

MS-14 Gresham Correspondence Collection MS-14

Gresham Correspondence Collection
1901-1984

Title Statement

MS-14 Gresham Correspondence Collection MS-14

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Profile Description

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2023 Updated subject terms. Revised by Elena Solé Rodríguez.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS-14

Unit ID

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Unit Date

1901-1984

Language

English

Abstract

The Gresham Correspondence Collection consists of a variety of correspondence between William Gresham and several poets, authors, and playwrights. The majority of the correspondence is invitations, made by Gresham, to speak and read for the Poetry Society of Virginia. The collection contains two booklets, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and a poem written by Gresham entitled Dewey Beach. The majority of the collection was found within the multitude of books that Gresham owned. Many of these books, including signed and first edition copies, are housed in the Galvin Rare Book Room in Boatwright Memorial Library.

Creator

Dew Gresham, William, 1925-1986

Creator

Gresham family

Extent

.25 Linear Feet

Repository

University of Richmond

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

William Dew Gresham's family donated the collection after his passing.

Processing Information

Due to deterioration of the newspaper clipping in Series I, File 2, the original clipping was discarded and has been replaced by a photocopied version.

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Preferred Citation

[Box Number, Folder Number], MS-14, Gresham Correspondence Collection, Book Arts, Archives, & Rare Books, Boatwright Memorial Library, University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

William Dew Gresham (1925-1986) was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. He received his Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from University of Richmond in 1948 and went on to receive a degree in Divinity from Harvard in 1952 and a degree in Library Science from Columbia in 1955. In 1956, Gresham was an assistant librarian in the Boatwright Memorial Library. During his time at the library, Gresham founded a literature society entitled Great Books of Richmond. Gresham moved to Wilmington, Delaware, working in the field of public education from 1959-1985. Public education suited Gresham, as he loved to share what he learned from his wide variety of books, plays, travels, and lectures that he attended. Gresham was a voracious reader who felt that books were the best way to record history, culture, and traditions. His taste in books included literature, poetry, non-fiction, travel, and history. He also enjoyed books written by authors around the world, most notably Greek, Russian, French, and Spanish. Boatwright Memorial Library has a significant collection of his books that were donated by Gresham's family upon his passing. Among these books are first editions and signed copies, many of which are both. Included in these books are several written by the poets represented in the Gresham Correspondence Collection: Enid Starkie's *Arthur Rimbaud*, *Andre Gide*, and *Baudelaire*; John Gassner's *The Theater in Our Times* and *Masters of the Drama*; W.H. Auden's *The Collected Poetry of W.H. Auden*, *The Shield of Achilles*, *Nones*, and *The Age of Anxiety*; Marianne Moore's *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*; Muriel Rukeyser's *Selected Poems*; and W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood's *Journey to a War*. In addition to the many books donated, the family also donated Gresham's collection of incunabula leaves (see MS-11 Gresham Incunabula Leaves Collection).

Enid Starkie (1897-1970) was born in Ireland and studied in both Ireland and England. She was an author of biographies and taught modern languages at the University of Oxford, University of Exeter, and Hollins College (now Hollins University).

John Gassner (1903-1967) was born in Hungary and lived in New York. He attended Columbia University, receiving his Masters. He taught at Labor Temple School (1925-1927), Columbia University, Hunter College (1928-1945), and Bryn Mawr College (1941-1943). Gassner was a playwright and wrote for several magazines, including the *New York Times Book Review*.

Wystan Hugh Auden – better known as W.H. Auden – (1907-1973) was from England and emigrated to the United States during WWII (1939). He was a playwright and an author of poetry. Most of his poems were of a political and moral nature. During the Spanish Civil War, Auden spent time in Spain writing. Auden graduated from Oxford in 1928 and married Erika Mann in 1935 to protect her from the Nazi's. Mann stayed behind when Auden emigrated to the United States; the pair never divorced and remained friends. Auden wrote a few plays with Chester Kallman – his lifelong companion. Auden taught poetry at Oxford University from 1956-1961. In 1948, Auden won a Pulitzer Prize for *The Age of Anxiety*; the Gresham family donated a signed copy.

May Sarton (1912-1995) was a poet and author of novels. She is known for her interest in feminism and sexuality, which transfers to her writing. Sarton was born in Belgium, but in 1914, the family fled to England due to WWI. In 1918, the family emigrated to the United States where Sarton remained. The theater was Sarton's first love; after acting for a small New York theater, she ran her own theater company, but had to

take on extra work to keep the theater's finances in the black. She began writing literary reviews specifically about theater, but dabbled in poetry as well. She briefly wrote documentary scripts for the United States Office of War Information. During the 1930s, she taught at Stuart School in Boston and from 1950-1953 she taught composition at Harvard University.

Barbara Guest (1920-2006) was an American poet and playwright. In addition, Guest also wrote art reviews for magazines, such as *Art News* and *Art in America*. Guest graduated from the University of California, at Berkeley and lived in New York. Among the awards Guest won during her lifetime, include the Lawrence Lipton Award for Literature (1990) and the Robert Frost Medal for Distinguished Lifetime Achievement from Poetry Society of America (1999).

Marianne Moore (1887-1972) was an American poet known for her diverse writings. Moore grew up in the Midwest and graduated from Bryn Mawr in 1909. She lived in New York with her mother throughout her life. The literary community viewed her as an "auntie figure" and a mentor. During her lifetime, Moore won many awards: Levinson Prize from Poetry Magazine (1932), Pulitzer Prize for Collected Poems (1951), and gold medals from Poetry Society of America (1960 & 1967).

Muriel Rukeyser (1913-1980) was an American poet and political activist. She attended school at Vassar College from 1930-1932, but did not graduate. Upon her departure from Vassar, Rukeyser started the journal *Student Review* with three other women. In 1933, Rukeyser travelled to Alabama to cover the Scottsboro, Alabama, trial of nine African-American boys who were accused of raping two white females, but Rukeyser was detained during the trial. In 1936, she went to Spain to cover an athletic competition; however, by the time she arrived, the Spanish Civil War had begun and Rukeyser began working for the medical bureau in Spain. Rukeyser was frequently involved with political activism and was an advocate against inhumanity. She taught at Sarah Lawrence College in 1946 and 1956-1967. She spoke several languages, including French, Spanish, Swedish, and Italian and enjoyed translating poems in these languages. Among her many awards are the Oscar Blumethal Prize in poetry (1940), Harriet Monroe Poetry Award (1941), and the Levinson Prize in poetry (1947). Paul Duke (1926-2005) graduated from University of Richmond in 1947. He was a classmate of William Dew Gresham's. Duke wrote a sports column during his time at the university. Duke is best known for his time on the television program *Washington Week in Review* where he worked for twenty years. During his time on the show, Duke was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame (1992).

Paul Duke (1926-2005) graduated from University of Richmond in 1947. He was a classmate of William Dew Gresham's. Duke wrote a sports column during his time at the university. Duke is best known for his time on the television program *Washington Week in Review* where he worked for twenty years. During his time on the show, Duke was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame (1992).

George Dillon (1906-1968) was an American poet, editor, and translator. He graduated from University of Chicago. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his book of poems entitled *Flowering Stone* (1930s).

Gilbert Murray (1866-1957) was an English classicist and translator of Greek literature. He graduated from St. John's College, Oxford and later taught at New College, Oxford where he was the Regius Professor of Greek (1908-1936). Upon his death, his ashes were placed at Westminster Abbey.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains correspondence between William Gresham and several poets. The majority of the correspondences are replies to Gresham's invitations to speak for the Poetry Society of Virginia. Some of the correspondence Gresham saved was not written by him or to him. The collection also houses several programs, pamphlets, and newspaper articles that support Gresham's dedication and love of literature and culture.

Series I, Gresham Correspondence, includes correspondence between William Gresham and several poets. The letters are regarding Gresham's invitations for various poets to speak for the Poetry Society of Virginia in Williamsburg, Virginia. May Sarton spoke for the organization on May 14, 1960. Most of her letters are regarding her travel arrangements.

Series II, Pamphlets, Writings, and Newspaper Clippings, contains several personal keepsakes, most notably, a poem written by Gresham, two booklets – one autographed by Pearl S. Buck and the other by Art Buchwald – and a Christmas poem written by May Sarton.

Series III, Other Correspondence, comprises correspondence that did not include Gresham. One letter in particular was a thank you note from the poet George Dillon to Gresham's wife Nancy. The last item in the series is a payment note for a cab in Richmond; however, there does not appear to be any connection to Gresham himself and was written over twenty years before Gresham's birth.

Keywords

Richmond (Va.)
Poetry
Nonbook Materials
Clippings
Poetry Society of Virginia
Harvard University. Dramatic Club
Richmond Times-Dispatch
Buchwald, Art
Buck, Pearl S. (Pearl Sydenstricker), 1892-1973
Pound, Ezra, 1885-1972
Rukeyser, Muriel, 1913-1980
Moore, Marianne, 1887-1972
Sarton, May, 1912-1995
Gassner, John, 1903-1967
Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973
Starkie, Enid
Guest, Barbara
Murray, Gilbert, 1866-1957

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 3 series:

Series I: Gresham Correspondence Series II: Pamphlets, Writings, and Newspaper Clippings Series III: Other Correspondence

Description of Subordinate Components

Series I: Gresham Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1472

Unit Date 1959-1976

Rukeyser, Muriel letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1473

Unit Date January 14, 1959

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Rukeyser, Muriel letter & newspaper clipping

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1474

Unit Date May 11, 1959

Unit Date May 13, 1959

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Rukeyser, Muriel letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1475

Unit Date [May 21, 1959]

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Auden, Wystan Hugh (W. H.) letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1476

Unit Date April 4, 1959

Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 4 (folder)

Moore, Marianne letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1477
Unit Date August 19, 1959
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 5 (folder)

Sarton, May letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1478
Unit Date September 8, 1959
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 6 (folder)

Sarton, May letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1479
Unit Date September 26, 1959
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 7 (folder)

Sarton, May letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1480
Unit Date April 10, 1960
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 8 (folder)

Sarton, May letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1481
Unit Date April 18, 1960
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 9 (folder)

Starkie, Enid letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1482
Unit Date December 15, 1959
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 10 (folder)

Starkie, Enid letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1483
Unit Date December 17, 1959
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 11 (folder)

Starkie, Enid postcard

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1484
Unit Date June 8, 1960
Text 1 MS-14 (box)
Container 12 (folder)

Gassner, John letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1485

Unit Date February 3, 1962

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Guest, Barbara Letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1486

Unit Date October 8, 1976

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Duke, Paul letter

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1487

Unit Date June 12, [?]

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Series II: Pamphlets, Writings, and Newspaper Clippings

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1488

Unit Date 1930-1984

"Dewey Beach" poem by Gresham

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1489

Unit Date 1984

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

The Poetry Society of Virginia 37th meeting booklet

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1490

Unit Date May 14, 1960

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 17 (folder)

Sarton, May newspaper article

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1491

Unit Date May 9, 1960

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

Sarton, May Christmas poem

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1492

Unit Date 1963

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

Auden, W. H. program & newspaper clippings

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1493

Unit Date March 21, 1952

Unit Date March 22, 1952

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 20 (folder)

Buchwald, Art pamphlet "While Regan Slept" (autographed)

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1494

Unit Date October 26, 1984

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 21 (folder)

Buck, Pearl S. biography booklet (autographed)

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1495

Unit Date undated

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 22 (folder)

Freud, Sigmund article

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1496

Unit Date September 1, 1930

Text 1 MS-14 (box)

Container 23 (folder)

Series III: Other Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1497

Unit Date 1901-1958

Dillon, George letter to Mrs. Gresham

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1498

Unit Date June 22, 1949

Text 2 MS-14 (box)

Container 24 (folder)

Murray, Gilbert letter to Mr. Dodds

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1499

Unit Date March 7, 1952

Text 2 MS-14 (box)

Container 25 (folder)

Copies of letter of Ezra Pound

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1500

Unit Date 1957-1958

Text 2 MS-14 (box)

Container 26 (folder)

Williams, Mrs. Talcott note of payment

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/1501

Unit Date April 10, 1901

Text 2 MS-14 (box)

Container 27 (folder)