

GEORGE HORACE LORIMER PAPERS, 1912-1936

Collection #
SC 2512

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 8 folders, 1 photograph

COLLECTION DATES: 1912-1936

PROVENANCE: Heritage Book Shop, 8540 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90069, 13 December 1995

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: M 274 Booth Tarkington; F 357-358 Booth Tarkington; OMB 24 Booth Tarkington-Susanah Jameson; M 411 Susanah Tarkington

ACCESSION NUMBER: 96.0145

NOTES: The acquisition of this collection was made possible through generous contributions of Patricia J. Cochran (Mrs. Richard A.) and Alfred J. and Jeanette Tarkington Stokely.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

George Horace Lorimer (1869-1937) was born in Louisville, Ky., the son of the Rev. George and Belle (Burford) Lorimer. He attended Moseley High School in Chicago, Colby College, and Yale University. In 1899 he became editor-in-chief of *The Saturday Evening Post*, and remained in charge until his death. He served also as vice president, president, and chairman of Curtis Publishing Company, which published the *Post*. He lived in Wyncote, Pa. Early in his career he wrote *Letters from a Self Made Merchant to His Son* (1902), *Old Gorgon Graham* (1904), *The False Gods* (1906), and *Jack Spurlock-- Prodigal*. He was made a Kentucky Colonel in 1923. His work as editor brought him into a long association with Booth Tarkington.

Booth Tarkington (1869-1946) was perhaps Indiana's most famous author, both as playwright and as novelist. His best-known works were written in the first decades of the twentieth century: *The Gentleman from Indiana* (1899), *Penrod* (1910), *Seventeen* (1917), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918), and *Alice Adams* (1921). The last two won Pulitzer prizes. In his work he showed an amiable understanding of the problems of young people. Through the 1920s and 1930s his books were often serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Tarkington was married twice. His first marriage ended in divorce in 1911, and in 1912 he married Susanah Kiefer Robinson, who survived him by twenty years.

During their later years, the Tarkingtons spent about half of each year at their home in Indianapolis, and the other half at Seawood, the home they developed at Kennebunk Port, Maine. The establishment at Kennebunk Port included, besides the house, a boat, and "The Floats," a boathouse where Tarkington went every afternoon for coffee and conversation. Historical novelist Kenneth Roberts was a close neighbor and friend.

Tarkington made a financial success out of his writing, and developed into a connoisseur both of antique furniture and of paintings, particularly of English portraits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He combined his knowledge of art with his literary talents in the book *Some Old Portraits* (1939). He carried on an extensive correspondence with his favorite art dealers, the Silberman brothers in New York, and used them as the basis for his stories about *Rumbin Galleries*.

Especially in his later years, Tarkington became very conservative in politics, violently opposed to FDR and the New Deal. These views showed up in many of his letters, particularly those written to his old Democratic friend Dr. Carleton B. McCulloch and to George Horace Lorimer.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection contains 25 letters from author Booth Tarkington to publisher George Horace Lorimer written between 1912 and 1936, one undated note from Mrs. Tarkington, and one photograph. It is arranged chronologically.

The 18-year series of letters shows a growing friendship between author and editor. Letters often refer to the enclosure of stories: of the Little Orvie and Little Susie series, and of the Rumbin Gallery series. Maine neighbor Kenneth Roberts appears several times, portrayed as impulsive and demanding but still likeable. (He also appears in the one photograph, taken on the shore at Kennebunk Port, with Tarkington and a third man, possibly Lorimer.) Radio mogul Atwater Kent is mentioned in two letters, as a collector who knows very little about art. There are several references to Tarkington's and Lorimer's mutual interest in collecting antiques; apparently Lorimer specialized in glass objects.

In the letters from 1932 on, Tarkington shows the growing political conservatism which marked his last years, centered on a dislike of FDR. In three letters he refers to his cook's niece, who is working in a New Deal "alphabetical" agency, and whom he sees as exemplifying the philosophy that the "guvment owes us a living;" he thinks about using her as the basis for a story.

A brief listing of the correspondence follows.

12-24-1912: Thanks for the \$12,000 fee. ALS 1p

5-19-1918: I talked to Gov. Cox of Ohio, a straight guy. Could you take up the airplane thing in the *Post*?

3-28-1919: Re: a play on which Tarkington is collaborating with Harry Leon Wilson. ALS 2p (with one page of a typed letter to Tarkington from Wilson)

4-5-1919: About the same play-- \$5,000 fee. ALS 1p

5-6-1919: The common man is worried about taxes, not global theory. ALS 1p

11-5-1925: Re: Mah Jongg, Ken[neth Roberts], meeting Mr. Costain. TLS 1p

4-12-1926: Re: manuscript sent to Lorimer, H. L. Wilson's domestic troubles. ALS 2p

1-2-1931: Thanks for your generosity and kindness in sending the Golden Book. Off to Johns Hopkins tomorrow. TLS 2p

8-31-[1931]: I like Ken's essay about me. TLS 1p

7-26-1932: About Mr. Rogers's estate at Kennebunk Port, which Lorimer is thinking of buying. ALS 2p

8-12-1932: Sorry you didn't buy the Rogers place. Enclosing part of "Introducing Lily Mars." TLS 1p

8-31-1932: Sending rest of manuscript except last three chapters. More about Rogers place. TLS 1p

9-16-1932: About resemblances to Lorimer in story Tarkington is writing. TLS 2p

10-12-1932: Re: soldiers' bonus and paper money. TLS 2p

6-3-1933: Hope to see you in Kennebunk Port. Difference between a connoisseur and a collector. Compares Kenneth Roberts to Krakatoa. TLS 1p

8-2-1933: Have sent Orvie story to Mr. Costain. Whales in Kennebunk Port. Re: Mr. Vose, art dealer. TLS 1p

11-14-1933: Sending another Orvie story. Anecdote about Kenneth Roberts. ALS 2p

6-14-1934: Re: article he was asked to write to restore public confidence. (Post doesn't want it.) Roberts getting honorary degree from Dartmouth. TLS 2p

10-6-1934: Re: new series of stories [little Susie] aimed at "humorous mothers." Conversation with Atwater Kent about collecting pictures. TLS 2p

10-11-1934: Here's the first Little Susie story. TLS 1p

10-17-1934: Re: a dealer selling fake Sandwich glass. TLS 1p

2-24-1935: Politics. Cook's niece working for federal relief agency. TLS 1p

3-16-1935: Possible story about cook's niece. ALS 2p

3-25-1935: Re: use of "gullible" in broker's brochure. TLS 1p with enclosure

4-8-1935: More about cook's niece story, and how to guard against being intemperate in writing it. TLS 1p

6-3-1935: Re: FDR attack on Supreme Court. ALS 2p

6-16-1935: Another Susie story. Roberts has arrived; hope you will do the same. TLS 1p

6-20-1935: Re: Mrs. Roberts's usual composure in an explosive household. Story about Roberts borrowing an ill-fitting doctor's gown to receive another honorary degree. Now FDR says that taxes are desirable in themselves as instruments of social policy. ALS 4p

7-2-1935: More about FDR and Mrs. Roosevelt. Lorimer has been right in steadily attacking FDR. ALS 4p

11-1-1935: Politics. Graeme Lorimer has suggested a series about art dealers. K. Roberts blew up at a Democrat who was our guest. TLS 2p

1-8-1936: Mr. Silberman is beginning to talk like Rumbin. TLS 1p

3-23-1936: More about Rumbin. TLS 1p

6-18-1936; Another Rumbin story. Re: 1936 campaign. TLS 2p

8-15-1936: Another Rumbin story. Wish you could have stayed longer. Am now chasing whales. TLS 2p

8-26-?: I'll send you another story when I've finished this novel. ALS 1p

n.d.: Note from Mrs. Tarkington enclosing a gift. ALS 1p

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Lorimer, George Horace, 1869-1937

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Lorimer, George Horace, 1869-1937

Roberts, Kenneth Lewis, 1885-1957

Rubin galleries

Little Orvie

Authors, American--Indiana--Indianapolis--Correspondence

Book editors--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia

United States--Economic policy--1933-1945

Kennebunkport, Me.--Social life and customs

ADDED ENTRIES: Tarkington, Booth, 1869-1946

END