
Frederic W. Goudy Correspondence Collection MS-0546

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Special Collections & University Archives

04/26/2018

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Contributing Institution: Special Collections & University Archives

Title: Frederic W. Goudy Correspondence Collection

Creator: Goudy, Frederic W.

Identifier/Call Number: MS-0546

Physical Description: 0.20 Linear Feet

Date (inclusive): 1929-1946

Language of Material: English .

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of correspondence from Goudy to his close friends and family. The majority of the letters are addressed to Grace Gray, a family friend who lives in Omaha, Nebraska, who lives in Goudy's deceased Aunt Alice's home. The dated letters have been placed in alphabetical order. Letters lacking a posted date, as well as miscellaneous items, such as newspaper clippings, have been placed at the rear of the stack.

In 1939, Goudy's printing press, the Village Letter Foundry, was destroyed by a fire and much of his work was lost. He sends a printed letter to hundreds of friends, family members, and acquaintances who sent him their condolences: "What a comfort it is to realize the wealth of friendship that is mine, to have the regard & affection of so many manifested so patently by them; it softens the blow greatly." He mentions that he had the shop for 31 years and lost over 20 new typefaces in the fire.

Goudy frequently travels between Berkeley, Chicago, New York, and other cities giving lectures to book clubs and universities. He shares with Grace his receiving his doctorates from Syracuse University, and becoming a guest lecturer within the university's School of Journalism. He also receives the highest honorary degree that the University of California (UC) system has to offer, commenting to Grace, "Pretty nice for a mere high school graduate without any college or university training?" Several book clubs, including the Grolier Club, grant him awards and permanent memberships.

His association with Grace becomes increasingly intimate. One early letter highlights his desire for a closer affiliation: "Is there any way I can make you stop addressing me as 'Mr.' - why can't I be just 'Fred' instead?" He invites Grace to social events and fairs, often pressing her on the matter: "We're not getting younger, you know." His travels frequently send him through Omaha, allowing him to visit Grace regularly. In one letter, he writes, "I love you and wouldn't do anything to hurt you."

Another acquaintance often mentioned in his letters to Grace is Florence Elizabeth. In 1940, Goudy arranges for Florence and Grace to meet in a hotel in Omaha: "You'll know her by her smiling countenance and golden brown hair, and you'll like her." He also adds, "I remember you said you were going to 'make her jealous' so go to it."

Goudy often reflects on his life and updates Grace on his current projects and endeavors. In one letter, he shares how his 29-year old son, Frederic T. Goudy, works in his shop but lacks the desire to follow in his footsteps; he wants to construct radios instead. Goudy also comments on his sister, Josie's, preference to travel by airplane: "Things have certainly changed since she lived on a Dakota prairie and travelled by horse and wagon." Goudy publishes a new book, *Hypologia*, which he sends a copy of to Grace and agrees to sign it when he visits Omaha. He is also working on a new "American" type for book use, which will be showcased in new publication of Rip Van Winkle.

He often writes about his failing health, from illnesses to physical injuries. In one letter, he apologizes to Grace for not writing more frequently due to recently tearing the ligaments in his right arm after slipping on the lower step of a street car: "The surgeon says I'll never have more than 50% use of it again." A growing fatigue becomes increasingly prevalent in his letters to Grace.

There are a few miscellaneous items, namely newspaper clippings, with information pertaining to Goudy's professional achievements. One piece comments on Goudy's early success in typography, having won acclaim with his type used in H.G. Wells' 1911 book of short stories. One Nebraska newspaper article, entitled "Here, Mr. Goudy is One of Your 110 Type Faces," writes on Goudy's frequent visits to Miss Gray's home in Omaha.

Arrangement Note

Chronological.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Accruals and Additions

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Related Materials

Dick Yale Papers, 1913-2002

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, folder title, box number, *Frederic W. Goudy Correspondence Collection*, Special Collections and University Archives, San Diego State University Library.

Biographical Note

Frederic Goudy was born March 8, 1865, in Bloomington, Illinois. He was an American printer and type designer whose typefaces include Copperplate Gothic, Goudy Old Style, and Kennerley. He was widely known for the success of his typefaces between 1915 and 1940, and often gave speeches regarding his passion for letter forms.

He was married to Bertha Matilda Sprinks, a typographer and fine press printer, from 1897 until her death in 1935. Frederic Goudy died on May 11, 1947, in Marlborough, New York.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Typographers--United States

Goudy, Frederic W. (Frederic William), 1865-1947

box 1, folder 1

Letters to Fred Goudy's Aunt Folder 1 n.d.

Scope and Contents

Scope and Contents note: Letter contents include travel plans, work updates, and description of new home in Hingham, Massachusetts.

box 1, folder 2

Letters to Alice Goudy Folder 2 1929

Scope and Contents

Scope and Contents note: Letter contents include travel plans, work updates (including Goudy's project of creating a new "American Typeface"), and family updates.

box 1, folder 3

Letter to Alice Goudy Folder 3 February 1930

Scope and Contents

Scope and Contents note: Letter contents include arrangements and intentions to meet up with Alice upon arrival in Omaha for a speaking arrangement.

box 1, folder 4

Letter to Grace Gray Folder 4 1929

Scope and Contents

Scope and Content note: Letter contents include available dates for Grace to visit Fred in New York and potential plans to visit a fair.

box 1, folder 5

Letters to Grace Gray Folder 5 1938

Scope and Contents

Scope and Content note: Letter contents include instructions and check compensation for shipping an item to New York, and arrangements for a short visit while on layover in Omaha on Goudy's way to Oregon.

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- box 1, folder 6 **Letters to Grace Gray Folder 6 1939**
Scope and Contents
Scope and Contents note: 6 letters total. Letter contents include: Updates on visit from Florence while in Berkeley, California, various arrangements to visit Omaha, updates on home renovations, weather, and studio furnishings, and a mass-printed message regarding the burning down of Goudy's printing shop around February or March of 1939.
- box 1, folder 7 **Letters to Grace Gray Folder 7 1941**
Scope and Contents
Scope and Contents note: Letter contents include general life updates, particularly travel arrangements and health updates.
- box 1, folder 8 **Letters to Grace Gray Folder 8 1940**
Scope and Contents
Scope and Content note: General life and work updates, description of a day party in Marlboro, New York, travel arrangements, and health updates.
- box 1, folder 9 **Letters to Grace Gray Folder 9 1942-1944**
Scope and Contents
Scope and Contents note: Letter contents include general life and health updates, mention of slow printing business due to war and daily hardships, announcements of being given an honorary degree and professional celebrations, and housing updates.
- box 1, folder 10 **Newspaper Clippings Folder 10 1939; 1946**
Scope and Contents
Scope and Contents note: Clippings relate to Goudy's professional printing history, beginning in 1896 with his first major success in 1911 when he designed the typeface for a book of short stories written by H. G. Wells. Clippings also include information related to Goudy's friendship with Grace Gray. The National Graphic Arts Education Association News Bulletin (1946) includes articles re Goudy's election to Honorary Life Membership.
- box 1, folder 11 **Postal Service Reciepts Folder 11 1938; 1940**
box 1, folder 12 **Collection Gift Reciept from San Diego State University Folder 12 1977**