
Finding aid for the Ambrose Bierce correspondence collection 0342

Finding aid prepared by Sue Luftschein

USC Libraries Special Collections

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Title: Ambrose Bierce correspondence collection

Collection number: 0342

Contributing Institution: USC Libraries Special Collections

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.42 Linear feet1 box

Date: 1893-1913, undated

Abstract: Letters from Ambrose Bierce to a variety of correspondents, including Samuel Loveman, B.J.S. Cahill, and Burnette G. Haskell. The collection also includes copies of some of Bierce's contracts with Neale Publishing, and pamphlets advertising his "Collected Works."

creator: Bierce, Ambrose, 1842-1914?

Conditions Governing Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE: Advance notice required for access.

Preferred Citation

[Box/folder# or item name], Ambrose Bierce correspondence collection, Collection no. 0342, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Related Archival Materials

See also Willard Morse collection on Ambrose Bierce, Collection no. 0136.

Conditions Governing Use

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Scope and Content

Letters from Ambrose Bierce to a variety of correspondents, including Samuel Loveman, B.J.S. Cahill, and Burnette G. Haskell (and one letter from Haskell). The collection also includes copies of some of Bierce's contracts with Neale Publishing, and pamphlets advertising his "Collected Works." Of particular note is Bierce's last letter to Samuel Loveman, in which he indicates he is off to South America and does not know when he will return.

Biographical note

Ambrose Bierce was an American writer, poet, editor, journalist, and satirist. Born in Ohio in 1842, Bierce enlisted in the Union Army and fought at, among others, the Battle of Shiloh. His experiences formed the basis for several stories and his memoir, "What I saw of Shiloh." After the war, he settled in San Francisco and earned a reputation as a contributor and/or editor for a number of local newspapers and periodicals. He spent the years 1872-1875 in England where his first book was published. Upon his return, he traveled throughout the West and worked for a mining company, but when the company failed, he returned to journalism in San Francisco, working for William Randolph Hearst's San Francisco Examiner. Bierce was a biting social critic, and much of his journalistic career was steeped in controversy, but he was also well known for his encouragement of younger writers, such as the poet George Sterling (who is often referred to in the letters in this collection). At the age of 71, Bierce left for South America and disappeared without a trace. His disappearance has become one of the most famous in literary history.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Bierce, Ambrose, 1842-1914? -- Archives

Bierce, Ambrose, 1842-1914? -- Correspondence

Cahill, Bernard J.S., (Bernard Joseph Stanislaus), 1867- -- Archives

Haskell, Burnette G., 1857-1907 -- Correspondence

Loveman, Samuel, 1887-1976 -- Archives

American poetry--20th century--Archival resources

Contracts

Correspondence

Pamphlets

Poets, American--20th century--Archival resources

Box 1, Folder 1	<p>BJ.S. Cahill 1908, 1912, 1913</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Letters from Bierce to Cahill, discussing publication of Bierce's "Ashes of the Beacon" (August 8, 1908); publication of his "Collected Works" (September 12, 1908); obtaining Cahill's address from one of Cahill's articles and his opinion of Cahill's Butterfly Map (December 12, 1912); mentions the Civic Center (January 20, 1913). These letters were published in "The Letters of Ambrose Bierce" by Bertha Clark Pope.</p>
Box 1, Folder 2	<p>Harper & Brothers 1907 August 2</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Letter from S.[?]M. Alden, Harper's Magazine, regarding the return of "Pierrot".</p>
Box 1, Folder 3	<p>Burnette G. Haskell 1893, 1894</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Letter from Haskell to Bierce extending an open invitation to visit (May 27, 1893). Letters from Bierce indicating poor health (June 1, 1893); asking about publication of Haskell's account of the Kaweah Colony (October 10, 1894); explanation of his description of Haskell as "a mischevious man" (October 21, 1894).</p>
Box 1, Folder 4	<p>Mrs. Johnson 1910 December 27</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Thanking her and her husband for their hospitality while in San Francisco.</p>
Box 1, Folder 5	<p>Samuel Loveman 1908</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Return of verses mistakenly sent to Bierce, apologizing for no connection with "The Cosmopolitan", and complimenting Loveman on the excellence of the verses (October 17, 1908); thanking Loveman for the privilege of reading his poems, which, while good, were not equal to his other work, and requesting a copy of "Pierrot" for submission to "The Cosmopolitan" (November 20, 1908); offer to publish "Pierrot" in his own magazine and an explanation of his edits (December 6, 1908).</p>
Box 1, Folder 6	<p>Samuel Loveman 1909</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Mentions that his poem is in print, indicates that he prefers Loveman's rhyme to his blank verse (May 13, 1909); indicates that he could help Loveman find a publisher for any translation of Heine's poetry he might undertake, "Pierrot" was not well received at "Everybody's" magazine and he includes the editor's comments, he will send it to the "Atlantic" (June 18, 1909); the "Atlantic" has rejected "Pierrot" and he plans to send it to "Harper's", he will keep all the notes of rejection for his own literary purposes and will eventually send them to Loveman, as indication of what literary poetry is not, mentions his work on his "Collected Works" (July 27, 1909); references an included note from Mr. Alden that "Pierrot is poetry" and asks him for the note back for the record of "Pierrot vs The Magazines", likes Loveman's plan for translating Heine, asks him to visit on his way to Europe (August 5, 1909); thanks him for a photograph, has no more rejections of "Pierrot" (September 2, 1909); thanks Loveman for a magazine with his poem, sends him the latest "rejection" of "Pierrot", one of dozens but includes a remark from Markham about its worth, mentions his poor health (November 2, 1909); thanks him for his inquiry into his health, mentions he will go to California after he finished the last volume of the "Collected Works", asks if he's still "minded Europeward" (December 21, 1909).</p>

Box 1, Folder 7	<p>Samuel Loveman 1910</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Apologizes for neglecting correspondence, will be off to California when he's done, encloses a copy of Ezra Pound's "Ballad of the Goodly Fere" (March 7, 1910); thanks him for a copy of "The Younger Choir", doesn't know when he will return from California, went to Yosemite with Sterling, mentions a published version of "Pierrot" (July 22, 1910); remarks on Loveman's attitude and his intention of visiting California, describes his visit with Sterling, expects he will settle in Carmel with the "high-brows", says he is just "loafing" (September 13, 1910); recommends he travel to California via the Santa Fe route and stop at the Grand Canyon, mentions that Pound's poem was submitted to him in manuscript form (November 27, 1910).</p>
Box 1, Folder 8	<p>Samuel Loveman 1911</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Is sorry that Loveman did not go to California, recommends Sterling's latest book, hopes his letter to the NY Times Review will "enlighten the darkness of that sheet" (May 28, 1911); notes time spent with Sterling in Sag Harbor, saw Loveman's tribute to Sterling and is glad the "literary folk" are taking him seriously, discusses the preface to Loveman's book (September 18, 1911); apologizes for not responding due to illness, is awaiting impatiently Loveman's book which is not copyrighted, is tired of working on his "Collected Works" (November 21, 1911).</p>
Box 1, Folder 9	<p>Samuel Loveman 1912</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Wishes Loveman happiness and prosperity in the New Year, mentions that Loveman's poems have given him great pleasure, invites Loveman to go to Yosemite with him and Sterling in June (January 5, 1912); saw Sterling in California but doesn't think he will go back again, discusses his philosophy of living and writing (November 26, 1912).</p>
Box 1, Folder 10	<p>Samuel Loveman 1913</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Mentions that his friend Mencken now knows of Loveman and is impressed, tells him to send Mencken his book (May 4, 1913); letter of good bye saying he is going to South America in a few weeks and doesn't know when he will return. (September 10, 1913).</p>
Box 1, Folder 11	<p>Robert Mackay 1903 September 7</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Sending a photograph of himself, explains the delay in sending copy is due to ill health.</p>
Box 1, Folder 12	<p>Peterson 1897 January 28</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses his health.</p>
Box 1, Folder 13	<p>James Tufts 1898 September 6</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Recommends his young friend Scheffaner to Tufts as a potential newspaper reporter.</p>
Box 1, Folder 14 Box 1, Folder 15 Box 1, Folder 16	<p>Agreements with Neale Publishing Company 1902-1908 [Pamphlets for Bierce's "The Collected Works] undated [List of Bierce's reviews, magazine sketches, and memos] undated</p> <p>General note</p> <p>Possibly removed from the Willard Morse collection on Bierce.</p>
