Guide to the Ezra Pound/Elisabeth W. Schneider Correspondence

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Guide to the Ezra Pound/Elisabeth W. Schneider Correspondence, 1952-1958

Collection number: Mss 114

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Ezra Pound/Elisabeth W. Schneider Correspondence,
Date (inclusive): 1952-1958
Collection Number: Mss 114
Creator: Pound, Ezra,--1885-1972
Extent: .2 linear feet (1 half-size document box)
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Acquisition Information
Purchase, 1977.

Biography
From 1941 to 1943, the influential American poet Ezra Pound made over 120 pro-Fascist radio broadcasts directed at British and American troops over Radio Rome in Italy. A proud and vocal supporter of Benito Mussolini, Pound was arrested in 1945 and extradited to the United States to stand trial for treason. However, in an attempt to save him from the death penalty, Pound's attorney, Julien Cornell, arranged to have the poet declared insane. The government prosecutors did little
to challenge the diagnosis, and allowed Pound to be incarcerated at St. Elizabeths Hospital, a federal asylum outside Washington, D.C. He remained there until eventually being released, though still legally insane, in 1958. He immediately returned to Italy, where he lived until his death in 1972.

During his time at St. Elizabeths, Pound remained an extremely active literary figure, as his activities within the hospital grounds were unrestricted. He received visitors almost daily, and corresponded with numerous poets, writers, students, and scholars, including Dr. Elisabeth Wintersteen Schneider, a professor of English literature at Temple University in Pennsylvania. Between 1952 and his release in 1958, Pound corresponded routinely with Professor Schneider, sending her handwritten or typed notes in his own idiosyncratic shorthand. She also visited Pound at the hospital on different occasions.

Dr. Elisabeth W. Schneider was born in Salt Lake City, UT in 1897, but had moved to Pennsylvania by the time she was a teenager. She received a degree in Musical Theory from Smith College in Northampton, MA in 1920, and went on to earn a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania, the same college Pound himself had attended. She began teaching at Temple University in 1926, and after finishing her degree in 1933, went on to become a full professor by 1945. She spent the 1957-58 school year on sabbatical, writing and researching at home, and trading letters with Ezra Pound.

In 1964, Dr. Schneider came to the University of California Santa Barbara as a lecturer, where she remained for many years. She published numerous articles in journals such as Modern Language Notes, PMLA, and Explicator. She wrote seven books on poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and T.S. Eliot. She also served as president of the College English Association of America. She died in 1985 in Pennsylvania.

Further information about Ezra Pound may be found in numerous sources, including:

- Gallup, Donald Clifford. Ezra Pound, a Bibliography (Charlottesville, Va., 1983).

Scope and Content of Collection

Pound and Schneider began their correspondence in 1952, and it consisted primarily of trading literary recommendations, with Pound often providing addresses of small publishers who printed the works of obscure authors he considered important. His letters, written in a style Schneider described as “deliberately incoherent,” were peppered with jabs against the publishing industry and institutions of higher learning, including Schneider’s employer, Temple University. Early in 1954, Schneider’s book Coleridge, Opium, and Kubla Khan was published, and she requested the publisher send a copy to Pound as a courtesy. An offhand request by the editor, Barry Karl, for Pound’s “comments” provoked an angry response from the temperamental poet, leaving Dr. Schneider to play the diplomat. The entire exchange is preserved in the collection through handwritten drafts, carbon-copies, and letters typed on official stationery. Their correspondence ends a week after Pound was discharged from St. Elizabeths Hospital.

The collection also includes a brief exchange between Dr. Schneider and one of Pound’s favorite publishers, T.D. Horton of the Square Dollar Series. Also collected are several enclosures from Pound’s letters, as well as documents relating to Pound and the treason charges against him.

At UCSB:

- Ezra Pound/John Richmond Theobald Collection. (Mss 99).
- Pound, Ezra. 1 typescript manuscript, “Firdusi: Complaint of his Old Age,” translated by Basil Bunting and with holograph notes by Ezra Pound and Louuis Zukospskyl, ca. 1932. (SC 596).
- Pound, Ezra. 1 TLS to Dr. Rene Taupin. Rapallo, Italy, 12 Feb. 1930. (SC 598).
- Pound, Ezra. 1 typescript ms signed, with holograph annotations, “HAFIZ: Ghazal,” a literal translation between the couplets, n.d. (SC 600).

Other Published Correspondence:


[Ford, Ford Madox]. *Pound/Ford, the Story of a Literary Friendship: The Correspondence between Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Ford and Their Writings about Each Other* (New York, 1982).

[Henderson, Alice Corbin]. *The Letters of Ezra Pound to Alice Corbin Henderson* (Austin, Texas, 1993).


**Series 1. Correspondence -- Pound to Schneider**

| Box 1: 1 | 22 Oct. 1952 |
| Box 1: 2 | 2 Feb. 1953 |
| Box 1: 3 | 21 July 1953 |
| Box 1: 4 | Coleridge endorsement dispute, letters among Pound, Schneider, and Barry Karl, 24 Jan. - 9 Feb. 1954 |
| Box 1: 5 | 19 Dec. 1954 |
| Box 1: 6 | 26 Jan. 1956 |
| Box 1: 7 | 22 Aug. 1956 [with enclosure] |
| Box 1: 8 | [ca. Fall 1956] |
| Box 1: 9 | 18 Dec. 1956 [with enclosures] |
| Box 1: 10 | 20 Dec. 1957 |
| Box 1: 11 | 18 Mar. 1958 |
| Box 1: 12 | 14 May 1958 |

**Series 2. Correspondence -- Schneider and Horton**

| Box 1: 13 | Horton to Schneider, 27 Feb. 1953 |
| Box 1: 13 | Schneider to Horton, 6 Mar. 1953 |

**Series 3. Ephemera**

| Box 1: 14 | Enclosures from Pound with typewritten annotation, newsletters and clippings of *Square Dollar Series, Strike, and Human Events, 1952-1955* |
| Box 1: 15 | Academic Bulletin pamphlet regarding Pound, ca. 1956 |
| Box 1: 16 | Published items regarding Ezra Pound case, 1955-1958 |
| Box 1: 17 | *A Tribute to Ezra Pound*, promotional flyer, December 1955 |