions at the 1951 convention created so much interest that they were included once more. The sessions were the one on church and drama, which had been a general session the year before, and the one devoted to a student-faculty panel. For the first time members of the press were included on the program to discuss the relationship between the press and the theatre.

The special interest sessions returned to their concurrent scheduling the following year, 1953. There were only two basic community theatre and college theatre sessions. The community group concerned itself with all the details of community theatre production from selecting the play to financing and publicity. The college group considered the role of theatre in various institutional settings such as the multi-purpose institution and the teacher training institution.
An innovation at the 1953 convention was simultaneous demonstrations. The demonstrations were presented in one large room so that anyone could wander from one demonstration to another as he chose. Most of the demonstrations concerned technical theatre: projected scenery, enlarging costume patterns to scale, new methods for doors and platforms, and using celastics. Other demonstrations were of a theatre-in-the-round rehearsal and of choreography for the theatre. An exhibit of theatre books, a display by the American Educational Theatre Association, and an art exhibit from the University of Arizona completed the program.

No special interest sessions were held in 1954 since the convention was devoted to a general taking stock of the Conference and assessing its growth and development.

**Guest Speakers**

Four guest speakers addressed the first convention. Two of them lectured at general sessions. B. Iden Payne lectured on "Shakespeare Productions in University and Community Theatres." And George Izenour brought his recently finished lighting control system from New Haven, Connecticut, for its first public demonstration. The other two speakers appeared at banquets. Kenneth MacGowan, University of California at Los Angeles, spoke of "The Motion Picture and Radio as Extensions of Theatre Arts." George Freedley, a member of the New York City critics circle and author of several theatre books was principal

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Mr. Freedley delivered a speech entitled "The Theatre Swallowed a Tapeworm" in which he compared the stagehands' union to a tapeworm. He warned that the union was making such exorbitant demands that production costs would be crippled.  

Government subsidy of the American theatre concerned the two guest speakers in 1949. Sawyer Falk, president of the National Theatre Conference, advocated government subsidy to revive the ailing American theatre. He suggested a system similar to that used in Great Britain. On the other hand, Barrett Clark, of Dramatists' Play Service in New York, warned against government subsidy of the theatre. He decried a theatre bound by bureaucracy and official supervision. He felt that the cause of theatre's decline was theatre practitioners themselves. "If you cannot now attract audiences whose dollars at the box office support you and your fellow-workers," he said, "are you willing to let your government pay for the empty seats you can't fill? Shall it make good the deficit caused by your incompetency?" The high point of the convention was an impromptu debate between Mr. Falk and Mr. Clark on government subsidy for the theatre.  

In 1950, although the Conference was considering an official stand on unions in the regional theatre and government subsidy to the theatre, 

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3 "Freedley Says Stagehands Threaten to Cripple Theatre," The Norman Transcript, October 31, 1948, p. 3.

4 Quoted in "Warning Against Government Subsidy for Theatres, Given to Drama Parley by Clark," The Norman Transcript, October 23, 1949.

5 Charles Suggs, personal interview, June 22, 1970.

6 See chapter III for a discussion of the Conference's stand on unions in regional theatres and government subsidy.
the principal speaker did not concentrate on either subject. Instead he spoke about a possible cause of some of the theatre's problems, the rise of television. As principal speaker, Samuel Leve, New York designer, discussed "The Impact of TV on the Broadway Theatre."

A scene designer was principal speaker in 1951 also. Donald Oenslager spoke on "Scenery, Today and Tomorrow." He delivered a very inspiring speech in which he urged theatre workers to break away from the canvas flats they have been using for three centuries and experiment with the new materials which have been developed by the commercial world. The other luncheon speaker was E. L. Aschaffenburg, president of Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre. He discussed Le Petit and explained how it had been working in affiliation with the drama department at Tulane University.

Anticipating the Second National Theatre Assembly called by the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA), the first guest speaker at the 1952 convention addressed himself to an appraisal of ANTA's shortcomings. Henry Schnitzler, of the University of California at Los Angeles, charged ANTA with forgetting its original national theatre concept by concentrating exclusively on Broadway activities and not encouraging a decentralization of the professional theatre. He called on ANTA to "re-dedicate itself to its original purpose as expressed in the charter granted it by the U. S. government."7

John Gassner, New York drama critic and scholar, was principal speaker in 1952. Mr. Gassner spoke about "Modern Mid-Century Theatre."

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7 Quoted in Pericles Alexander, "ANTA Field Secretary to Reply to Schnitzler," The Shreveport (Louisiana) Times, November 1, 1952, p. 6.
He analyzed the current problems in the modern theatre as stemming from the loss of creative stimuli. The theatre had concentrated too long on topical subjects and ignored the universal ones, he claimed and called on playwrights to make man, not man's environment, the central theme of their plays.  

The following year, 1953, a Pulitzer prize-winning playwright gave his analysis of the American theatre's failings. Arthur Miller attributed the theatre's ills to its financial structure. He claimed the structure did not encourage playwrights and producers to experiment with new forms which would keep the theatre alive. Nor did it encourage professional groups to remain together for more than one production so that the members could grow artistically and benefit from their association. The professional American theatre was based on a "one shot" basis whereby the artists came together to produce one play and rarely collaborated again.  

Other speakers at the 1953 convention were John Ashby Conway, John Rosenfield, and John Wray Young. Mr. Conway, of the University of Washington, discussed the role of the scenic artist in the modern theatre. "Southwest Theatre and the National Scene" was Rosenfield's subject. During his speech Mr. Rosenfield urged community theatres not to be too proud to "pass the hat" since they provide their communities a great cultural service which deserves community support.

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8 "Author-Critic Addresses STC," The Shreveport Journal, November 1, 1952, Section 1, p. 1


10 John Rosenfield, "Seven Years of Postwar Theatre," copy in SWTC Archives.
a memorial to Whitehand. It was an excellent choice for the first convention of the Southwest Theatre Conference since it was about the Southwest and by a Southwestern writer. Carl B. Cass of the Oklahoma faculty staged the production.\(^{12}\)

The following year Oklahoma presented the first American production of Stuart Gilbert's translation of Caligula by Albert Camus. The University got special permission to produce this play about the Roman Emperor. Charles C. Suggs directed the production.

Baylor University presented the premiere production of Cocklebur by Ramsey Yelvington in 1950. Mr. Yelvington was a native of Texas and a graduate of Baylor. His play concerned the life and death of a cow-puncher, who typified a way of life which was basic to the heritage of Texas. Paul Baker directed the production for Baylor.

The following year, 1951, Texas Christian University followed suit and presented a premiere production. However, the emphasis shifted from regional theatre to Broadway theatre since Joel Turner and Roland von Weber were aspiring Broadway playwrights. Their play, Phaedra, was chosen for production at the convention. Walther Volbach of Texas Christian University directed the production.

Connecticut Halloween by Jonathan Bates was premiered by the Shreveport Little Theatre at the 1952 convention. John Wray Young directed the production.

The University of Arkansas turned from original plays to the classics in 1953. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was presented under

\(^{12}\) Charles Suggs, personal interview, June 22, 1970.
the direction of George R. Kernodle.

The 1954 convention provided two productions since it was hosted by two organizations. Tulane University produced Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. And Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre produced Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not For Burning*. A production of *The Innocents* by William Archibald was also offered for conferees remaining in New Orleans over Saturday night. It was produced by Gallery Circle, New Orleans' community theatre-in-the-round.

During the first seven conventions there were two critique sessions after the productions. In 1950 there was a "Discussion of Playwriting and New Play Production," The panel was composed of Ramsey Yelvington, playwright, Keith Palmer, designer of the production, Samuel Leve, New York designer, John Rosenfield, critic, and Margo Jones, director-producer. The other session was held in 1951 when a panel of newspaper drama critics were assembled to review the production of *Phaedra*. The review did not work out as planned but got sidetracked by a discussion of the play's possibilities for commercial success.13

**Southwest Theatre Conference Awards**

The Conference felt that distinguished theatre service by persons in the region should be recognized. It decided to express this recognition through the presentation of a merit award plaque. The convention host provided the plaque and determined the recipient. The

first award was presented at the 1952 convention.

B. Iden Payne became the first person to receive the Conference's Award of Merit. Mr. Payne had distinguished himself as an excellent director in both England and America. He was also an outstanding educator. His current post was on the faculty of the University of Texas.14

No awards were presented during the remaining two conventions covered by this chapter.

Summary

For the first seven years of the Conference the annual conventions were held mainly by universities. After its first two years at Norman, Oklahoma, the Conference began to move about the region. However it confined itself to the central and eastern portions.

The conventions consisted of four attractions: general sessions, special interest sessions, guest speakers, and theatrical productions.

The general sessions were first devoted to learning about other national and regional theatre organizations so that the Conference could get ideas for its own organizing. Later the subjects changed to such interests as theatre history, acting, church drama, and theatre interrelationships. Two extraordinary general sessions were held in 1952 and 1954. In 1952 the session was devoted to an explanation of plans by the American National Theatre and Academy in an attempt to rally the Con-

ference's support. And in 1954 the sessions were devoted to discussions of the Conference's achievements and problems and the important role that laymen play in theatre organizations.

The special interest sessions also displayed some variety during these first seven years. In addition to the regular community theatre and college and university theatre interest groups there was occasionally a high school theatre interest group on the convention program. The most varied convention was the one held in 1951 at Texas Christian University. It added children's theatre, opera, and television to the other interest groups. The 1952 convention sponsored by the Shreveport Little Theatre was unique in that the special interest sessions were not scheduled concurrently. Also unique was the New Orleans convention in 1954, which did not include special sessions at all.

There were many prominent speakers from both the regional and the national theatre scenes at the conventions. The list included educators, authors, critics, technicians, scene designers, and a playwright.

The first seven annual conventions provided premieres of theatrical productions. A French play in translation was given its American premiere in 1949. Original plays were premiered during the next three years. The conventions shifted from premieres to productions of other modern works and the classics after that.

The Conference instituted an annual award for outstanding contribution to the theatre by a person from the region. B. Iden Payne was the first and only recipient of the award during these first seven years.
Chapter VIII
THE ANNUAL CONVENTIONS, 1955 - 1961

The conventions covered in this chapter are listed below with their locations, hosts, and presidents.

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<th>YEAR</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>HOST AND PRESIDENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Dallas, Texas</td>
<td>Margo Jones Theatre '55 and the community theatres of Dallas</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ramsey Burch, (Theatre '55)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>University of Texas along with</td>
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<td>Southwestern University and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Austin Civic Theatre</td>
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<td>Loren Winship, (Univ. of Texas)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Tulsa, Oklahoma</td>
<td>Tulsa Little Theatre</td>
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<td>Theodore Viehman</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Amarillo, Texas</td>
<td>Amarillo Little Theatre and</td>
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<td>Eastern New Mexico University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Portales, New Mexico)</td>
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<td>Oma Link Rowley and R. Lyle Hagan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>San Antonio Little Theatre</td>
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<td>Joe Salek</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>Baton Rouge, Louisiana</td>
<td>Baton Rouge Little Theatre and</td>
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<td>Louisiana State University</td>
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<td>Lee Edwards, B. R. L. T.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Ft. Worth, Texas</td>
<td>Ft. Worth Community Theatre and</td>
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<td>Texas Christian University</td>
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<td>Francis Prinz, Ft. Worth C. T.</td>
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The custom of electing the president from the city in which the next convention would be held was established in the early years of the Conference. Since the president was responsible for planning the convention facilities this arrangement worked well. It did occasionally create problems, however. Two problems occurred during the years discussed in this chapter. The first arose when the Conference decided to return the convention to a central location in 1955. The Conference selected Dallas, Texas, as the convention site and proposed to elect Margo Jones, Theatre '54, president. She declined. As an alternative the Conference elected Ramsey Burch, Miss Jones' assistant. Burch's only qualification for office was the fact that he directed theatre in Dallas. He was a very inadequate president.¹ In this instance the Conference created an unhappy situation in its attempt to perpetuate a custom.

The other problem occurred in 1958 and came about in the following manner: Prior to 1958 none of the annual conventions had been held in or near New Mexico. Consequently the majority of New Mexican theatre groups did not participate in the Conference. To remedy this situation and encourage participation by the New Mexicans, the Conference proposed to hold a convention in New Mexico.

R. Lyle Hagan of Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, was enthusiastic about holding a convention. Unfortunately Portales was a small community without sufficient hotels and accommodations for such a venture.

¹ Monroe Lippman, letter to the author, August 20, 1970. Oma Link Rowley, letter to the author, n.d. See also "An Irregular Election" in Chapter IV.
Hagan suggested that Eastern New Mexico University was inclined to sponsor a convention if another theatre group in the vicinity of Portales cooperated by providing the physical facilities. Oma Link Rowley, Managing Director of Amarillo Little Theatre, offered the facilities in Amarillo, Texas. Since Amarillo was close enough to Portales to allow Hagan and Rowley to coordinate planning without much difficulty, the Conference decided to elect them co-presidents for 1958.²

This chapter covers the conventions for the years 1955 through 1961 during which the community theatres were the dominant hosts. "Quo Vadis" general sessions and "smorgasbord" special sessions were introduced during this period. Foreign and international theatre figures addressed the conventions for the first time. And the Conference recognized the achievements of several members through its Merit Award.

General Sessions

The 1955 convention was unique among the conventions covered in this chapter because it did not include any general sessions on its program.

In 1956 the general session was concerned with high school theatre and the relationship between it and the community and university theatres. Two reports of general interest were delivered at a convention dinner. One report concerned the Conference's liaisons with other regional theatre conferences. The other concerned the International Musicological Congress in Vienna.

The following year, 1957, the subject of the sessions turned to the craft of theatre. James Moll of the University of Texas and Mack Scism of Mayde Mack Mummers gave demonstrations and discussions of the director's approach. Demonstrations of several elements of technical theatre were also presented. A special event of this convention was the program honoring Will Rogers and Lynn Riggs at Claremore, Oklahoma. Clem McSpadden, Oklahoma State Senator, spoke about his granduncle, Will Rogers, and Richard M. Caldwell spoke about Lynn Riggs.

The 1958 convention was similar to that of 1952 since its program consisted primarily of eight general sessions lasting an hour each. The subjects covered at the sessions were: selecting a repertoire, the resident theatre, musicals, the education of the playmaker, costumes, technical theatre problems, new ideas, and creative dramatics.

The four general sessions at the 1959 convention also displayed much variety. The first session was devoted to a panel discussion of the theatre and related arts. The second session was a discussion and explanation of the Dallas Theatre Center. The possibility of having pre-Broadway tryouts of plays in the Southwest was discussed at the third session. George Hamlin, of New Dramatists Committee, New York, and John Caldwell, Louisville (Kentucky)Little Theatre, discussed the possibilities of such tryouts. The final session consisted of the presentation of three films and an opera workshop. Baylor's production of Hamlet, the mime of Etienne de Croux, and the use of the camera in training actors were subjects of the films. The opera workshop was an original production, "Gallantry," by Trinity University Opera Workshop.
In contrast to the numerous sessions of the 1959 convention, the 1960 convention employed one simple general session. The session consisted of a panel discussion on the theatre and its public. Panel members were Thomas W. Collens, Baton Rouge Little Theatre; Loren Winship, University of Texas; Mrs. Anne Price, Baton Rouge Morning Advocate; and William Reardon, Louisiana State University.

In 1961 the convention returned to numerous general sessions. "Cultism in the Theatre" was the subject of one panel in which "the Method" and Theatre of the Absurd were considered. Panels on "Preparing for the Theatre" and the problems of play selection in the educational, community, and high school theatres rounded out the discussion sessions. One session was devoted to demonstrations. "New Approaches to Costuming," "Movement and the Actor," and "Scene and Costume Design in Relation to the Plastic Experience of the Contemporary Audience" were demonstrated for the delegates.

A new kind of general session was added to the convention agenda in 1957. The new session was entitled "Quo Vadis" (where are you going?). As its name implies the session was devoted to an informal discussion of the future course of the Conference. This does not imply that such discussions did not take place at earlier conventions. Many unofficial discussions about the Conference and its future surely took place at every convention since the first one in 1948. This was, however, the first convention to make such discussions an official part of the agenda. The idea was well received and became a part of subsequent convention programs.
Special Interest Sessions

The special interest sessions at the conventions between 1955 and 1961 took on a slightly different format from those of earlier conventions. The format was introduced in 1955 by John Wray Young and became known as the "smorgasbord" because it offered the delegates as many choices as a smorgasbord buffet might. It was organized in the following manner:

Eleven tables were set up in the large Cactus Room of Hotel Adolphus. Each bore a sign announcing a subject to be discussed. An expert with assistants awaited customers. There was room around each table for fourteen or fifteen delegates. Thereafter the delegates could table-hop every thirty minutes or oftener. They could visit from four to six tables during the two-hour period.\(^3\)

The "smorgasbord" idea was such a solid hit in 1955 that it was used again in 1956, 1957, 1959, and 1960. There were no special interest sessions on the agenda in 1958 or 1961.

The subjects offered on this first "smorgasbord" were playwriting, theatre curricula, theatre business management, scenery, community theatre, arena staging, college theatre, high school theatre, children's theatre, television, and costume and makeup. Each subject was generally repeated each thirty minutes during the two-hour session.

The 1956 convention offered a variation on the original "smorgasbord" idea. Rather than repeat the same basic discussion during each time segment, different specific subjects were offered at intervals under a general heading. E. g. under the general heading, "Arena

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Production," the specific subjects of "arena staging and smaller colleges," "arena staging and lighting secrets," and "selecting plays for arena production" were presented at the different time segments. The general subjects for 1956 were arena production, children's theatre, college theatre, community theatre, high school theatre, and religious theatre. A total of sixteen specific subjects were presented under these general headings.

In addition to the "smorgasbord" the 1956 convention also offered concurrent meetings of discussion groups on costume, dance, directing, playwriting, and technical production.

The "smorgasbord" variation used in 1957 followed the pattern set in 1956 but was greatly reduced. Instead of six or more simultaneous discussions there were only three. Specific subjects of the discussions changed four times so that there were almost a dozen subjects covered during the three hours that the "smorgasbord" ran.

In 1959 and 1960 the "smorgasbord" consisted of two sessions of simultaneous panels lasting two hours each. The 1959 "smorgasbord" offered six panels during each session. Subjects of the twelve panels were playwriting, management and organization, directing, children's theatre, educational and professional theatre relationships, theatre design and equipment, acting, play selection, the lyric stage, public relations, design, and New York and regional theatre. The 1960 "smorgasbord" reduced the number of panels in the sessions to four. During the first session panels discussed problems in directing, media public relations, the shoestring theatre, and creative dramatics and
children's theatre. During the second session panels considered methods in acting, theatre administration, teenage theatre, and technical direction.

Guest Speakers

The 1955 convention offered three banquet speakers. Frederic McConnell, director of the Cleveland Playhouse, spoke on "Community Theatre." He chose as his theme the decentralization of theatre away from Broadway. George Hamlin, executive secretary of the New Dramatists Committee, explained how the Committee functioned to encourage new playwrights. He urged the regional theatres to give new playwrights a chance. Willard Swire, executive director of the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA), was the final speaker on the convention agenda. Mr. Swire spoke of ANTA's plan to establish four theatrical production centers in the United States. These centers would serve a forty-city circuit and be the nucleus for a national theatre in the true sense of the term. ANTA's plan was well received by the Conference which had been unhappy with the Broadway emphasis of earlier ANTA plans.


John Rosenfield, *Dallas Morning News*, and Thomas M. Patterson, University of North Carolina, were guest speakers at the 1956 convention. Mr. Rosenfield reviewed the development of theatre in the Southwest. Although he reported progress, he bemoaned the fact that theatre was still not accepted as a major art in this country. Also keeping to the theme of regional theatre, Mr. Patterson reported on new developments in the Southeast Theatre Conference.

In 1957 the four convention speakers turned to observations of the theatre in general. B. Iden Payne, University of Texas, led off with some personal observations about how theatrical practices have changed over the many years that he had been working in the theatre. Howard Lindsay, Pulitzer playwright and actor, spoke of the performers' change in interest. He observed that performers previously were interested only in producing theatrical effects but now were striving for truth in performance. Both Robert E. Gard, Wisconsin Idea Theatre, and Lee Norvelle, president of the National Theatre Conference, gave optimistic predictions for the future of theatre in America. Mr. Gard spoke primarily about the community theatre while Mr. Norvelle spoke in general about "The Functions of a Theatre in A Democracy."  

The 1958 convention saw the return of regional theatre as a popular subject for addresses. Dr. Edyth Renshaw of Southern Methodist Univer-

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sity traced Texas theatre history from the time of the Texas Republic to the twentieth century. And John Wray Young, as first vice-president of the American Educational Theatre Association, discussed the relationship of that Association with the regional theatres.

Paul Baker, current president of the National Theatre Conference, also appeared on the convention program. He delivered a very inspiring speech in which he encouraged experimentation and the nurturing of fresh ideas in the theatre.10

Experimentation in theatre was also a key phrase for the speakers in 1959. As the first speaker Mrs. Norman Bel Geddes, Theatre Arts magazine, urged regional theatre people to experiment and produce new plays rather than to imitate Broadway, which she claimed was producing uninspired claptrap theatre.11 The second speaker was Michel Saint-Denis, distinguished European theatre man. He proposed constant experimentation as the means for keeping the theatre young and alive.12

In 1960 Mrs. H. Alwyn Innes-Brown, vice-chairman of the International Cultural Exchange Service of the American National Theatre and Academy, and Henry Hewes, drama editor and critic for The Saturday Review, were guest speakers. Mrs. Innes-Brown spoke on "The Arts in International Understanding." She reviewed the activities of the State

10 "Call Is Sounded for Better, Fresher Theatre," The Daily Oklahoman, (Oklahoma City), November 2, 1958.

11 "Experimentation Urged at Theatre Meeting," The Dallas Morning News, October 31, 1959, Section 1, p. 9.

Department's international cultural exchange program and stressed the effectiveness of the program in creating good will for America in other nations. As his contribution to the convention, Mr. Hewes focused his attention on a more general theatre subject. He considered the problems posed by the question "How Real Should Theatre Be?"

International and foreign theatre were again popular with guest speakers in 1961. Rosamond Gilder, vice-president of the American National Theatre and Academy, reemphasized the value of international theatre which Mrs. Innes-Brown had stressed the previous year. In her speech, "The Theatre in the World Today," Miss Gilder examined the importance of theatre for international understanding and made suggestions for improving the theatre exchange program. Preceding Miss Gilder's address, Karl Lichteneker, press attache of the Austrian Embassy in Washington, described the rebirth of the Austrian theatre after World War II.13

Tom Hughes, managing director of State Fair Music Hall in Dallas, also addressed the 1961 convention. He discussed the development of amateur theatre groups into partly or wholly professional theatre organizations.14

Convention Productions

The 1955 convention in Dallas offered more productions than had


ever been offered before. Many of the productions were premiere productions. Margo Jones Theatre '55 presented the American premiere of Ferenc Molnar's *Somebody* directed by Ramsey Burch, Conference president. The premieres of two adaptations were presented for the conferees. Edyth Renshaw adapted and staged Stephen Vincent Benet's narrative poem, *Western Star*, at Southern Methodist University. And Robert Glenn adapted and staged a reading of works by Langston Hughes which he entitled *Shakespeare in Harlem* at the Roundup Theatre. Two music theatre pieces completed the list of convention productions. Southern Methodist University presented the regional premiere of Gian-Carlo Menotti's *The Saint of Bleecker Street*. And the Dallas Lyric Theatre presented Carl Orff's *Catulli Carmina*.

In 1956 the convention presented a variety of plays ranging from Restoration to modern and religious. William Congreve's *Love for Love* was presented by the University of Texas. B. Iden Payne directed the production in the University auditorium fitted out to resemble a Restoration theatre. William Inge's modern *Bus Stop* was given an arena production by Mel Pape of the Austin Civic Theatre. And Ladislas Fodor's religious drama, *The Vigil*, was presented by Southwestern University with Angus Springer directing.

The 1957 convention offered two modern comedies for the enjoyment of the conferees. The Tulsa Little Theatre produced William Douglas Home's *The Reluctant Debutant* under the direction of Conference president Theodore Viehman. Tulsa University produced *Beggar on Horseback*. The Marc Connelly and George S. Kaufman fantasy was directed by Beaumont Bruestle.
The 1958 co-presidents of the Southwest Theatre Conference each directed a play for the annual convention. Oma Link Rowley directed a staged reading of *The Lion's Cub* for the Amarillo Little Theatre. The play was an original by area playwright Dr. C. E. Colgate. R. Lyle Hagan brought his production of R. E. McEnroe's *The Silver Whistle* from Eastern New Mexico University. Also on the convention program was an Amarillo Junior League Children's Theatre production of *Three of the Golden Apples*.

Two music productions dominated the 1959 convention bill. First was the premiere of *La Vida de la Mission*, an opera by Carl Venth, presented by the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra. The other music production was Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loew's *Brigadoon* at the San Antonio Little Theatre. Joe Salek, 1959 Conference president, directed the production. One non-music production was also on the convention agenda. San Antonio College presented James Leo Herlihy and William Noble's *Blue Denim* under the direction of Carl Atkins.

Modern drama took the spotlight at the 1960 convention. Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind* directed by Lee Edwards was Baton Rouge Little Theatre's offering. A production of Ketti Fringe's *Look Homeward Angel* was directed by Don Blakely at Louisiana State University. In addition to these two productions a non-convention production was also available to the delegates. The Baton Rouge Civic Ballet offered an evening of ballet for delegates remaining in town Saturday night after the convention.

Two plays from Europe were presented at the 1961 convention. Texas
Christian University presented the American and English language premieres of Max Mell's *Joan of Arc*. The play was translated by Megan Laird Comini of Southern Methodist University's German faculty and directed by Walther Volbach of the Theatre faculty. Fort Worth Community Theatre presented *Ring Around the Moon*, Christopher Fry's adaptation of Jean Anouilh's play. William Garber directed the production.

Panels of critics discussed the productions at the conventions in 1955 and 1961.

**Southwest Theatre Conference Awards**

The Conference's Award of Merit for distinguished service to the theatre by persons in the region was presented five times between 1955 and 1961.

After a two year lapse since the presentation of the first award, the Conference presented its second award in 1955. The award went to Rupel Jones, "Father of the Conference." Jones was honored for his outstanding job of developing a very strong drama department at the University of Oklahoma and for organizing the initial meetings of the Southwest Theatre Conference in 1948.\(^{15}\)

The Conference presented awards to John Rosenfield and John Wray Young in 1956. Mr. Rosenfield had long been acknowledged as the leading critic in the Southwest and a man who had done much to encourage fine theatre in the region. Mr. Young had produced fine theatre for many

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years at the Shreveport Little Theatre and had been very active in organizing the Conference.\textsuperscript{16}

Lucy Barton became the first woman to receive the Conference's award in 1957. Miss Barton, professor of costume at the University of Texas, received the award in recognition for her "incomparable service to the visual eloquence of the theatre."\textsuperscript{17}

Two years elapsed during which no awards were presented. Then in 1960 John Rosenfleld received the award for the second time in recognition of his continued service to regional drama.\textsuperscript{18}

Angus Springer received the Conference award at the 1961 convention. The award was in recognition of Springer's work in developing an "outstanding small college theatre" and his editorship of \textit{Southwest Theatre Topics}.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Summary}

During the seven years from 1955 through 1961, community theatres held all but one of the conventions. Starting from a central location in 1955, the convention site moved about the outer edge of the region and returned to a central location in 1961. Most of the movement was within the state of Texas.


\textsuperscript{17} "Texas U Professor of Costume Gains Merit Award at Theatre Conference," \textit{Tulsa Daily World}, October 26, 1957, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{18} Larry Rumley, "Role of Community Theatre Discussed at Conference Here," Baton Rouge \textit{Morning Advocate}, October 28, 1960, Section C, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{19} "notes:" \textit{Players Magazine}, XXXVIII, 3 (December, 1961), 85.
The general sessions during this period presented a variety of subjects for the conferees. Three conventions were unique in that they concentrated primarily on one subject. The 1956 convention concentrated on high school theatre; the 1957 one concentrated on the director; and the 1960 one on the theatre and its public.

The 1955 convention had the distinction of being the only one not to have general sessions on any subject.

The majority of special interest sessions during this period were unique in that they followed the pattern of the "smorgasbord" introduced in 1955. The "smorgasbord" was arranged to allow a conferee to move freely from one discussion group to another as his interest guided him. Two conventions did not adhere to the "smorgasbord" format. The 1958 convention utilized an arrangement similar to the one of 1952 in which the sessions were not scheduled concurrently. And the 1961 convention did not provide any kind of special interest sessions for the delegates.

There were prominent speakers at the conventions during this period as there had been in the previous period. But the Conference now drew its speakers not only from the ranks of regional and national theatre but also from the ranks of foreign and international theatre.

The productions at the conventions consisted of modern plays, several of which were originals. Translations or adaptations of modern European plays appeared at the conventions. Music theatre productions were included on the agenda for the first time.

The Southwest Theatre Conference Merit Award was presented to five deserving personalities during the seven years covered in this chapter.
Rupel Jones, John Rosenfield, John Wray Young, Lucy Barton, and Angus Springer received the award for their outstanding service to the theatre.
Chapter IX

THE ANNUAL CONVENTIONS, 1962 - 1969

The conventions covered in this chapter are listed below with their locations, hosts, and presidents.

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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>HOST AND PRESIDENTS</th>
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| 1962 | Norman, Oklahoma                | University of Oklahoma  
F. Donald Clark                                       |
| 1963 | Georgetown, Texas and Austin, Texas | Southwestern University and University of Texas  
Angus Springer, Southwestern |
| 1964 | Fayetteville, Arkansas           | University of Arkansas  
Preston Magruder                                         |
| 1965 | Midland, Texas                  | Midland Community Theatre  
Art Cole                                                   |
| 1966 | Dallas, Texas                   | Southern Methodist University and the Dallas Theatre Center  
Burnet Hobgood, S. M. U.                                  |
| 1967 | Las Cruces, New Mexico          | New Mexico State University  
Richard O'Connell, N.M.  
Highlands University                                       |
| 1968 | Baton Rouge, Louisiana          | Louisiana State University and Baton Rouge Little Theatre  
Claude Shaver, L. S. U.                                   |
| 1969 | San Antonio, Texas              | San Antonio Theatre Council  
Stocker Fontelieu, Le Petit (New Orleans, Louisiana)      |
The Conference retained the custom of holding its annual convention in the current president's home town. This and two other factors combined to create an awkward situation for the 1965 election of officers. One factor was the succession of the first vice-president to the presidency. Vice-presidential succession was firmly established as unofficial policy by 1960. It later became official Conference policy.¹

Another factor was the racial desegregation policy of the Conference. As early as 1954, Monroe Lippman of Tulane University began urging the Conference to adopt a policy of encouraging Negroes in theatre to attend the conventions.² Lippman and several other members opposed the principal of segregation especially in the arts. And although the Conference was not segregated in policy it was segregated in fact since many conventions were held in segregated facilities.³

Several years passed before the Conference took an official stand on the question. In 1963 it passed Lippman's recommendation that the Conference "should not be held in any place that is segregated."⁴

The policies of vice-presidential succession and of holding a convention in integrated facilities conflicted with the custom of having the president sponsor the convention in 1965. Stocker Fontelieu of Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre, New Orleans, as first vice-president for 1964 would have succeeded to president for 1965. According to

1 "Minutes SWTC Joint Committee Meeting," Topics, I, 5 (May, 1968) 7.
custom the convention would have been in New Orleans. Unfortunately New Orleans still had segregated facilities in 1965 and the Conference could not convene there. Fontelieu graciously stepped out of the succession with much apology for being unable to hold the convention in New Orleans. Art Cole of Midland (Texas) Community Theatre offered the facilities in Midland for the 1965 convention. The Conference accepted Cole's offer and subsequently elected him president.5

The Conference Planning Committee appreciated the awkward situation occupied by Fontelieu in 1964 and recommended that "the election of officers for the Conference not be contingent upon the location of the Conference."6 Although the Conference took no official action on the Committee's recommendation it did accept the spirit behind that recommendation. After 1965 the president has not necessarily sponsored the annual convention.7

The break in the 1965 presidential succession was not the only one which occurred. In 1968 Nat Eek resigned as first vice-president of the Conference because of his added responsibilities at the University of Oklahoma and his vice-presidency of International Association of Theatres for Children and Youth. Eek felt that he could not fulfill all

5 Business Meeting Minutes, 1964, p. 1.
6 Ibid.
7 Richard O'Connell of New Mexico Highlands University was president in 1967 but Hershel Zohn of New Mexico State University hosted the convention and Stocker Fontelieu of New Orleans was president in 1969 but Joe Salek and the San Antonio Theatre Council hosted the convention.
his obligations and chose to step out of the succession.8

This chapter discusses the annual conventions which took place from 1962 through 1969. All but two of the conventions were sponsored by University theatres. Each convention provided the delegates with both general and special interest sessions. However, special interest sessions did not use the "smorgasbord" format so popular in the previous period. Guest speakers were drawn more frequently from outside the Southwest region. And more productions were presented at the conventions than had been previously.

General Sessions

The 1962 convention, which was a symbolic rebirth for the Conference, imitated the first general session held in 1948. The session was devoted to reports on national theatre associations. Included in both the 1948 and the 1962 sessions were reports on the National Theatre Conference, the American Educational Theatre Association, and the American National Theatre and Academy. Reports on associations which had developed since 1948, the American Community Theatre Association, the Children's Theatre Conference, and the Secondary School Theatre Conference were also included in the 1962 session.

In addition to the session on theatre associations, three other general sessions were held in 1962. Subjects for the sessions were theatre business management and promotion and stage movement. The stage

movement session included live demonstrations and a Marcel Marceau film, *In the Park*.

The following year, 1963, the convention offered four interesting sessions for the benefit of the conferees. Two of the sessions concerned themselves with acting. One of these considered the use of space in theatre and the other considered period styles in acting. Both sessions used scenes by student actors for demonstration purposes. A third session discussed new trends in theatre architecture. The fourth session consisted of reports on various organizations' projects to encourage playwriting.

Only one general session was held at the 1964 convention. Its subject was readers theatre. The session demonstrated several styles of readers theatre under the direction of Leslie Irene Coger, Southwest Missouri State College.

The 1965 convention returned to numerous general sessions and provided more variety in subject matter than had been the case for some time. Theatre in New Mexico, the relationship between educational and community theatres, children's theatre, architecture for Southwest theatres, and new plays and playwrights each occupied the delegates at a general session. Two sessions at which representatives from theatrical manufacturers demonstrated new developments in stage lighting techniques completed the agenda.

In 1966 the convention concentrated on the actor and on new trends in the theatre. Of special interest was the session on training the actor since it demonstrated the use of the video tape recorder with its
instant playback capability as a training aid. The session on new trends in the theatre considered the role that regional theatres might play as new trends develop.

Theatre for non-adults was the topic of the two general sessions in 1967. One session consisted of a panel discussion on the achievement of the ideal children's theatre. The other discussed improving the standards and the teaching methods in the high school drama curriculum.

The 1968 convention broadened the horizons for the regional theatre people. New directions in theatre interested the delegates at one session. At another John D. Mitchell, president of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts, New York City, acquainted the delegates with Japan's new National Theatre. Workshop sessions in scene design and acting filled out the program. Will Steven Armstrong, New York designer, was consultant for the scene design workshop and Alvina Krause, professor emeritus at Northwestern University, was consultant for the acting workshop.

The convention in 1969 acquainted delegates with the numerous theatre activities in San Antonio. The opening session consisted of a panel discussion of the many educational and community theatres in the city. Also included was an exhibition of R. L. B. Tobin's theatre collection and an open house at KLRN-TV, the public television station in San Antonio.

Special Interest Sessions

Special interest sessions in 1962 employed discussion and demon-
stratlon formats. Discussion sessions examined the problems of educational theatre and of community theatre. Simultaneous demonstrations set forth techniques for costume design, make-up, scene design, mask making, wig making, and slip covering furniture. A session on playwrights and new plays was also held during the demonstration period.

The 1963 convention boasted two interesting sessions on readers theatre. One session, entitled "New Forms in Theatre for Secondary Schools," employed readers theatre performances by two high schools as illustrations. Georgetown (Texas) High School performed The Thurber Carnival and Austin (Texas) High School performed The World of Carl Sandburg. Another session was devoted to readers theatre at the college level. The students of Southwest Texas State College presented a reading of Go Fly a Kite, a new play by Ramsey Yelvington.

Other sessions in 1963 consisted of two open forum discussions for the community theatres, an evaluation of professional theatre group affiliation with drama departments by the educational theatres, demonstration of a method for making breakaway bottles, and exhibits of new posters, programs, and brochures.

In 1964 the sessions with Howard Bay and Eleanor King as guests were of special note. Mr. Bay, New York designer, participated on a panel discussing "Design for Theatre Production." Miss King delivered a slide lecture on Japanese Noh and demonstrated Noh masks, music, and costumes. In addition to these sessions, several panels discussed new playwrights, children's theatre, college theatre curriculum, theatre promotion, and the community theatre board of directors.
The 1965 convention provided two special sessions for the delegates. Simultaneous demonstrations were held on "space centered scenery," cartridge sound, and Celluclay. The other session consisted of concurrent panel discussions by the community theatres and the secondary school theatres. No session was provided for the college and university theatres. In this respect the convention was unique.

Twice as many special sessions were held in 1966 than in any other year during this period. Several sessions were continuous. Brad Morrison, public relations director of the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, conducted a three-session Theatre Management Workshop. Subjects of the sessions were Goals and Objectives of a Civic Theatre, Community Development, and Audience Development. Another three-session cluster was devoted to creating new works. At the sessions a new play was shown in early reading rehearsal, innovative methods in creative theatre for children and teens were demonstrated, and a modern dance was choreographed. A two-session block explored the federal government's subsidy of regional theatres.

A number of single-session panels were also presented in 1966. The panels discussed directing translated plays, new research in theatre history, new opportunities in community theatre, musical productions in high school, and outdoor drama in the Southwest.

The convention returned to a more usual number of three special sessions in 1967. Two concurrent panel discussions constituted each of the sessions. Subjects examined by the panels were recent studies in American theatre research, scene design trends, the critic, new ideas
sessions at the 1969 convention consisted of a report on high school theatre activities, a demonstration of creative dramatics, and a panel on college drama departments.

**Guest Speakers**

The 1962 convention offered two Broadway personalities and one from the region as principal speakers. Harold Clurman, New York director-producer-critic, discussed his approach to directing in the professional theatre. Martin Tahse, producer of both Broadway and road productions, explained "the process of organizing and sending out road shows." And Mack Scism, director of Oklahoma City Mummers Theatre, explained the formation of Theatre Communication Group. This group was founded on a grant from the Ford Foundation to help develop professional theatre people for work in both community and professional theatres.10

In 1963, the convention had only one guest speaker, Orlin R. Corey of Centenary College, Shreveport, Louisiana. Mr. Corey critiqued outdoor drama and considered the opportunities offered by this form of drama.

After a year's absence, Broadway again provided guest speakers for the convention. Harold Clurman returned and with him came Abe Feder, New York designer. Clurman addressed himself to injustices in the professional theatre through his speech, "The Challenge of


10 Aline Jean Treanor, "Theatre Session Hammers at Problems," The Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City), November 11, 1962, Section D, p. 4.
the New American Theatre." In his speech on automation in stage lighting, Feder urged theatres to use the new techniques and assured the conferees that automation was an aid to the lighting technician not his replacement.11

Douglas Campbell, artistic director of the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre, and Jack Morrison, theatre specialist with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare were guest speakers in 1965. Mr. Morrison's speech attracted much interest since President Johnson had recently signed the bill establishing a National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities. In his speech, Morrison discussed a number of theatre programs initiated by Health, Education, and Welfare including ones in theatre research and educational theatre.12

In 1966, New Yorkers once again appeared on the convention program. Michael I. Campus, director of Special Programming, CBS Television, New York, discussed programming quality dramas on national television. Jo Mielziner, New York designer, examined some of the problems with theatre architecture. Norman Nadel, drama critic for New York's World Journal Tribune, delivered the keynote address. In his discourse on theatre interrelations, Mr. Nadel made an eloquent plea for the improvement of the American theatre through a program of exchanges between the professional and the amateur theatres. He presented the outline of a plan whereby the professional and amateur theatres would


band together to exchange knowledge, talent, and experience.13

The 1967 convention presented a program of seven guest speakers on a variety of subjects. Harold Clurman made his third appearance at a Southwest convention to speak on the contemporary theatres of America and Europe. Harold Taylor of Sarah Lawrence College examined the role of the teacher in theatre art. William Saroyan, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, discussed the art of playwrighting. The founder of the New York Shakespeare Festival, Joseph Papp, gave a resumé of the Festival's activities. David H. Ayers, Ohio State University, explained the American Playwrights' Theatre. Two actresses completed the long list of speakers. Maria Douglas, leading tragedienne of Mexico, discussed Mexican theatre. And Elizabeth Huddle, guest artist at New Mexico State University, presented insights into portraying Brecht's characters.

In 1968 also, four speakers presented a wide range of subjects. Will Steven Armstrong, New York designer, bemoaned the fact that excessive costs of Broadway productions had scared off many potential producers. He looked to regional theatres to provide the necessary creativity to keep theatre alive.14 Stuart Vaughn, New Orleans Repertory Theatre, encouraged the cooperation of educational and community theatres with regional professional theatres, which he claimed were

13 "Norman Nadel Keynote Speaker for SWTC October Meeting in Dallas," Topics, I, 3 (February, 1967), 7.

ready to reciprocate.\textsuperscript{15} Anna Marie Barlow, New York Playwright, gave an interesting account of the problems facing playwrights in a speech entitled "Playwriting, or How to Hang by Your Thumbs While Balancing the World."\textsuperscript{16} Also on the Program was Alvina Krause, professor emeritus at Northwestern University. Miss Krause gave some personal observations about acting and the teaching of acting.

Speakers at the 1969 convention were Walter Kerr, Sunday critic for the \textit{New York Times}, Tom Jones, playwright, and Buhumil Svoboda, creator of Laterna Magika. Mr. Kerr spoke of the explosion of experimentation in the off-Broadway theatre. He expressed a hope that the theatre might discover its own identity through these experiments.\textsuperscript{17} Mr. Jones spoke of his concept of theatre as a form of ritual, and Mr. Svoboda gave a demonstration-lecture on "Techniques of Combining Film and Live Action Thru the Use of Film, Slide Projection, and Actors."

Constitution Productions

From 1962 through 1969, Conference delegates to the annual conventions were entertained by a variety of theatrical performances. In 1962 the University of Oklahoma presented Jean Giroudoux's \textit{Ondine} under the direction of Charles Suggs. Sir Lawrence Olivier's film \textit{Richard III} was also included on the program.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{15} Anne Price, "Theatre Can Get Aid—University, Community," Baton Rouge \textit{State-Times}, October 26, 1968.
\bibitem{16} Susan Bridges, "Playwright Tells Here of 'High Wire' Balance," Baton Rouge Morning \textit{Advocate}, October 26, 1968, Section C, p. 12.
\bibitem{17} Gerald Ashford, "Theatre Exploding, Drama Critic Says," San Antonio \textit{Express/News}, November 2, 1969, Section B, p. 6.
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Two original plays were presented in 1963. The Cotton Pick by Draxel Riley, assistant professor of Drama at Southwestern University, was performed at the University under the author's direction. A reading of Ramsey Yelvington's Go Fly a Kite was staged by Southwest Texas State College Players under the direction of James Barton.

In 1964, plays from the European theatre dominated the convention. The University of Arkansas presented a new translation of Goldoni's The Servant of Two Masters. The production was directed by the translator, Norman DeMarco. The Arkansas Arts Center Players of Little Rock presented Strindberg's The Ghost Sonata, directed by Dugal MacArthur.

 Films relating to Shakespeare were also included on the 1964 program. The films included "England of Elizabeth," "Shakespeare's Theatre," "The Forum Scene" from Julius Caesar, and "Throne of Blood," a Japanese version of Macbeth.

The 1965 convention produced both American and European plays. Midland Community Theatre presented Never Too Late by Sumner Arthur Long and The American Dream by Edward Albee. Texas Technological College, Lubbock, brought down its production of Andre Obey's Noah under the direction of Ronald E. Schulz.

The Dallas Theatre Center provided both productions for the 1966 Convention. Jean-Pierre Granval, guest director at the Center from Theatre de France directed Georges Feydeau's A Bug in Her Ear and Louise Mosley directed Edward Albee's Tiny Alice.

Three interesting productions highlighted the 1967 convention. The world premiere of William Saroyan's Anybody and Anybody Else was
presented by New Mexico State University. The University also presented Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, directed by Hershel Zohn. Las Cruces Community Theatre presented *Marat/Sade*, by Peter Weiss. The production was directed by John Hadsell.

In 1968 two productions were presented in Baton Rouge and one in New Orleans. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University presented three of Anna Marie Barlow's one acts under the title, *Where the Music Is*. Claude Shaver and Gresdna Doty directed the plays. The Baton Rouge Little Theatre presented Frederick Knott's *Wait Until Dark*, directed by Lee Edwards. The production in New Orleans was James Goldman's *A Lion in Winter*. It was directed by Stocker Fontelieu at Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre.

The 1969 convention offered the greatest number of productions in the history of the Conference. The educational theatres presented Lorca's *House of Bernarda Alba*, Trinity University; an original satire, *La Raza Pura*, St. Mary's University; Albee's *The American Dream*, Incarnate Word College; Herman's *The Company of Wayward Saints*, Fox Technical School; and a children's theatre production of the musical, *Alice In Wonderland*, San Antonio College. The Community theatres presented Gogol's *The Inspector General*, San Antonio Little Theatre; Andreyev's *He Who Gets Slapped*, Fort Sam Houston Playhouse; Betti's *Crime On Goat Island*, First Repertory Company; Masteroff, Harnick, and Bock's musical, *She Loves Me*, Music Theatre; Van Druten's *Bell, Book and Candle*, Lackland Little Theatre; Dyer's *Staircase*, Billboard Theatre; and an original production of the works of Langston Hughes, Afro-American Theatre.
Southwest Theatre Conference Awards

To commemorate the founding of the Southwest Theatre Conference at the University of Oklahoma in 1948, the Conference honored its founders at the 1962 convention on the Oklahoma campus. The four founders, Paul Baker, Rupel Jones, Ted Viehman, and John Wray Young were presented engraved desk sets as a memento of the occasion.\textsuperscript{18} Unfortunately, Rupel Jones was the only one able to be present for the occasion.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1963, the Conference's Award of Merit was presented to Nita Krupp of Amarillo. Mrs. Krupp had been a devoted worker for the Amarillo Little Theatre and had tirelessly served the Conference as its secretary for four years.\textsuperscript{20}

The Conference did not present the award to anyone after 1963.

Summary

The conventions covered in this chapter might be considered unique since all of them had a full complement of general sessions and special interest sessions. The general sessions usually offered a variety of subjects each year, but occasionally they concentrated on one subject. The actor was the major subject in 1963 and 1966. Readers theatre

\textsuperscript{18} "Drama Group Pays Tribute to Founders," The Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City), November 2, 1962, p. 6.


occupied the session in 1964. Theatre for the young was the primary concern in 1967. Workshops in playwriting, design, and acting dominated the sessions in 1968. And in 1969, the many theatres of San Antonio held the spotlight.

The special interest sessions did not use the format of the "smorgasbord," which had been popular the previous seven years, but returned to the earlier format. The subjects covered in the sessions represented the usual variety of interest. Perhaps the most outstanding or different sessions were the ones on theatre management conducted by Brad Morison at the 1966 convention. Sessions during this period also utilized more demonstrations than earlier ones had.

Guest speakers at the conventions from 1962 through 1969 came primarily from outside the Southwest region. Their speeches concentrated on the elements of theatre and on the state of theatre in America. Directors, designers, actors, playwrights, critics, and educators were well represented during these eight years.

The plays presented at the conventions during this period were mainly modern plays. A number of them were originals and two were premières. The 1969 convention presented more plays for the conferees than had ever been presented before. A total of twelve productions were presented in San Antonio.

Awards or mementoes were presented to the four founders of the Conference: Rupel Jones, Paul Baker, Theodore Viehman, and John Wray Young. The only other person to receive a Conference Award during these years was Nita Krupp.
Chapter X
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Evolution of Conference Organization

The Southwest Theatre Conference was founded in 1948 "to improve the theatre in the Southwest Region." The environmental factors which influenced the founding of the Conference and the choice of goal were the following: First, numerous community theatres were springing up throughout the region but most of their workers had little or no training. These workers needed help if the community theatres were to survive and grow. Second, many institutions of higher education were starting or expanding their theatre departments. The departments needed external encouragement and help in standardizing their curricula.

The strategy by which the Conference intended to work toward this goal was to bring all the theatre organizations in the region together "to share the results of our several experiences, researches, and knowledge." The Conference proposed to hold an annual convention to which the organizations could send their inexperienced workers to learn from the more experienced theatre people. The annual convention became the most important work of the Conference.

The Conference decided to base the structure of its membership on the theatre organizations in the region. It hoped to bring the organizations together and work toward improving them. The Conference therefore became an organization of organizations. Membership was later extended to individuals, both theatre professionals and laymen,
but on a non-voting basis. This retained the composition of the Conference's membership as primarily of organizations rather than of individuals.

The Conference established four officers to be elected each year for administering its affairs. The major administrative duty of the officers was planning the annual conventions. This task fell to the presidents, who customarily held the conventions. The other officers were primarily figureheads. This fact became evident when a fifth officer, a second vice-president, was added so that each of the five states in the region could be represented on the executive committee. The early administrations were very loosely knit.

This rather informal approach to administering the Conference sufficed in the early years, but it soon became apparent that if the Conference was to continue growing, the administration needed revising. In 1955 a formal constitution and bylaws were drawn up. The major revisions incorporated in the document were the establishment of a planning committee to help the president prepare for the annual convention and the addition of two past presidents to the executive committee to provide some continuity in the administration. These two revisions lessened the burden on the presidents but did nothing to remedy the problem that soon faced the Conference.

The enthusiasm which greeted the founding of the Conference and sustained the members' interest through the early years began to wane and the Conference fell into a decline. The environmental conditions which influenced the founding of the organization were gradually
remedied. Also there was no urgency for the members to band together to present a unified front to national organizations like the American National Theatre and Academy and the National Theatre Assembly as they had done in the early fifties. In addition, a lack of internal binding forces to hold the organization together was reflected in the fact that the annual convention, the primary function of the Conference, became uninteresting for many members. This situation reached its climax with the 1961 convention.

When the Conference hit its low point, it took steps to revive itself. In 1961 the constitution underwent another revision. The major change which contributed to the revival of the organization was the enfranchisement of the individual members. Allowing the individual members to vote gave them a stake in the future of the organization and increased their interest in it. Individual membership rose spectacularly after this time, so that the Conference became primarily an organization of individuals rather than organizations as it had originally been.

Throughout the years the Conference had been interested in providing extra services for its members. It was limited in the number and kind of projects it could foster, however, since its source of revenue was limited. Although it wished to introduce more projects, it did not want to raise its membership dues. The only answer to this problem was to attract revenue from external sources. Consequently, the Conference decided to incorporate itself so that it would be capable of receiving gifts or grants from individuals and foundations. The incorporation became official on January 16, 1967.
Incorporation gave the Conference two other advantages. It provided a distinct legal structure which the Conference had not had before. And it strengthened the administrative organization of the Conference by establishing an elected Board of Directors as a central administrative body. The Board gave the Conference more continuity in its administration than it had ever had before.

In spite of all the advantages associated with incorporation, the Southwest Theatre Conference remains today much the same as it was before the incorporation. Its membership structure and its strategy for working toward its goal are basically unchanged. Two factors contribute to the retention of the status quo. First, although the administration has been strengthened, the administrators are still part-time. They must squeeze their Conference duties between their duties at the institutions where they work. No one works full time for the Conference, only once or twice a year. It is impossible for the Conference to encourage year-round activities without a year-round administrator. Second, the anticipated additional revenue has not materialized. Consequently the Conference can not finance any more projects than it did before and the annual convention remains its major project.

Finances

Financial support for the Conference came from the National Theatre Conference, convention host institutions, convention registration fees, and membership dues. The National Theatre Conference
contributed to establishing the Southwest Theatre Conference for its first four years. Host institutions supported the annual conventions out of their own resources or their community's. The Conference itself has levied membership dues and convention registration fees to support its activities.

Membership dues were the major source of Conference revenue over the years. The original executive committee established dues at $5.00 a year for organizations belonging to the Conference. Organization dues remained at this level until 1966 when they became $10.00 a year.

The Conference created individual membership in 1955 and set dues at $2.00 and $4.00 yearly. Individual dues did not, however, contribute substantially to the Conference's income since individual membership was not particularly attractive. Two factors contributing to this unpopularity were that individual membership carried no voting privileges and that membership was not required for convention attendance. The Conference changed its individual membership policy in 1961 eliminating both factors. It also set $3.00 as the only rate for individual dues. Two years later it raised dues to $5.00 yearly for individuals.

Student membership became a special form of Conference membership with dues set at $3.00 annually in 1966.

Originally the Conference did not set a definite convention registration fee. Each host charged what he deemed appropriate and sufficient. When the Conference established individual dues it also set registration fees at $3.00 for members. In 1959 during the membership decline and before membership was required for convention
attendance, the Conference increased the registration by $1.00. The increase did not provide additional funds for the convention but went into the general treasury in an attempt to compensate for the flagging membership. Two years later membership became a requirement for convention attendance. The Conference returned membership registration to the $3.00 level. In 1963 the Conference abolished the convention registration fee for members as a separate item and included it in the dues. Lowering the total sum paid by members represented an effort to attract more individual members.

The Conference established a student registration fee of $1.00 in 1955. It increased the fee by $0.50 when it increased the membership registration to provide additional funds for the general treasury. The $1.50 fee remained until 1966 when the Conference went full circle in its registration fee policy and no longer specified the fee for members or students attending the annual convention.

Income from dues and registration fees supported the Conference and its projects and services. Registration fees helped support the annual conventions. They contributed fully to the convention except in 1960 and 1961 when a portion was allocated for the general treasury. Dues were the only funds available to the Conference for purchasing general office supplies and financing projects other than the convention.

The Annual Convention

The annual convention was the primary means by which the Southwest Theatre Conference pursued the goal of improving theatre in its region.
Importance of the convention was evident in the fact that the choice of
collection sites and election of Conference presidents were interde-
pendent. The Conference established the custom of having the president
hold the annual gathering; as a result it was necessary to elect someone
from a city in which the Conference desired to convene. The president's
function was that of a convention program producer rather than an orga-
nization administrator.

The convention programs included four types of activities: general
sessions, special interest sessions, guest speakers, and theatrical
productions.

General sessions devoted their attention to subjects of interest
to all members of the Conference. Over the years subjects of the
general sessions have included acting, directing, playwriting and the
various elements of technical theatre. Other subjects have been theatre architecture, theatre business management and promotion.

Special interest sessions were devoted to subjects of limited interest and were usually scheduled concurrently. Sessions of interest to the community and educational theatres were regularly included on the programs. Frequently the program offered sessions for the high school and children's theatre interest groups also.

Guest speakers were a noteworthy attraction at many of the annual conventions. Besides prominent theatre experts from the Southwest region, many authorities from across the nation came to address the annual meetings. Among the speakers were educators Kenneth Macgowan, George Izanour, Sawyer Falk, Frederic McConnell, Lee Norvelle, Robert
Gard, Jack Morrison, Harold Taylor and Alvina Krause; playwrights Arthur Miller, George Hamlin, Howard Lindsay, William Saroyan, Anna Marie Barlow, and Tom Jones; designers Donald Oenslager, Abe Feder, Jo Mielziner, and Will Steven Armstrong; actors Douglas Campbell, Elizabeth Huddle, and Maria Douglas; directors Michael Saint-Denis, Harold Clurman, and Joseph Papp; critics and writers Barrett H. Clark, John Cassner, Rosamond Gilder, Henry Hewes, Norman Nadel and Walter Kerr.

Each convention provided some theatrical production for the entertainment and edification of the delegates. Most of the plays produced were by modern American and European playwrights. Original productions and premieres were of special interest. The following original plays were produced for the annual gatherings: Precious Land by Robert Whitehand, 1948; Cocklebur by Ramsey Yelvington, 1950; Phaedra by Joel Turner and Roland von Weber, 1951; Connecticut Halloween by Jonathan Bates, 1952; Shakespeare in Harlem, an adaptation of the works of Langston Hughes, 1955; The Lion's Cub by C. E. Colgate, 1958; The Cotton Pick by Drexel Riley and Go Fly a Kite by Ramsey Yelvington, 1963; Anybody and Anybody Else by William Saroyan, 1967. Delegates enjoyed the American premieres of Caligula by Albert Camus, 1949; Somebody by Ferenc Molnar, 1955; and Joan of Arc by Max Moll, 1961.

Quality of the yearly conventions varied over the years. Some programs were more interesting or better organized than others. Some variation was to be expected when different individuals were responsible for each yearly program. Another factor influencing the variety in
program quality was the financial resources of the host institution. A host institution with limited resources could not possibly provide the same calibre of program as a host with numerous resources. Most of the conventions, however, were rewarding for the delegates and fulfilled their purpose, to inspire the region's theatre people to improve their theatres.

Services

The Conference provided services for its members to maintain contact with them between annual conventions. It published Southwest Theatre Conference Bulletin from 1951 through 1953. The Bulletin concerned itself primarily with information and reports about the annual conventions. A more successful Conference attempt to communicate with its members began in 1955. The service was Southwest Theatre Topics, a newsletter. It contained information about the region's theatres and Conference activities. Some members hoped that Topics would become a professional journal like the Southeastern Theatre Conference's Southern Theatre. However many members feared that Topics would be engulfed by the larger journal. They preferred to retain Topics as a newsletter to keep the family of Southwestern theatres in touch during the year.

New Plays Library Service, established in 1963, provided Conference members a source for new plays. It read manuscripts and published synopses in its catalog. It distributed copies of plays to interested members for production. Unfortunately few members used the
library's service. The library was an excellent idea but it was unproductive because the Conference members did not use it.

In 1966 the Conference attempted to conduct an employment clinic as a service for both theatre employers and employees in the region. Unfortunately, registration for the clinic was so low that the Conference canceled it. This service was superfluous since national organizations such as the American Educational Theatre Association had placement services. These organizations also had a staff to administer such a service, whereas the Southwest Theatre Conference did not.

Projects

Projects to encourage and improve theatre in the Southwest were on the Conference agenda throughout the years. From the time it was first organized the Conference expressed an interest in encouraging and developing new playwrights. Consequently, a new plays contest was the first project initiated by the Conference. A committee screened manuscripts and forwarded them to a panel of New York judges. The judges, however, considered none of the plays worthy of production. Several Conference members felt it a mistake to have New York theatre people judge a play for the Southwest, but none of them offered to produce any of the plays submitted. The first project of the Conference was a dismal failure.

Several other projects were more successful. In 1957 the Conference passed a resolution supporting minimum standards for
theatre curricula on the college and junior college levels. It encouraged educational theatres in the region to be consistent with one another in their course offerings so that the quality of theatre education could be improved.

Formulation of a high school play selection policy in 1960 was another project. With this policy the Conference encouraged high schools and small drama groups to produce plays of better quality than the non-royalty ones flooding the market at that time.

A project to encourage training for community theatre workers met with some success. Summer workshops in community theatre were offered by Texas Women's University in 1963 and 1964. And Midland (Texas) Community Theatre initiated an intern program for community theatre directors in 1963.

Merit Awards

The Conference occasionally presented awards in recognition of exceptional service to theatre in the region. Recipients of the award were B. Iden Payne, University of Texas; Rupel Jones, University of Oklahoma; John Rosenfield, The Dallas Morning News; John Wray Young, Shreveport Little Theatre; Lucy Barton, University of Texas; Angus Springer, Southwestern University; Paul Baker, Dallas Theatre Center and Trinity University; Theodore Vlahman, Tulsa Little Theatre; and Nita Krupp, Amarillo Little Theatre.

Relations with Other Organizations

The Southwest Theatre Conference had direct relations with several
national organizations. It began as a regional satellite of the National Theatre Conference, which contributed financial aid for several years to help it get organized. Later it served as a rallying point when the American National Theatre and Academy called the National Theatre Assemblies to organize and develop a national theatre with government support as in Europe. It also served as a united front to encourage ANTA to be more concerned about theatre throughout the country rather than just Broadway.

The Conference enjoyed a relationship with Southeastern Theatre Conference. For several years the two conferences sent delegates to each other's conventions. A merger of Southwest Theatre Topics with Southern Theatre, journal of Southeastern Theatre Conference, was considered. The Southwest preferred to retain its own publication, however.

Relations with other organizations such as the American Educational Theatre Association and its subsidiaries, the American Community Theatre Association and the Children's Theatre Conference, were primarily indirect. Relationship existed because many SWTC members were also members of AETA, ACTA and CTC. Theatre people were very active in the Southwest region and in national theatre organizations also.

Perusal of lists of members and also of officers for these national organizations reveals the names of numerous Southwest theatre people.

Value of SWTC

The value of SWTC lies primarily in the achievement of its stated
purpose, "to share the results of our several experiences, researches, and knowledge and by such mutual interchange to improve the theatre in the Southwest Region." In advancing its purpose, the Conference fostered conditions which contributed to the growth of theatre in the region. It helped theatre workers increase their competency and thereby improve production standards. It encouraged the establishment and growth of both educational and community theatres by passing on to the younger theatres knowledge acquired by the older ones. A result of the Conference's activities was the development of an audience for live theatre in the Southwest.

The Conference served as a channel through which the region's theatres maintained contact with each other and also with theatrical developments around the country. Annual conventions provided opportunities for personal contact among regional theatre people. Conventions also provided contact with national theatre activities by presenting prominent guest speakers from other areas of the country.

Community theatres of the Southwest owe an extra debt to SWTC. At the time of its founding in 1948, the Conference was the only organization to which community theatres could turn for mutual support and encouragement. The educational theatres had the American Educational Theatre Association since 1936 but community theatres had no national organization until 1958 when the American Community Theatre Association was founded. During the ten years between 1948 and 1958, the Conference was the only organization which encouraged community theatre development in the Southwest.
No scholarly journal evolved from the Conference's publications. Several members considered this fact a weakness of the Conference. This was not necessarily the case. Several journals existed for publishing scholarly works without the Conference adding to the list. Members eager to publish found sufficient outlets in the journals of national organizations.

Major work of the Conference was the annual convention to which theatre people of the Southwest come to renew acquaintances and make new friends and to be inspired and encouraged to return home and create quality theatre.

SWTC's Place in American Theatre

During the 1950's and 1960's, the American theatre experienced the advanced stages of a movement to decentralize major theatre activities from Broadway and recognize the importance of other theatre centers. The Off-Broadway movement began in the late 1940's and grew during the 1950's. Outside of New York, resident theatre companies made a second start and developed gradually during the 1950's to burst into great activity during the 1960's.

1 The purpose of this study is not to trace the development of theatre throughout the nation but to understand the development of Southwest Theatre Conference. For detailed discussions of theatre on the national level, the reader is referred to such histories as the following: Howard Tubman, The American Theatre (New York, 1967); Emory Lewis, Stages, The Fifty-Year Childhood of the American Theatre (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1969); Jack Poggi, Theatre in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870 - 1967 (Ithaca, N.Y. 1968); Robert E. Gard and Gertrude S. Burley, Community Theatre, Idea and Achievement (New York, 1959).
While SWTC could not claim credit for influencing the revival of resident professional companies in the late 1940's, the pioneers in this movement were from the Southwest. Margo Jones founded her Theatre in Dallas, Texas, during 1947. Nina Vance founded the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas, the same year. Other companies around the country followed the lead of these two theatres during the 1950's. That the Alley and Margo Jones' Theatre found audiences and developed into substantial professional theatres was a credit to the theatrical climate fostered by SWTC.

During the decline of Broadway in the early 1950's, the commercial theatre selfishly viewed the growing regional theatre as a "tributary theatre: that is, a theatre which pours talent and ideas into the professional theatre." The regional theatre, however, felt no duty to help the commercial theatre when it was failing, since Broadway had offered no assistance to the regional theatre when it was developing. Regional theatre grew without the aid of Broadway and in some cases in spite of hindrances imposed by Broadway. The commercial theatre soon recognized the separate existence of the regional theatre.

With the growth of regional theatre came the philosophy that the true national theatre should include all areas of the country, not just Broadway. The American National Theatre and Academy, the Congressionally chartered national theatre organization, however, focused its attention on developing Broadway into a national theatre. SWTC attempted to influence ANTA's thinking by urging its members to withhold dues from ANTA until it gave evidence of a broader concept of a
national theatre. ANTA did broaden its concept but unfortunately it did not have the funds or staff for projects to expand regional activity.

As Broadway declined, the regional theatres, both professional and non-professional, assumed a greater responsibility in developing a national theatre representative of the entire country. SWTC, by fostering the growth of educational and community theatres in the Southwest, helped prepare the theatres for the roles they eventually accepted.

Future Directions

Southwest Theatre Conference began as an annual activity. It remains basically that today, despite numerous attempts over the years to make it a year-round organization. Two factors have influenced the retention of this characteristic.

First, no great need exists for the Conference to be anything else as long as other organizations like the American Theatre Association continue to function as they are.

Second, a permanent, full-time staff is necessary for the Conference to sustain activities throughout the year. Since no indication exists that the Conference intends to hire a staff to administer expanded activities, it is unlikely that the status quo will change.

The Conference will probably remain the type of organization it has been for over two decades. It will continue to provide annual conventions at which theatre people can be inspired to improve their work and provide quality theatre for the people of the Southwest.
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_______. To "Co-Workers" concerning 1938 conference, February 5, 1938.


_______. To Ben Henneke, May 11, 1949.

_______. To Claude Shaver, October 12, 1949.


Klewer, Leonore. To Rupel Jones, October 17, 1949.

Lippman, Monroe. To author, August 20, 1970.


Magruder, Preston. To author, August 31, 1970.

McConnell, Frederick, To Falk and Letham, December 13, 1947.


Miller, James H. To author, July 9, 1970.


Salek, Joe. To author, April 28, 1970.

Selden, Samuel. To Rupel Jones, October 7, 1948.


Shaver, Claude. To Waldo Braden, July 12, 1968.
To Don Clark, September 6, 1968.
To Greadna Doty, August 8, 1968.
To Miss Elizabeth Halbert, November 12, 1963.
Telford, Robert S. To author, August 30, 1971.
Whiting, H. Neil. To author, n.d.
Winship, Loren. To author, n.d.
To Planning Committee, April 15, 1959.
September 17, 1971.
To Miss Ernst, September 3, 1948.

Interviews

Clark, F. Donald. Personal interview, Norman, Oklahoma, June 19, 1970.
Hobgood, Burnet. Personal interview, Lubbock, Texas, October 31, 1970.
Jones, Mrs. Rupel. Telephone interview, June 20, 1970.


Young, John Wray. Personal interview, Shreveport, La., April 11, 1970.
APPENDIX
### Officers of the Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice-presidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Rupel Jones (Univ. of Oklahoma)</td>
<td>John Wary Young (Shreveport Little Theatre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Paul Baker (Baylor Univ.)</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Walther Volbach (Texas Christian Univ.)</td>
<td>Theodore Viehman (Tulsa Little Theatre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>John Wray Young (Shreveport Little Theatre)(Univ. of Arkansas)</td>
<td>Virgil L. Baker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1953 | Virgil L. Baker (Univ. of Arkansas) | 1st. - Monroe Lippman (Tulane Univ.)  
2nd. - John Rosenfield (Dallas Morning News) |
| 1954 | Monroe Lippman (Tulane Univ.) | 1st. - David Russell (Southern Methodist Univ.)  
2nd. - James H. Miller (Univ. of New Mexico) |
| 1955 | *Ramsey Burch (Margo Jones Theatre '55) John Rosenfield (Dallas Morning News) | 1st. - Claude Shaver (Louisiana State Univ.)  
2nd. - James H. Miller (Univ. of New Mexico) |
| 1956 | Loren Winship (Univ. of Texas) | 1st. - Theodore Viehman (Tulsa Little Theatre)  
2nd. - Elroy Fulmer (New Orleans Little Theatre) |
| 1957 | Theodore Viehman (Tulsa Little Theatre) | 1st. - Oma Link Rowley (Amarillo Little Theatre)  
2nd. - R. Lyle Hagan (Eastern New Mexico Univ.) |

* For a discussion of this election see "An Irregular Election," Chapter IV.
Southwest Theatre Conference

Secretary

Ben Henneke  
(Tulsa Univ.)

Walther Volbach  
(Texas Christian Univ.)

Edwin Snapp  
(Univ. of New Mexico)

John Rosenfield  
(Dallas Morning News)

Mrs. Theodore Viehman  
(Tulsa Little Theatre)

M. Blair Hart  
(Univ. of Arkansas)

Treasurer

Paul Baker  
(Baylor Univ.)

Laurence Mortensen  
(Univ. of Oklahoma)

James H. Miller  
(Univ. of New Mexico)

Charles Suggs  
(Univ. of Oklahoma)

Mrs. Maydelle Jones  
(Mayde Mack Mummers,  
Oklahoma City, Okla.)

Preston Magruder  
(Univ. of Arkansas)

Tom Headley  
(Henderson State Teachers  
Col., Archadelphia, Ark.)

R. Lyle Hagan  
(Eastern New Mexico Univ.)

Exec. – Angus Springer  
(Southwestern Univ.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>+Oma Link Rowley</td>
<td>1st. - Joe Salek</td>
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<td>(Amarillo Little Theatre)</td>
<td>(San Antonio Little Theatre)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>R. Lyle Hagan</td>
<td>2nd. - Ethel Crumb Brett</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Eastern New Mexico Univ.)</td>
<td>(Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre, N. O., La.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Joe Salek</td>
<td>1st. - Lee Edwards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(San Antonio Little Theatre)</td>
<td>(Baton Rouge Little Theatre)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2nd. - M. Balir Hart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Univ. of Arkansas)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Lee Edwards</td>
<td>1st. - Francis Prinz</td>
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<td>(Baton Rouge Little Theatre)</td>
<td>(Greater Ft. Worth Com. Th.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd. - Angus Springer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Southwestern Univ.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Francis Prinz</td>
<td>1st. - F. Donald Clark</td>
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<td>(Greater Ft. Worth Com. Th.)</td>
<td>(Univ. of Oklahoma)</td>
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<td>2nd. - Art Cole</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>F. Donald Clark</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Univ. of Oklahoma)</td>
<td>(Southwestern Univ.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2nd. - Robert Tobin</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td>Angus Springer</td>
<td>1st. - Preston Magruder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Southwestern Univ.)</td>
<td>(Univ. of Arkansas)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2nd. - Jennie Louise Hindman</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>Preston Magruder</td>
<td>1st. - Stocker Fontelieu</td>
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<td>(Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2nd. - Jeanne A. Wray</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(Ada Community Theatre)</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>Art Cole</td>
<td>1st. - Burnet Hobgood</td>
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<td>(Midland Com. Th.)</td>
<td>(Southern Methodist Univ.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd. - Richard O'Connell</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(New Mexico Highlands Univ.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Conference elected co-presidents.
Secretary

Baa Hanel  
(Oklahoma City)

Nita Krupp  
(Amarillo Little Theatre)

Nita Krupp  
(Amarillo Little Theatre)

Treasurer

Tom Headley  
(Henderson State Teachers Col. 
Archadelpia, Ark.)

Ruth M. Owings  
(Pan-American College)

Stocker Fontelieu  
(Gallery Circle Theatre, N.O., La.)

Stocker Fontelieu  
(Le Petit Theatre du Vieux 
Carre, N.O., La.)

Angus Springer  
(Southwestern Univ.)

Molly Furrata  
(Baton Rouge Little Theatre)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice-presidents</th>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Burnet Hobgood (SMU)</td>
<td>1st. - Richard O'Connell (NMHU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd. - Bill Crawford (LMTC)</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>Richard O'Connell (NMHU)</td>
<td>Nat Eek (OU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Claude Shaver (LSU)</td>
<td>1st. - Nat Eek (OU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd. - Stocker Fontelieu (LPVTC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Stocker Fontelieu (LPVTC)</td>
<td>1st. - James Barton (SWTSTU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd. - Turner Edge (OU)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secretary

Executive Secty-Treas.

Treasurer

William Shapard
(Southern Methodist Univ.)

Theatre Conference, Inc.

James Baines
(Arkansas Arts Center)

James Baines

Margaret H. Glenn
(Amarillo Little Theatre)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWTC, Inc.</th>
<th>Board Members</th>
<th>Term Expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Marilyn Pool (Amarillo, Texas) Amarillo L.T.</td>
<td>1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>* John Wray Young (Shreveport, La.) Shreveport L.T.</td>
<td>1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Burnet Hobgood (Dallas, Texas) Southern Methodist Univ.</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<td>* William Crawford (Lawton, Okla.) Lawton Constitution</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Ruth Denny (Houston, Texas) Houston Ind. School District</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Moore (Canyon, Texas) West Texas State University</td>
<td>1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hershel Zohn (Las Cruces, N.M.) N.M. State University</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Telford (Fort Worth, Texas) Wm. E. Scott Theatre</td>
<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur Stone (Ruston, La.) La. Polytechnic Institution</td>
<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>August Staub (New Orleans, La.) La. State Univ. in N.O.</td>
<td>1972</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Lyle Hagan (Portales, N.M.) Eastern N.M. University</td>
<td>1972</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Original Board in 1967.
APPENDIX B

CONSTITUTION FOR THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE.

Adopted at the 1955 Convention.

ARTICLE I.
The name of this organization shall be Southwest Theatre Conference, abbreviated SWTC.

ARTICLE II.
The purpose of the Southwest Theatre Conference shall be to share results of our several experiences, researches, and knowledge, and by such mutual interchange, to improve the theatre in the Southwest.

ARTICLE III.
Membership shall be open to those organizations and individuals actively engaged in theatre, and laymen interested in theatre promotion, throughout the five state area: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Membership may be extended beyond the boundary of those states for individual or groups who can best be served through SWTC.

ARTICLE IV.
The elected officers of the organization shall be a president, first and second vice-presidents, secretary, and a treasurer. An executive secretary shall be appointed by the executive committee, and shall be a member of the organization.

ARTICLE V.
The executive committee shall consist of the elected officers, the executive secretary and two past presidents who will be appointed by the president.

ARTICLE VI.
Time of the annual meeting shall be determined by the host organization for that year and approved by the executive committee. The preferred time shall be late October or early November. The time and place of the meeting shall be announced to members at least six months in advance of the meeting date.

ARTICLE VII.
This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting on written notice to members thirty days prior to time of meeting. Amendments shall require a 2/3 affirmative vote of all legal votes cast.

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THE BY-LAWS OF THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE

1. These by-laws may be changed at any annual meeting by a 2/3 affirmative vote of all legal votes cast.

2. The nominating committee shall consist of the three immediate past presidents and two other members elected at the annual conference. The last immediate past president will serve as chairman.

3. The annual dues of the organization will be as follows:
   $5.00 Organization Membership includes all summary and printed materials and voting privileges.
   $4.00 Individual membership includes all summary and printed materials, but no voting privileges.
   $2.00 Individual Membership, no materials, no vote.

The annual conference registration fees will be as follows:
   $3.00 Registration fee for all members attending the conference.
   $1.00 Registration fee for all students attending the conference.

4. The president may call a special planning session to include generally the officers and such other members as may be important in planning an effective program. All who attend this session will constitute the steering committee for the year's program and will be reimbursed at six cents a mile for travel expenses to the planning session.
APPENDIX C

CONSTITUTION FOR THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE

Adopted at the 1961 Convention

ARTICLE I.

The name of this organization shall be Southwest Theatre Conference.

ARTICLE II.

The purpose of the Southwest Theatre Conference shall be to share results of our several experiences, researches, and knowledge, and by such mutual interchange, to improve the theatre in the Southwest.

ARTICLE III.

Membership shall be open to those organizations and individuals actively engaged in theatre, and laymen interested in theatre production, throughout the five state area: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Membership may be extended beyond the boundary of those states for individuals or groups who can best be served through SWTC.

ARTICLE IV.

The elected officers of the organization shall be:

   a) A President, for a term of one year; b) a First Vice President, for a term of one year; c) a Second Vice President, for a term of one year; d) an Executive Secretary, for a term of one year; e) a Treasurer, for a term of one year; f) an Historian to be elected by the executive committee.

ARTICLE V.

The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

A. The President shall:

   1. Preside over all meetings of the organization;
   2. Call and preside over meetings of the Executive Committee;
   3. Appoint committees except those for which other provisions are made by the constitution and by-laws;
   4. Delegate such responsibilities as he sees fit where such delegation is to the best interests of the Conference;
   5. Represent the Conference in dealings with other organizations;
   6. Perform other such duties as pertain to the office of President.

B. The First Vice President shall:
1. Assist the President, and perform the President's duties in case of the latter's disability or absence;
2. Prepare and administer the program of the annual convention in cooperation with the host organization.

C. The Second Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President and First Vice President and perform the duties of the First Vice President in cases of the latter's disability or absence;
2. Maintain liaison with other regional theatre organizations;
3. Plan and execute membership promotion;

D. The Executive Secretary shall:

1. Be directly responsible to the president;
2. Serve as Secretary to the committees which pertain to the administrative functions of the Conference;
3. Keep and file all minutes of administrative committees;
4. Perform the usual duties pertaining to the office of secretary.

E. The Treasurer shall:

1. Collect membership dues;
2. Keep and file all financial records;
4. Perform such other duties as pertain to the office of Treasurer.

F. The Historian shall keep all records pertaining to the organization.

ARTICLE VI.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers and two past presidents who will be appointed by the President.

ARTICLE VII.

Time of the annual meeting shall be determined by the host organization for that year and approved by the Executive Committee. The preferred time shall be late October or early November. The time and place of the meeting shall be announced to members at least six months in advance of the meeting date.

ARTICLE VIII.

This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting on written notice to members thirty days prior to time of meeting. Amendments shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of all legal votes cast.
BY-LAWS OF THE SOUTHWEST THEATRE CONFERENCE

1.

These by-laws may be changed at any annual meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of all legal votes cast.

2.

A Planning Committee shall be established, the duties of which will be to take up matters not already delegated by the Constitution to other committees. The Planning Committee shall be composed of: 1) five immediately past Presidents, 2) five members of the Conference, not past Presidents, who shall be nominated and elected by the Conference at its annual business meeting, and who shall serve for a term of one year, and 3) the President of the Conference, who shall be an ex-officio and voting member of the committee.

The Nominating Committee, which shall be a sub-committee of the Planning Committee, shall consider with the President those matters which pertain to the nomination of officers. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of: 1) the three immediately past Presidents, and 2) two members of the Conference elected at large, who will be in addition to the two delegates-at-large chosen for the Planning Committee. The membership of the Conference shall be informed of the Nominating Committee's slate no later than thirty days prior to the opening date of the annual Conference.

3.

The annual dues of the organization will be as follows:

$5.00 Organization membership includes all summary and printed materials and voting privileges.

$3.00 Individual membership includes all summary and printed materials for the next Conference year and entitles the individual member to one vote. Everyone attending the annual Conference and not covered by the organization membership, must hold an individual membership.

The annual conference registration fees will be as follows:

$3.00 Registration fee for all members attending the Conference.

$1.50 Registration fee for all students attending the Conference.

$3.00 The sum total of the member's registration fee will go to the host city for the annual convention.
$1.00 of the student registration fee will go to the host city and 50 cents to the treasury of the SWTC.

4.

The President may call a special planning session including generally the officers and such other members as may be important in planning an effective program. All who attend this session will constitute the steering committee for the year's program and will be reimbursed for travel expenses to the planning session.
SWTC RESOLUTION CONCERNING
ANTA

The members of the Southwest Theatre Conference during their annual business meeting at T.C.U., Fort Worth, Texas, during October 26, 27, 28, 1951 after due consideration and consultation voted with one exception to take the following action. Be it resolved that:

1. The Southwest Theatre Conference earnestly requests all cooperate members of ANTA in this Southwest region to place dues due ANTA for 1952 in the hands of the Southwest Theatre Conference treasurer to be held in escrow until the ANTA Board of Directors has made clear the philosophy in its direct relationship to the Southwest region and its specific objectives for this area.

2. That a committee of three be appointed to represent the Southwest Theatre Conference in their relationship with ANTA.

3. That if the committee believes further action need be taken before our next conference meeting that the committee submit recommended action by mail to the Southwest Theatre Conference members for their vote.

4. That before final action be taken by the Southwest Theatre Conference Committee, the individual ANTA member shall reserve the right to withdraw from the action recommended by the Southwest Theatre Conference Committee.

Enclosed is an application for membership into ANTA. Each person wishing membership in ANTA is urged to fill in the blank and forward the blank with their money to James Miller, Department of Drama, University Theatre, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mr. Miller is the treasurer for Southwest Theatre Conference and will hold all the dues from this region in escrow until our committee made up of Mr. John Rosenfield, Dallas Morning News, Prof. Edward Snapp, Chairman, Department of Drama, University of New Mexico, and Prof. Rupel Jones, Chairman, Department of Drama, University of Oklahoma have had time to ask for clarification of ANTA’s philosophy in its direct relationship to the Southwest region. The officers and board of directors of the Southwest Theatre Conference urgently request each person receiving this brochure to become a member in ANTA. If everyone receiving this brochure will place at least the individual membership fee in the hands of Mr. Miller the dues will amount to $3,500 - $5,000.
The above resolution and action was taken in the spirit of good will, hoping that by this action much of the muddled thinking and planning which has emanated from the headquarters of ANTA in New York City will be clarified, given direction and vision. The Southwest Theatre Conference has an alive theatre and makes a great contribution to theatre in the United States. Its vision and its ideals for theatre are not regional: they are national and international. We sincerely hope that a truly national theatre will emerge which we can respect and support. We have adopted the above resolution in hope that it will stimulate quick action with the national headquarters.
APPENDIX E

GUEST SPEAKERS FROM OUTSIDE THE SOUTHWEST REGION

1948:
George Freedley, New York critic and authro. "The Theatre Swallowed a Tapeworm."
Kenneth Macgowan, University of California at Los Angeles. "The Motion Pictures and Radio as Extensions of Theatre Arts."

1949:
Barrett H. Clark, Dramatists' Play Service. "The National Theatre We Make."
Sawyer Falk, Syracuse University and president of National Theatre Conference. "From Regional to National Theatre."
Robert Gard, University of Wisconsin. "Wisconsin Idea Theatre."

1950:
Barclay Leatham, Western Reserve University. "Growth of the Off-Broadway Theatre in America."
Reynold Arnould, Paris Opera Comique. "Theatre Design in France."

1951:

1952:
Henry Schnitzler, University of California at Los Angeles.

1953:
Arthur Miller, Playwright.

1954:
Rosamond Gilder, Theatre author and editor. "Theatre National and International."

1955:
Frederic McConnell, Cleveland Playhouse. "Community Theatre."
George Hamlin, New Dramatist's Committee.
William Swire, American National Theatre and Academy.

1956:
Thomas M. Patterson, University of North Carolina. "The Southeast Theatre Conference - Work in Progress."
1957:
Howard Lindsay, Playwright and Actor. "From One Player to Some Others."
Lee Norvelle, Indiana University and president of National Theatre
Conference. "The Functions of a Theatre in a Democracy."

1958:
None.

1959:
Michael Saint-Denis, European theatre director. "English and French
Theatre at Their Best."

1960:
Mrs. H. Alwyn Innes-Brown, American National Theatre and Academy.
"The Arts in International Understanding."
Henry Hewes, The Saturday Review. "How Real Should Theatre Be?"

1961:
Rosamond Gilder, American National Theatre and Academy. "The
Theatre in the World Today."
"The Theatre in Austria Today."

1962:
Harold Clurman, New York director-producer-critic. "Thoughts on
Directing."
Martin Tahse, New York producer. "Road shows."

1963:
Harold Clurman, New York director-producer-critic. "The Challenge of
the New American Theatre."
Abe Feder, New York designer. "The Art of Stage Lighting - How Far
Automation?"

1965:
Douglas Campbell, Artistic Director of Tyrone Guthrie Theatre.
Jack Morrison, Theatre Specialist, Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare.

1966:
Norman Nadel, New York World Journal Tribune. "Theatre's Interrela-
tions."
Michael I. Campus, CBS Television, New York. "Quality Drama on
Television."

1967:
Harold Clurman, New York director-producer-critic. "Contemporary
American and European Theatre."
David H. Ayers, Ohio State University. "American Playwrights' Theatre."
Maria Douglas, Mexican tragedienne. "The Mexican Theatre."
Elizabeth Huddle, American actress. "Acting in Brecht."

1968:
Will Steven Armstrong, New York designer. "Is There A New York Scene?"
Anna Marie Barlow, New York playwright. "Playwriting, Or How To Hang by Your Thumbs While Balancing the World."
Alvina Krause, Northwestern University. "Personal Perspective."

1969:
Tom Jones, Playwright. "Ritual Theatre."
APPENDIX F

PRODUCTIONS AT ANNUAL CONVENTIONS

Original Productions

1948:
Robert Whitehand, Precious Land. Univ. of Oklahoma.

1950:
Ramsey Yelvington, Cocklebur. Baylor Univ.

1951:

1952:

1955:
Robert Glenn's adaptation of works of Langston Hughes, Shakespeare in Harlem. Roundup Theatre.

1958:

1963:
Ramsey Yelvington, Go Fly A Kite. Southwest Texas State College.

1967:
William Saroyan, Anybody and Anybody Else. New Mexico State Univ.

1969:
La Raza Pura. St. Mary's Univ., San Antonio, Texas.

American Premieres

1949:
Albert Camus, Caligula. Univ. of Oklahoma.

1955:
Ferenc Molnar, Somabody. Margo Jones Theatre '55.

1961:
Max Mell, Joan of Arc. Texas Christian Univ.
Other Productions

1953:
Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*. Univ. of Arkansas.

1954:
Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*. Tulane Univ.

1955:
Gian-Carlo Menotti, *Saint of Bleeker St*. SMU Opera Workshop.*

1956:
Ladislas Fodor, *The Vigil*. Southwestern Univ.

1957:
Marc Connelly & George S. Kaufman, *Beggar on Horseback*. Tulsa Univ.

1958:

1959:

1960:

1961:

1962:

* Music productions.
+ Children's Theatre productions.
1964:
Carlo Goldoni, *The Servant of Two Masters*. Univ. of Arkansas.

1965:

1966:
Edward Albee, *Tiny Alice*. Kalita Humphreys Theatre.

1967:

1968:

1969:
George Herman, *The Company of Wayward Saints*. Fox Technical School.
+Alice In Wonderland*. San Antonio College.

+ Children's Theatre productions.
* Music productions.
VITA

William Patrick Harrigan III was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on August 2, 1934. He is married to Evelyn Marie Lagattuta and has three daughters: Kelli, Patti, and Lesli.

Harrigan displayed an early interest in theatre. He produced and directed several puppet shows for the New Orleans Public Library and participated in high school dramatics. At Loyola University in New Orleans he majored in speech education with music as a second teaching field. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree in scene design and technical direction from Tulane University in 1960 and began work toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge during the summer of 1966.

He began a teaching career in the educational theatre at Lamar State College of Technology, Beaumont, Texas (1960-1962). He taught speech and theatre at Louisiana State University in New Orleans (1962-1966), Loyola University, New Orleans (1967-1968), and St. Bernard Junior College, Chalmette, Louisiana (1968-1969). In the fall of 1969 he returned to Lamar in Beaumont, Texas, where he is an assistant professor of speech.
Candidate:  William Patrick Harrigan III

Major Field:  Speech

Title of Thesis:  A History of the Southwest Theatre Conference

Approved:

[Signatures]

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

May 12, 1972