Inventory of the Archer Taylor papers pertaining to folklore, 1890-1973

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Inventory of the Archer Taylor papers Pertaining to Folklore, 1890-1973

Collection number: ARCHIVES TAYLOR 1

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Archer Taylor Papers Pertaining to Folklore,
Date (inclusive): 1890-1973
Collection number: ARCHIVES TAYLOR 1
Creator: Taylor, Archer, 1890-1973
Extent: Number of containers: 2 boxes
Repository: The Music Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Shelf location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Language: English.
Donor:
Part of the bequest by the family to the University of California in 1974.
Access
Collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
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Memoirs of Fellows and Corresponding Fellows of The Mediaeval Academy of America
---from Speculum (July, 1974), pp. 606-08
Archer Taylor, a Fellow of the Academy since 1941, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 1 August 1890, and died in Vallejo, California on 30 September 1973. His family belonged to the Society of Friends and the quiet self discipline of the Quaker was evident throughout his long life of unremitting and painstaking research and selfless service to other scholars. Few men of his learning and massive publications have shared their knowledge so freely with their students, colleagues, friends and, again and again, with people in all parts of the world of whom he knew nothing beyond their writings or, indeed, their aspirations to write.

thesis, The märchen motifs in Wolfdietrich, was written under Walz with advice from Kittredge and Robinson. Taylor did not publish his dissertation as a whole, but to read it, as one of the undersigned did recently, is to show how, at the advanced age of not quite 25, he had set the pattern which he was to maintain through life: meticulous examination of texts, mastery of the bibliography of the subject, searching yet not querulous analysis of previous scholarship, separation and identification of themes, not as easy then as now, and above all, a wealth of comparative material from many languages, literatures, and folklores.

Taylor's teaching career carried him steadily westward. From 1915 to 1925 he was at Washington University in Saint Louis, from 1925 to 1939 at the University of Chicago, and from 1939 until he became emeritus in 1957 at the University of California in Berkeley. Everywhere he cheerfully undertook a heavy teaching load and at Chicago and Berkeley he spent long years as Chairman of his Department. As Chairman, he was an imaginative recruiter of younger scholars whom, by example and precept, he imbued with his own enthusiasm for teaching and research.

If "publish or perish" had validity Taylor would be alive today and, since that is not the case, he is somewhere in the empyrean sitting on a monument of publications, hot as when they appeared from the press, and smiling benignly down on less prolific mortals. From his first brief note on a Rosengarten theme in 1916 to the time of his final illness, he produced a stream of articles, reviews and books which, had he done nothing else, would make one think him a reincarnation of some many-handed god or giant merely to have written them. Exaggerated though such a statement may sound, a glance at his bibliography makes exaggeration fade into truth. Taylor was by training a Germanist and medievalist, but his oeuvre, a word too fashionable to omit, proves him a master of folklore in the most generous sense of that word. His knowledge of the Middle Ages, and behind that of the classical literature affected and enlightened almost all that he wrote. His range, as impressive as his productivity, moved majestically from century to century, genre to genre, country to country, and continent to continent. As an instance of the last, only a couple of years ago, a collection of his articles dealing with Asiatic subjects was published in Taiwan and ran to several hundred pages. By convention, these memoirs are, and must be, brief.


Taylor's scholarly eminence was recognized both here and abroad. There are few pertinent societies or academies of which he was not an active or honorary member. He was President of the American Folklore Society (1935-37) and of the Modern Language Association (1951). On his seventieth birthday (1960), he was presented with a handsome festschrift entitled Humaniora, the introduction to which by Gustave O. Atrt gives details of his private life which those who only know him by his writings should read. In his eightieth year an issue of Proverbiwm (Helsinki, 1970) was dedicated to him. Since his death a number of appreciative articles have appeared, of which we mention with especial pleasure that by Alan Dundes in the American Folklore Newsletter(III, 1, 1974). The signers of this memoir knew and admired Archer Taylor for an aggregate of more than one hundred and fifty years. Of him we can state, and except for convention it might have been enough: Archer Taylor, a good man, a warm friend, a great scholar -about whom can one say more?

ALBERT C. BAUGH
TAYLOR STARCK
B. J. WHITING, Chairman

Scope and Content
Correspondence of other scholars to Taylor, offprints, reviews, and miscellaneous material.

| Box Box 2, item 1. | Correspondence of other scholars to Professor Taylor consisting of about 40 letters and 3 postcards. |
| Box Box 1, item 2. | One (1) folder containing about 25 published reviews by Professor Taylor. |
| Box Box 2, item 3. | One (1) packet of miscellaneous materials. |
| Box Box 1, item 4a. | Offprints, reviews, notices, etc, by other scholars collected by Professor Taylor on the subject of folklore. |
| | -- English language, about 60 items. |
List of Contents

Box Box 2, item 4b.
-- German language, about 70 items.

Box Box 1, item 4c.
-- Other languages, about 50 items.