THEODORE DREISER
PAPERS, 1919, 1927, 1933–CA. 1940

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Processed by
Charles Latham
8 May 1995
Revised by Dorothy A. Nicholson
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**COLLECTION INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</th>
<th>3 manuscript folders, 1 bound volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTION DATES:</td>
<td>1919, 1927, 1933–ca. 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVENANCE:</td>
<td>Howard S. Mott, Sheffield, MA 01257, August 1966</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swann Auction Galleries, New York, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESTRICTIONS:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTERNATE FORMATS:</td>
<td>SC 2412 Paul Dresser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATED HOLDINGS:</td>
<td>See online catalog for works by and about Dreiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES:</td>
<td>This is an artificial collection with additions expected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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."

From 1907 until 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 NOTE

This collection, arranged chronologically, is comprised of three manuscript folders containing correspondence dated 1927, 1935–1937, an address book in one bound volume, and one photograph folder with a portrait photograph of Theodore Dreiser dated 1919.

The most interesting correspondence is contained in three letters from Charles Yost, which deal with the public attitude toward Dreiser's work, notably in Angola, Indiana, where his books were ordered to be 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.
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<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>CONTAINER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 Apr. 15 Simon Flexner, New York City, to TD. Re: cells and protoplasm. TLS 1p</td>
<td>Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 May Ford Madox Ford, New York City, to TD. Where are you? I am writing books. TLS 1p</td>
<td>Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 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</td>
<td>Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 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</td>
<td>Folder 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 May 17 TD, Los Angeles, to A. D. Ficke. Re: photo. Carbon copy of T</td>
<td>Folder 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1935
May 17 TD, Los Angeles, to Carl Van Vechten Re: photo. Carbon copy of TL
Folder 1

1935
May 18 [TD] to Philip B. Dreiser, Prescott, AZ.
Folder 1

1935
Information re: ancestry and family. Carbon copy of TL
Folder 1

1935
May 21 Charles E. Yost, Fayaette, O., to TD. Same subject as May 2.
Folder 1

1935
May 22 A. D. Ficke, Hillsdale, N. Y., to TD. Thanks for your letter to Van Vechten. TLS 1p
Folder 1

1935
May 30 [TD] to Charles E. Yost. Would appreciate copy of editorial you wrote. Carbon copy of TL 1
Folder 1

1936
Dec. 30 Rz Valla, New York City, to TD. Asks permission to use "My Gal Sal" on radio. TLS 1p
Folder 2

1937
Folder 2

Sept. 12 Welsh, Baird, Hume & Cronin, Yonkers, N. Y. Bill for professional services in suit against Liveright Publishing Company. TD
Folder 2

Sept. 12 Arthur Carter Hume, Yonkers, N. Y. Re: case against Liveright Publishing Co. TLS 3p
Folder 2

1937
Folder 3

Address book
BV 1019
Series 2: Visual Material, 1919

CONTENTS

Theodore Dreiser portrait photograph
Inscription: "For George A. Van Nordall / Best wishes of Theodore Dreiser / Los Angeles - 1919"
Photo by "McCaffrey, Far Rockaway, L.I."

CONTAINER

Photographs: Folder 1