
Edwin Bliss Hill Papers: Finding Aid

Processed by The Huntington Library staff in May 1981; supplementary encoding and revision supplied by Xiuzhi Zhou and Diann Benti.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Manuscripts Department

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, California 91108

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Overview of the Collection

Title: Edwin Bliss Hill Papers

Dates (inclusive): 1737-1954

Bulk dates: 1895-1948

Collection Number: mssHill papers

Creator: Hill, Edwin Bliss, 1866-1949.

Extent: 2,557 pieces in 15 boxes

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Abstract: This collection consists of correspondence and manuscripts of America printer and author Edwin Bliss Hill (1866-1949) and deals primarily with Hill's activities as a private printer, as a founder of the Frank Holme Memorial Group, and as a collector of books and manuscripts.

Language: English.

Access

Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item]. Edwin Bliss Hill Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Acquired from Hill's daughter, Gertrude (Hill) Muir, from 1950 to 1956, and supplemented by gifts from Vincent Starrett in 1948 and 1956.

Biographical Note

Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on August 17, 1866, Edwin Bliss Hill began work as a printer's devil at the age of 18. From his first job with the *Michigan Christian Herald*, he moved on to various positions with the *Detroit Tribune*, *Detroit News*, *Detroit Times* and, finally, the *Detroit Journal* from 1891 to 1901. His health failed in 1901 and he spent the years until 1908 living and recuperating in the woods near Lakeland, Michigan, where he continued to pursue his avocation of printing brochures and books, an activity begun in 1882.

On October 19, 1908, Hill married Clara Ella Hood. Moving to Arizona, Hill worked for the United States Reclamation Service's Salt River Project, where he was in charge of the distribution of irrigation water for the Mesa-Chandler District. In 1918, he was transferred to the El Paso, Texas, office of the U. S. Reclamation Service. Subsequently assigned to the office at Ysleta, Texas, Hill made that small town his home until 1945. His final employment was as Assessor and Collector for the County Water Improvement District No. 1 in El Paso, where he commuted from Ysleta. By 1945, Hill had been retired for several years and he and Mrs. Hill moved to Tempe, Arizona. At the age of 82, Hill died in Mesa, Arizona, on April 6, 1949.

Throughout his life, Hill devoted his interest and energy to private printing. Having begun to print in 1882 on his first press, a small Daisy, he subsequently used an Excelsior, a Caxton and a Columbian press. Devoting over 50 years to printing, Hill was the owner of the oldest continuously operated private press in the United States. From his press, he issued a variety of verse and prose works, particularly titles by and about Henry David Thoreau, in whose life and works Hill had a strong and lifelong interest. His printing also encompassed works pertaining to Charles Lamb and other authors including Mark Twain, George Moore, John Ruskin, and many others, as well as titles by bibliophiles such as Vincent Starrett and Francis Cummins Lockwood. He produced a series called *Sherlockiana*, composed of items about Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars, and there were works relating to the artist Frank Holme and the Frank Holme Memorial Group.

Frank Holme was a Chicago newspaper artist and one of many of the newspapermen, printers and authors Hill met through his printing and literary interests. Holme, born in 1868, worked for a number of papers in Chicago, where he began his

School of Illustration. The School was run with the assistance of his wife, Ida May (Van Dyke) Holme, and Oswald Bruce Cooper. Frank and Ida Holme also began a private press called the Bandar Log Press, with the backing of George Ade and others. Traveling to Asheville, North Carolina, Holme spent the years 1901-1902 there in an effort to recover from tuberculosis. During his absence his wife and associates operated the School and ran the Press, with Holme providing supervision by correspondence. In 1902 the Holmes briefly moved their household and their Press to San Francisco and from there to Arizona, where Frank Holme died on July 27, 1904. Subsequently, in the late 1930's, Edwin Bliss Hill, together with Francis Cummins Lockwood, George Ade, Frederic Goudy and others, founded the Frank Holme Memorial Group to perpetuate the artist's memory.

Bibliography

Muir, Gertrude Hill, Edwin Bliss Hill: Pioneer Private Printer of the Southwest, *American Book Collector* 18 (October, 1967), 20-21.

Myers, John Myers, A Check-list of Items Published by the Private Press of Edwin B. Hill, *American Book Collector* 18 (October, 1967), 22-27.

Scope and Content

The collection deals primarily with Edwin Bliss Hill's activities as a private printer, as a founder of the Frank Holme Memorial Group, and as a collector of books and manuscripts.

There are 274 manuscripts including manuscripts by Hill and Frank Holme; poetry and prose to be printed by Hill; and biographical sketches of Holme. The materials by and about Holme were collected by Hill and others as part of the Memorial Group endeavors.

There are 1,807 pieces of correspondence including letters to and from Edwin Bill Hill chiefly about private printing; Hill's press and materials to be printed; the Frank Holme Memorial Group; and Thoreau scholarship, texts, etc. and book and manuscript collection. There are letters to and from Frank Holme chiefly about the School of Illustration and the Bandar Log Press.

There are 476 printed items including proofsheets from Hill's press; miscellaneous pamphlets, bookmarks, calling cards, etc.; and clippings.

Persons represented by three or more pieces:

Manuscripts

- Avery, Bertha Grant: 63 poems
- Babson, Joseph E.: 17 manuscripts and notes
- Hill, Edwin Bliss: 5 manuscripts
- Holme, Frank: 10 manuscripts, and 22 volumes of diaries
- Starrett, Vincent: 20 manuscripts, plus miscellaneous notes

Correspondence

- Adams, Raymond: 1928-1942. 6 pieces
- Ade, George [before 1905]-1942. 14 pieces
- Allen, Francis Henry: 1918-1942. 15 pieces
- Arizona. Dept. of Library and Archives: 1942-1945. 8 pieces
- Arizona. University. Library: 1934-1944. 10 pieces
- Avery, Bertha Grant: 1923-1933. 19 pieces
- Baldrige, Cyrus LeRoy: 1938-1944. 15 pieces
- Barber, George W: 1913-1914. 8 pieces
- Bay, J Christian: 1939-1947. 9 pieces
- Chalmers, Stephen: 1917-1926. 7 pieces
- Comfort, Will Levington: 1920-1932. 5 pieces
- Coolidge, Dane: 1912-1939. 6 pieces
- Cooper, Oswald Bruce: 1900-1938. 6 pieces
- Cuala Press: 1923-1941. 23 pieces
- Dean, Eva: 1908-1943. 75 pieces
- Dobell (Percy J and Arthur E) (firm): 1915-1945. 7 pieces
- Finch, Edward J: 1944-1948. 14 pieces

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- Finger, Charles Joseph: 1920-1935. 6 pieces
 - Fitzgerald, Percy: 1897 and undated. 5 pieces
 - Foley, Patrick Kevin: 1919-1935. 8 pieces
 - Forrest, Earle Robert: 1936-1949. 24 pieces
 - Ganz, Charles: 1934-1948. 37 pieces
 - Gjelsness, Rudolph H: 1938-1942. 7 pieces
 - Hayden, Carl: 1939-1946. 6 pieces
 - Hill, Edwin Bliss: 1918-1948. 35 pieces
 - Holme, Frank: 1899-1904. 142 pieces
 - Holme, Ida May (Van Dyke): 1930-1941. 21 pieces
 - Jaques, Bertha: 1906-1941. 13 pieces
 - Kitt, Edith O: 1933-1948. 5 pieces
 - Kleiner, Rheinhart: 1944-1948. 7 pieces
 - Lamb (Charles) Society: 1935-1948. 24 pieces
 - Larremore, Thomas Armitage: 1938. 5 pieces
 - LaShelle, Kirke: 1902-1946. 6 pieces
 - Lockwood, Francis Cummins: 1934-1935. 10 pieces
 - Marshall, Vause W: 1938. 6 pieces
 - Mazzanovich, Anton: 1933-1934. 18 pieces
 - Mighels, Ella (Sterling): 1930-1931. 19 pieces
 - Miller, Cincinnatus Hiner: 1888-1896. 6 pieces
 - Morris, Frank M: 1915-1925. 16 pieces
 - Newton, Alfred Edward: 1918-1940. 18 pieces
 - Phillips, Grace: 1945-1946. 6 pieces
 - Plarr, Victor G.: 1894-1906. 5 pieces
 - Ransom, Will: 1925-1948. 11 pieces
 - Robinson, Grace (Perley): 1938-1943. 5 pieces
 - Seymour, George Steele: 1919-1943. 5 pieces
 - Shaw, Mary W: 1926-1927. 5 pieces
 - Sloan, Charles H: 1931-1944. 73 pieces
 - Starrett, Vincent: 1918-1948. 223 pieces
 - West, Herbert Faulkner: 1940-1948. 21 pieces
 - White, Viola C: 1935-1949. 6 pieces
 - Williamson, Dan R: 1934-1940. 12 pieces
 - Woollen, Frank David: 1918-1925. 114 pieces
 - Yeats, Elizabeth Corbet: 1914-1939. 51 pieces
 - Yeats, William Butler: 1918-1920 and undated. 6 pieces

Some notable items include:

- Brown, Ray - letter to Francis Cummins Lockwood, Feb. 24, 1927, is a lengthy recollection of Frank Holme and includes many details of his life.
- Clemens, Samuel Langhorne - typescript of a suppressed chapter from *Life on the Mississippi*.
- Dean, Eva - letters to Edwin Bliss Hill contain recollections of Frank Holme. Eva Dean had been a student at Holme's School of Illustration.
- DeVinne, Theodore Low - two letters to Hill concerning printing.
- Emerson, Edward Waldo - letter to Francis Cummins Lockwood about Ralph Waldo Emerson.
- Forrest, Earle Robert - letters to Hill about Forrest's life as a cowboy and about the book he co-authored with Hill, *Lone War Trail of Apache Kid*.

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- Hill, Edwin Bliss - list of books printed on his press; and a series of 29 letters and one postcard to Vincent Starrett (1918-1948) discuss Hill's printing and literary pursuits.
 - Holme, Frank - letters written to Oswald Bruce Cooper in 1901, when Holme was away in Asheville, discuss the details of running his School of Illustration.
 - Holme, Ida May (Van Dyke) - correspondence to Hill provides information and dates regarding Frank Holme's life.
 - Jones, Haydon - letter of June 15, 1944, to Hill recalls events in Frank Holme's life.
 - Starrett, Vincent - extensive correspondence with Hill concerning works of his printed by Hill, with enclosures of manuscripts, proofsheets and lay-outs.
 - Yeats, Elizabeth Corbet - correspondence to Hill mentioning various members of the Yeats family and discussing her Cuala Press.
 - Yeats, William Butler - an introductory essay addressed to Lady Gregory, 4 letters to Hill, and one letter to Lily Yeats.

Arrangement

Arranged in the following series: 1. Correspondence (Boxes 1-12); 2. Misc. correspondence and manuscripts, ephemera (Box 13); 3. Frank Holme diaries, 1881-1904 (Boxes 14-15).

Indexing Terms

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

Subjects

Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-1882.

Holme, John Francis, 1868-1904.

Hill, Edwin Bliss, 1866-1949.

Authors, American -- 19th century -- Correspondence.

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

Forms/Genres

Manuscripts United States.

Letters (correspondence) United States.

Alternate Authors

Ade, George, 1866-1944.

Allen, Francis H. (Francis Henry), 1866-1953.

Avery, Bertha Grant.

Babson, Joseph E.

Baldrige, Cyrus Leroy, 1889-1977.

Dean, Eva.

Emerson, Edward Waldo, 1844-1930.

Finch, Edward J.

Forrest, Earle R. (Earle Robert), 1883-1969.

Ganz, Charles.

Holme, John Francis, 1868-1904.

Holme, Ida May.

Jaques, Bertha E. (Bertha Evelyn), 1863-1941.

Lockwood, Frank C. (Frank Cummins), 1864-1948.

Mazzanovich, Anton, 1860-

Mighels, Ella Sterling, 1853-1934.

Morris, F. M. (Frank Marion), 1857-1925.

Newton, A. Edward (Alfred Edward), 1864-1940.

Ransom, Will, 1878-1955.

Sloan, Charles H. (Charles Henry), 1863-1946.

Starrett, Vincent, 1886-1974.

Twain, Mark, 1835-1910. Life on the Mississippi.
West, Herbert Faulkner, 1898-1974.
Yeats, Elizabeth Corbet, 1868-1940.
Yeats, W. B. (William Butler), 1865-1939.
Charles Lamb Society.
Cuala Press.
University of Arizona. Library.

Box 1	A-Ba
Box 2	Be-C
Box 3	D-Fol
Box 4	For-Holl
Box 5	Holme-I
Box 6	J-Mac
Box 7	Ma-P
Box 8	R-Stal
Box 9	Vincent Starrett correspondence and manuscripts, 1918-1933
Box 10	Vincent Starrett correspondence and manuscripts, 1934-1948-Th
Box 11	Ti-Woollen, 1920
Box 12	Woollen (continued)
Box 13	Miscellaneous Correspondence and manuscripts; ephemera
Box 14	Frank Holme diaries, 1881-1887 August 19
Box 15	Frank Holme diaries, 1887 August 19-1904
Oversize Folder	United States General Land Office. Certificate of land in Michigan granted to George Tuthill. 1837 August 7.