
Ford Madox Ford Letters: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Huntington Library Staff in April 1957 and updated by Diann Benti in 2015.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Manuscripts Department

The Huntington Library

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Overview of the Collection

Title: Ford Madox Ford Letters

Dates (inclusive): 1901-1933

Bulk dates: 1901-1910

Collection Number: mssFMF 1-316

Creator: Ford, Ford Madox, 1873-1939.

Extent: 316 pieces in 4 boxes + 1 piece of ephemera

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Abstract: This collection of correspondence consists chiefly of letters from English author Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) to his literary agent, James B. Pinker (1863-1922). The letters discuss Ford's writings, especially his novels, and include his frequent requests for advances. Although the bulk of the letters in the collection are addressed to Pinker (303 letters), there is also six pieces of correspondence with Macmillan Publishing Company vice president Harold Strong Latham, as well as a few other individuals.

Language: English.

Note:

Finding aid last updated on June 3, 2015.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item]. Ford Madox Ford Letters, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Purchased from Dawson's Book Shop, December 6, 1950.

Access

The collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, please visit the Huntington's website: www.huntington.org.

Biographical Note

Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) was an English author and editor. Born Ford Hermann Hueffer on December 17, 1873, he changed his name to Ford Madox Ford in 1919. Ford's most well known works include the novels *The Good Soldier* (1915), the *Parade's End* series (1924-28), and *The Fifth Queen* trilogy (1906-1908). In the early 1900s, he collaborated with author Joseph Conrad on three novels: *The Inheritors* (1901), *Romance* (1903), and *The Nature of Crime* (published in 1924). In addition to his work as a novelist, Ford was also a poet and critic, and he founded *The English Review* in 1908 and *The Transatlantic Review* in 1924. Ford died in France on June 26, 1939.

Ford was represented by James Brand Pinker (1863-1922), a London literary agent, who from the late 1890s until his death in 1992 worked as an agent for many authors including Joseph Conrad and Henry James.

Scope and Content

This collection of correspondence consists chiefly of letters from English author Ford Madox Ford to his literary agent, James B. Pinker. The letters discuss Ford's writings, especially his novels, and include his frequent requests for advances. Although the bulk of the letters in the collection are addressed to Pinker (303 letters), there are also four pieces of correspondence with Macmillan Publishing Company vice president Harold Strong Latham, as well as some other correspondents. In the early part of the correspondence, there are a few references to Joseph Conrad.

The letters date from 1901 to 1931, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1901 to 1910. In general, the correspondence relates almost entirely to Ford's writing and the publication of his novels, and includes progress reports, discussion of sale negotiations and terms of contracts, frequent requests for advances, and the sending of manuscripts, correcting of proofs, etc. There is very little regarding Ford's personal life. The collection also includes one piece of

ephemera, a printed one-page list of one-act plays by J.J. Bell, May 1930 (housed at the end of Box 4).

Items consist of:

- Walter T. Boodle letter to James Brand Pinker, 1911 July 3 (FMF 1)
- Esther E. Bowen, secretary to Ford Madox Ford, letter to J.B. Pinker & Co., 1925 April 30 (FMF 2)
- County Bank, Ashford, telegram to James Brand Pinker, 1906 August 7 (FMF 3)
- Ford Madox Ford letters to Harold Strong Latham, 1921 August 14 and 1921 September 27 (FMF 4-5)
- Ford Madox Ford letter to Mr. Liverwright, Boni & Liverwright, 1922 July 6 (FMF 6)
- Hewitt Hanson Howland letter to James Brand Pinker, 1913 October 27 (FMF 7)
- Violet Hunt letter to James Brand Pinker, 1919 February 26 (FMF 8)
- Harold Strong Latham letters to Ford Madox Ford, 1921-1922 (FMF 9-12)
- James Brand Pinker letter to Ford Madox Ford, 1907 June 1 (FMF 13)
- Ford Madox Ford letters to James Brand Pinker, 1901-1933 (from 1922 onwards, the letters are addressed to J.B. Pinker & Sons (FMF 14-316)

Some of the letters are in Ford's handwriting, but many are written or typewritten by a secretary and signed by Ford. Most of the letters for 1901-1915 are undated.

A few quotations from the letters (as well as some from items not in the collection) were published by Paul Alexander Bartlett in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, August 2, 1941, pp. 3, 4, 14.

Notable items include:

Boodle, Walter T. To Pinker.

- 1911, July 3. Advises Pinker against guaranteeing weekly payments to Mrs. Hueffer. ... the probability that Mr. Hueffer may fail to make some of the payments does not appear to be remote for he already owes ¥108 in respect of the weekly payments that the Court directed him to make.

Ford, Ford Madox.

- 1902, May 21 & Sep. 28. Re: price of *Romance*.
- 1905, Nov. 15. Ford has been invited to Russia by a prominent Liberal big shot; proposes to do a series of articles.
- [1906, c. Aug.] Newport, Rhode Island. May ruin and desolation wait upon the day when you inspired me to come to this land: It is hot, dusty, dull, and uninspiring and the expenses are appalling: ... In revenge you will have to finance me, for I have exhausted every cent of ready money that I have.
- [c. 1906] I really *must* bleed you some more--because I must somehow raise ¥100 by next weekend.... Do do as much as you can & as quickly--because when I worry I can't work & when I can't work I can't make pennies.
- [c. 1907] I repeat that I feel a good deal of gratitude to you for having quite certainly `made' me and it makes me feel really mean to worry you--but I really am so hard pushed that I *must*.
- [1908] I will pay forty guineas for the James story on publication [in *The English Review*]
- [c. 1908] I'm really so desperately pushed for money that I really can't afford proper meals....
- [c. 1909] ... the English Review so eats up my reserves that I have nothing to pay my household bills with.
- 1911, Apr. 23. I suppose you are away upon your confounded holidays over which may seven devils cast forty-nine blights.
- 1912, June 3. I wrote the novel [*The Panel*] in about a month and induced a very severe nervous breakdown from which I am still suffering.... I am now tied to these people [Constable's] and cannot write novels for any other publisher till they choose to publish me-- and they simply sit on my mss. which may be ingenious and pleasant for them but is quite the reverse for me.
- 1913, May 6. I have no objection to Mr. Bobbs Merrill doing anything he likes with `The Panel.' He may change the title, rewrite the dedication, alter the end into a Tragedy in which all the people stab each other or do anything else that pleases him.
- 1913, Aug. 1. I suppose you will be going off for your holidays soon & I hope you will have as good a time as you deserve or better for the matter of that.
- 1914, Feb. 13. I don't want to deal with Stanley Paul.... I have worked damned hard for many years to establish my name as a good-will & that's all there is to it--conceit or no conceit. I don't need money &, unless I can get a good price I won't sell my immortal soul to any of your blooming devils. I want also stability....

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- 1919, June 28. I don't doubt the correctitude of yr. account & amount, but it inspires curiosity in my uncommercial breast.
 - 1921, Jan. 27. By the bye: would you care to `handle' my poems and smaller critical articles? I find on examining my accounts that I have this year made ¥316 by these--mostly from U.S.A....
 - 1921, June 3. Re: a proposed history of English literature; ...an account of English literature by a man of the world for men of the world--not a handbook with condensed annotations by a half dead don.
 - 1921, June 8. Offers hay, pigs, ducks for sale from his farm.
 - 1921, Aug. 14. I always do think of my books for very long periods before setting pen to paper, when I write them, usually, very rapidly.
 - 1928, March 19. To Eric Pinker. I write at this length because I was always having obscure rows with your father which distressed me, but which I could never understand, about points like this. There is an etiquette in these things as between author, agent and publisher that I could never understand either.
 - 1929, Nov. 24. This [a collected edition] will be coming in America before long.... I don't for a moment imagine any English publisher would think of re-printing me.
 - 1929, Dec. 2. By the bye, Hugh Welpole has a long screed about my genius and the neglect from which I suffer in England --in the *New York Herald*--and he is always writing about me in the U.S.A. and lecturing in similar terms.
 - [James B. Pinker Letters \(mssHM 42393-42453\)](#)
 - Ford Madox Ford letter to Conrad Aiken. 1931 November 2 (mssAIK 607) in the [Conrad Aiken Papers](#)
 - Ford Madox Ford letter to John Lane. 1914 August 12? (mssHM 48493)
 - Ford Madox Ford letters to Chesson. 1906 May-June (mssHM 46025-46027)

Arrangement

Items are arranged chronologically in four boxes.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](#).

Subjects

Ford, Ford Madox, 1873-1939.

Pinker, James B., correspondent.

Authors, English -- 20th century -- Correspondence.

Literary agents -- Great Britain -- Correspondence.

Forms/Genres

Letters -- (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 20th century.

Contributors

Latham, Harold Strong, 1887- correspondent

Pinker, James B., correspondent.

Box 1	Letters. 1901-1906
Box 2	Letters. 1907-1909
Box 3	Letters. 1910-1919
Box 4	Letters. 1920-1933