Finding Aid for the Percy H. Muir papers, ca. 1919-1970

Processed by Helen McManus in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT), with assistance from Kelley Wolfe Bachli, 2008; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

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Manuscripts Division
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URL: http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/scweb/
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Percy H. Muir papers

Date (inclusive): ca. 1919-1970

Collection number: 1430

Creator: Muir, Percy H. (Percy Horace), 1894-1979

Extent: 4 boxes (2 linear ft.) 1 oversize box.

Abstract: Percy H. (Percy Horace) Muir (1894-1979) was a prominent twentieth-century antiquarian bookseller, book collector, and bibliographer. He joined the London antiquarian booksellers Elkin Mathews, Ltd. in 1930, and remained with this firm until his death. This collection contains materials relating to Muir's published and unpublished works, together with a small quantity of papers relating to Elkin Mathews. The collection is primarily comprised of Muir's loose-leaf notes on British imprints, together with the manuscript of an unpublished novel.

Language: Finding aid is written in English.

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

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Provenance/Source of Acquisition


Processing Note

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Percy H. Muir papers (Collection 1430). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

UCLA Catalog Record ID: 4233462

Biography

Born in London on December 17, 1894, Percy Muir began his career as a bookseller in 1920. He joined the London antiquarian booksellers Elkin Mathews in 1930, and would remain with that firm until his death in Norfolk on November 24, 1979.

Muir was an influential figure among booksellers and book collectors around the world. As president of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association in Britain from 1945-1947, Muir chaired the first conference of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB) in 1947. He then served as president of the ILAB from 1950 until 1952. At the end of his term in this office, he was elected Life President of Honor.

Muir's publications include several bibliographies and contributions to bibliographical journals such as The Library. He composed numerous letters, essays, and addresses on book collecting, including the immensely popular Book Collecting as a Hobby: Letters to Everyman (1944) and its sequel in 1949. Muir was a founding member of the Editorial Board of Book Collector, and wrote many reviews for this journal. His Minding My Own Business (1956) was both a history of the firm Elkin Mathews and an autobiographical account of Muir’s career from the early 1920s to World War II.

Scope and Content

This collection contains materials relating to the published and unpublished works of bookseller, book collector, and bibliographer Percy Muir, together with a small quantity of papers relating to the antiquarian bookselling firm Elkin Mathews, Ltd.
The bulk of this collection is comprised of Muir’s loose-leaf notes on British imprints. Muir aspired to produce a dictionary of imprints that would trace the links between printing or publishing businesses over time. This project began ca. 1931, inspired by a client’s query, and was apparently never completed to Muir’s satisfaction. He discusses some preliminary findings in the 1933 essay “English Imprints After 1640,” published in The Library, but the dictionary represented in this collection remains unpublished.

Each “entry” in the imprints notes contains the following information: imprint (printing or publishing business) at head of page, followed by a list of publication dates, and the address at which the business was found at each date. These listings are corroborated with reference to various bibliographies and dictionaries of publishers.

The collection contains the manuscript (178 handwritten pages) of an untitled and unpublished novel, the tale of a young man’s entry into the book trade. The novel appears to be semi-autobiographical, although it is written in the third person. The imprints notes and novel manuscript are written on the verso of various earlier notes, manuscripts, typescripts, printed proofs, and calling cards. Of particular interest, and scattered throughout, are: Muir’s 1954 work, English Children’s books: 1600-1900 (the chapter entitled “A Monstrous Regiment” is particularly well-represented), in various stages from manuscript to printed pages; Muir’s notes on European Music publishers, in a format similar to the British Imprints notes; and various anecdotes in Muir’s hand. A lengthy fragment, in pencil, of a translation of Friedrich Chrysander’s G. F. Händel can be found on the verso of p. 165-178 of the novel manuscript.

Also included in the collection are several invoices from the Elkin Mathews business, and a suggested “arrangement of sold-cards.”

Organization and Arrangement
Arranged in the following series:
1) Imprints. (4.5 boxes)
   Muir’s loose-leaf notes for a dictionary of British imprints, arranged alphabetically by printer or publisher name.
2) Unpublished Novel. (3 folders)
   Muir’s unfinished manuscript of a novel about a young man entering the bookselling trade.
3) Business Records. (2 folders)
   Invoices from Elkin Mathews, Ltd., arranged by date, and notes about the arrangement of sold-cards.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Subjects
Antiquarian booksellers--England--Archival resources.

Related Material
At Indiana University’s Lilly Library:
- Elkin Mathews, Ltd. Manuscripts, ca. 1919-1987
- Muir Manuscripts, 1959-1973
- Muir Manuscripts II, ca. 1892-1981

Business Records
Box 5, Folder 12

Invoices 1969 September 12 - 1970 March 02
Scope and Content Note

Box 5, Folder 13

Arrangement of sold cards undated
Scope and Content Note

Imprints
Box 1, Folder 1  Abbott-Baynes undated
Scope and Content Note
Includes list of abbreviations used for reference works throughout the Imprints notes:
"Refs to Abb."

Box 1, Folder 2  Beadle-Bluett undated
Box 1, Folder 3  Bogue-Brown, William undated
Box 1, Folder 4  Brown and Co.-Bysh undated
Box 1, Folder 5  Cable-Cawthorn undated
Box 1, Folder 6  Central-Churton undated
Box 1, Folder 7  City of London-Clyatt undated
Box 1, Folder 8  Cobbett-Coyne undated
Box 1, Folder 9  Craddock-Cuthell undated
Box 2, Folder 1  Daldy-Day & Son undated
Scope and Content Note
Includes extensive notes on the Darton family.

Box 2, Folder 2  Deacon-Dugdale undated
Box 2, Folder 3  Dulau-Dyson undated
Box 2, Folder 4  Eade-Eyre undated
Box 2, Folder 5  Fairburn-Funk undated
Box 2, Folder 6  G.-Griffith undated
Box 2, Folder 7  Griffiths-Harbord undated
Box 2, Folder 8  Harding-Hazell undated
Box 2, Folder 9  Head-Hogarth, J. undated
Box 2, Folder 10  Hogarth, R.-Hoxland undated
Box 2, Folder 11  Hudson-Hutton undated
Box 2, Folder 12  Incomplete list of publishers from E-G undated
Box 3, Folder 1  Ibbett-Ivison undated
Box 3, Folder 2  Jack-Johnson, E. undated
Box 3, Folder 3  Johnson, H.-Johnston undated
Box 3, Folder 4  Johnstone-Juta undated
Box 3, Folder 5  Kay-Khull undated
Box 3, Folder 6  Kidd-Köhler undated
Box 3, Folder 7  Lacey-Layton undated
Box 3, Folder 8  Lea-Leyland undated
Box 3, Folder 9  Library-Lowndes undated
Box 3, Folder 10  Lucas-Lynch undated
Box 3, Folder 11  Macara-Macquistan undated
Box 3, Folder 12  Macredie-Mayne undated
Box 3, Folder 13  Meacham-Mylrea undated
Box 4, Folder 1  Nall-Newton undated
Box 4, Folder 2  Nichol-Nuttall undated
Box 4, Folder 3  Oakey-Oxley undated
Box 4, Folder 4  Page-Pickering undated
Box 4, Folder 5  Pickton-Quinton [Quinlon?] undated
Box 4, Folder 6  Rackham-Rixon undated
Box 4, Folder 7  Roach-Ryley undated
Box 5, Folder 1  Sabin-Sivewright undated
Box 5, Folder 2  Skeet-Spurin undated
Box 5, Folder 3  Squire-Systematic undated
Box 5, Folder 4  Tabart-Vogel undated
Box 5, Folder 5  Wacey-Wells undated
Box 5, Folder 6  Wertheim-Whyte undated
Box 5, Folder 7  Wight-Wix undated
Box 5, Folder 8  Wogan-Ziegler undated

Unpublished Novel
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5, Folder 9</th>
<th>Manuscript, p. 1-67 undated</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 10</td>
<td>Manuscript, p. 68-119 undated</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Scope and Content Note**

This portion of the draft is written on the blank versos of printed pages from English Children's books: 1606-1900.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5, Folder 11</th>
<th>Manuscript, p. 120-178 undated</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Scope and Content Note**

This portion of the draft is written in a notebook. Pages 120 and 121 are pasted onto notebook covers, over various clippings. On versos of notebook pages: p. 19-35 of a translation of G. F. Händel / von Friedrich Chrysander. Includes upper wrapper of vol. 1 of this book.