

Collection #
SC 0513
BV 1019

THEODORE DREISER PAPERS, 1933–CA 1940

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Processed by
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 folders, 1 bound volume

COLLECTION DATES: 1933- ca 1940

PROVENANCE: Howard S. Mott, Sheffield, MA 01257, August 1966

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: SC 2412 Paul Dresser

See card catalog for printed works by and about Dreiser

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1966.0804

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, the son of John Paul and Sarah (Schanab) Dreiser. His older brother, Paul, who changed the family name to Dresser, was the author of several popular songs, notably "On the Banks of the Wabash" and "My Gal Sal." Dreiser was educated in public schools in Warsaw, Indiana, and attended Indiana University. In 1891 he began to work on newspapers, serving in turn during the next four years on the *Chicago Globe*, the *St. Louis Globe Dispatch*, and the *St. Louis Republic*. In 1895-1896 he was editor of *Every Month*, and between 1895 and 1910 he did articles for *McClure's*, *Munsey's*, *Century*, and *Cosmopolitan* magazines.

In 1900 Dreiser published his first novel, *Sister Carrie*, which some found to be "startlingly frank in its treatment of delicate subject matter."

In 1907-1910 he was editor-in-chief of Butterick Publications, which published several magazines; and for a long period, until 1934, he was an associate editor of *American Spectator*.

Dreiser continued to produce novels, of which the best known were *The Titan* (1914), *The Genius* (1917), and *An American Tragedy* (1924). Critics varied from those like George Jean Nathan who proclaimed Dreiser "the most important American author" to those who saw "only a gloomy and dirty-minded old man whose prose was tortuous...[and] who could find a rotten spot in any apple." His books were banned in some libraries, and he gave fuel to his critics by openly sympathizing with Soviet Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

Sources: Materials in collection

Who Was Who in America, Vol. II

Banta, *Indiana Authors and Their Books 1816-1916*, 90-9

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, comprising three folders and one bound volume, contains correspondence 1935-1937 and an address book. It is arranged chronologically. A listing follows. The most interesting correspondence is three letters from Charles Yost, which deal with the public attitude toward Dreiser's work, notably in Angola, Indiana, where his books were ordered burned.

BV 1019 is a loose-leaf notebook labeled "Dreiser-- Private Address Book." It contains typed pages of addresses and telephone numbers. Some names are identified, e.g. "illustrator, artist," "about Paul's monument," "Chi. Comm. leader," "best interviewer," and "wrote 1925 to meet me." The list, revised in pencil in many places, seems to have been used for several years. The names include many of the well-known writers and publishers of the period, as well as *New Masses*, *Solidarity*, William Z. Foster, Diego Rivera, and Margaret Sanger.

FOLDER LISTING

Folder 1

1935 Apr. 15 R. D. Heinl, Washington, D. C., to TD. Mentions Virginia Jenckes and Paul Dresser Fund. Sends attached poem inspired by birthplace of Paul Dresser. TLS 1p

Apr. 15 Simon Flexner, New York City, to TD. Re: cells and protoplasm. TLS 1p

May Ford Madox Ford, New York City, to TD. Where are you? I am writing books. TLS 1p

May 2 Charles E. Yost, Fayette, O., to TD. I gave talk for Angola, Ind., book club. Library board there has ordered your books burned. Town is dominated by Campbellite professors and college. TLS 2p

May 9 A. D. Ficke, New York City, to TD. Please write Carl Van Vechten and ask him to give me a copy of your picture. ALS 1p

May 17 TD, Los Angeles, to A. D. Ficke. Re: photo. Carbon copy of TL

May 17 TD, Los Angeles, to Carl Van Vechten Re: photo. Carbon copy of TL

May 18 [TD] to Philip B. Dreiser, Prescott, AZ.

Information re: ancestry and family. Carbon copy of TL

May 21 Charles E. Yost, Fayette, O., to TD. Same subject as May 2.

May 22 A. D. Ficke, Hillsdale, N. Y., to TD. Thanks for your letter to Van Vechten. TLS 1p

May 30 [TD] to Charles E. Yost. Would appreciate copy of editorial you wrote. Carbon copy of TL 1p

Folder 2

1936 Dec. 30 Rz Valla, New York City, to TD. Asks permission to use "My Gal Sal" on radio. TLS 1p

1937 Sept. 8 Appeal Printing Co., New York City. Bill for printing case on appeal.

Sept. 12 Welsh, Baird, Hume & Cronin, Yonkers, N. Y. Bill for professional services in suit against Liveright Publishing Company. TD

Sept. 12 Arthur Carter Hume, Yonkers, N. Y. Re: case against Liveright Publishing Co. TLS 3p

Folder 3

1937 Apr.-Oct. Reports from Jordan H. Stover, III, New York City, re: Dreiser's stock holdings.

BV 1019 Address book

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 0513).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.