

CHAPIN LETTER

1925

Collection #
SC 2573

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Processed by
Chris Harter
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USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 item

COLLECTION DATES: 1925

PROVENANCE: Argosy Book Store, Inc., 116 East 59th St., New York, NY 10022

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 192, Carlton B. McCulloch Papers; M 274, OMB 18, Booth Tarkington Papers; M 411, Susanah Tarkington Papers; SC 2512, George Horace Lorimer Papers; OMB 24, Booth Tarkington-Susanah Jameson; F 357-358, Booth Tarkington Papers

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1996.0475

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Booth Tarkington (1869-1946), native of Indianapolis, student of Princeton (Class of 1893), 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 appreciation of the real and imagined problems of young people. He was an early member of the Dramatic Club, founded in 1889, and often wrote plays and directed and acted in its productions.

Tarkington was married twice. His first marriage, in 1902, to Laurel Louise Fletcher, ended in divorce in 1911, and his daughter by that marriage, Laurel, died young. In 1912 he married Susanah Kiefer Robinson of Dayton, who survived him by twenty years. In the absence of children of his own, he saw a good deal of Donald, John, and Booth Jameson, the sons of his sister Hautie (Mrs. Ovid Butler Jameson), and of their children.

During their late years, the Tarkingtons spent about half of each year at their home in Indianapolis at 4270 North Meridian Street, and the other half at Seawood, the home they developed at Kennebunkport, Maine. The establishment at Kennebunkport included, besides the house, a boat, and "The Floats," a boathouse to which Tarkington went every afternoon for coffee and conversation.

Tarkington was very successful financially as an author, and developed into a connoisseur both of antique furniture and of paintings, particularly of English portraits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He was a knowledgeable trustee of the John Herron Art Museum in Indianapolis, and combined his knowledge of art with his literary talents in the book *Some Old Portraits* in 1939. He carried 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 friend Dr. Carleton B. McCulloch, and in items written about the Wilkie campaign in 1940.

Henry Goddard Leach (1880-1970) was born in Philadelphia, PA, and was educated at Princeton and Harvard. In 1915 he married Agnes Lisle Brown. They later adopted two children, Annis Leach and Peter Fuller. Leach authored several books on Scandinavia, and taught courses on Scandinavian history in Europe, Iceland, and the United States.

From 1923 to 1940 he was the editor at *The Forum* magazine. *The Forum*, established in 1886, was known as "the magazine of controversy." Within its pages, such topics as Prohibition, race relations, art, and sex matters were debated. The magazine was also known for its literary features. Writers such as Tarkington, William Faulkner, Andre Gide, Virginia Woolf, and Anne Douglas Sedgwick published their fiction, poetry, and essays in *The Forum*.

Sources: Leach, Henry Goddard. *My Last Seventy Years*. (899.L4341m - Indiana State Library) p. 174-187.
Who Was Who in America. vol. 5 (1969-1973) p. 420.
Collection Guide - M 274

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one letter from Booth Tarkington to a Miss Chapin, dated November 21, 1925. Biographical information from primary sources could not be located for Miss Chapin; however, a note in pencil on the second page of the letter states that the letter was "written to the secretary to Henry G. Leach, editor of the Forum mag."

In the letter Tarkington reports on his recent activities: "the re-writing complete of a longplay, seven short stories, two one-act plays, making a `series' into a book and correcting the proofs, and one article." He states that he will soon be leaving Seawood in Kennebunkport, Maine for Indianapolis, and requests that Miss Chapin write to him there. Tarkington comments that he liked her "colleague's" book better than Anne Douglas Sedgwick's *The Little French Girl*, and discusses both works.

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Tarkington, Booth, 1869-1946

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Tarkington, Booth, 1869-1946--Correspondence

Authors--Indiana--Indianapolis--Correspondence

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