

Archives & Manuscript Collections  
National Sporting Library  
Middleburg, VA

**Ellen B. Wells  
Papers  
c1930-1992**

Name: **Wells, Ellen B. (c1935-1995)** **MC0028**

Materials: Papers

Dates: c1930-1992 (bulk dates 1979-1992)

Volume: 0.5 cubic feet

Donation: Bequest of Ellen B. Wells, c1995

Usage: Unless otherwise stated by NSL staff, these records are open for research without restrictions.

**Biographical Note**

Ellen Baker Wells was born in Berlin around 1935, but spent her childhood in Ithaca, New York. She graduated from Oklahoma State University and earned two master's degrees, one in library science from the University of California at Berkeley and one in history from McGill University in Montreal. Wells then embarked upon an extensive career in the library field; her career took her to posts at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland, the Osler Library of the History of Medicine at McGill University, the Cornell University Library in Ithaca, and the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, where she was the head of the Special Collections Department. There she oversaw the Libraries' most important books, including the collection in the Dibner Library in the History of Science. She served as curator for a number of exhibitions at the National Museum of American History.

Wells wrote extensively on the horse, its history and bibliography. She authored *Horsemanship: A Bibliography of Printed Materials from the Sixteenth Century Through 1974*, which has become a standard reference work for those studying the literature of horsemanship. She also co-wrote the 1989 book *The Annotated Black Beauty* with Anne Grimshaw, and contributed a number of articles to the *National Sporting Library Newsletter*, including an overview of the acquisition of the von Hunersdorf Collection in 1993. Wells' bibliography, which took more than twenty years to complete, illustrated her lifelong pursuit of and passion for rare horse books.

Her knowledge of the field and her library background made her an asset to the National Sporting Library's board of directors, of which she was a member from 1987 until her death on April 2, 1995 of cancer.

### Collection Description

The Ellen B. Wells Papers have been arranged into two series: Correspondence and Publication Announcements. The first is comprised of letters written to and by Wells during her work on a series of bibliographies on various subjects published by Garland Publishing (the publishers of her horse bibliography). The second series, Publication Announcements, consists of printed announcements for books on equestrian topics published between 1930 and 1991.

### Series and Subseries

- I. Correspondence, 1979-1992** **7 folders**  
Seven folders of correspondence written by and to Wells as a member of the editorial board for a series of bibliographies on many subjects produced by Garland Publishing. The materials are arranged alphabetically by correspondent.
- II. Publication Announcements, c1930-1991** **9 folders**  
**Printed pamphlets, announcements, advertisements, and catalogs of works on equestrian topics that Wells gathered as part of her research for her bibliography. The materials are arranged chronologically.**
- III. "Gait Analysis," 1995** **2 folders**  
Draft writings on equine locomotion and gait analysis; Wells was working on this project when she died in 1995. This project was intended for publication through the Archives of Natural History, and one folder includes photos and illustrations for inclusion as illustration for the publication. This series donated by Robin Bledsoe, March 12, 2014.

### Container List

MC0028

**I. Correspondence, 1979-1992**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
J29	01	Darnell, Regna	1986-1989
J29	02	Deacon, Margaret	1986-1991
J29	03	Jayawadrene, S. A.	1983-1992
J29	04	Leahey, Thomas	1986-1991
J29	05	Parrow, Brown, and Garland Publishing	1979-1983
J29	06	Rothenberg, M. and Garland Publishing	1979-1986
J29	07	Miscellaneous	1986-1989

**II. Publication Announcements, c1930-1991**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
J29	08-13	Book announcements	c1930-1988
J29	14-16	Book announcements	1989-1991

**III. "Gait Analysis," 1995.**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
J29	17	Draft text of "Gait Analysis"	1995
J29	18	Draft illustrations for "Gait Analysis"	1995

This collection was processed by Michele M. Tourney, July 2004. Series III added by John Connolly, February 2017.