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Ernest Hunter Wright Collection 4079505

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Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
Business Number: (212) 854-5153
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu
URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Summary	5
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	7
Controlled Access Headings	7
Collection Inventory	7
Series I: Manuscripts	7
Series II: Correspondence	9
Series III: Personal Papers	9
Series IV: Cragmoor Community Properties	10
Series V: Mary Heritage Wright	11

Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Wright, Ernest Hunter, 1882-1968
Title:	Ernest Hunter Wright Collection
ID:	4079505
ID:	MS#1395
Date [inclusive]:	1892-1968
Date [bulk]:	1924-1968
Physical Description:	2.5 linear feet 5 document boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Ernest Hunter Wright Collection contains the unpublished manuscripts, and correspondence of Ernest Hunter Wright, a professor of English beginning in 1910 and the head of the Department of English from 1933 to 1947, the collection also contains his wife Mary Heritage Wright's diaries and manuscripts.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Ernest Hunter Wright Collection; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Ernest Hunter Wright was born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1882. He came to New York around 1900 to work with a social worker on the Bowery and attend Columbia College. During Wright's senior year, with Seth Low as his sponsor, he helped to found a school at the Young Men's Institute on the Bowery. Wright was responsible for hiring teachers and beginning instruction while the rest of the staff was assembled. The students paid \$12 a year in tuition, and the school was intended to prepare them for college.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Wright graduated from Columbia in 1906 and received his Ph.D from the University in 1910. He worked as an instructor of English beginning in 1910, became a full professor in 1928, and from 1933-1947 was the head of the English Department. During that time, he wrote *The Meaning of Rousseau* and *The Authorship of Timon of Athens*. His academic writing was on a variety of subjects, including the Romantics and Shakespeare. Wright also edited *The Richards Encyclopedia* in 1933 with his wife Mary Heritage Wright.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

The Wrights owned a home in Cragmoor, New York where they spent the summers and retired after Wright left Columbia in 1947. In 1950, the community theater was threatened with closure, but Wright convinced many of his friends to provide financial support to buy the theater from its owner. The theater was purchased in 1950 by Cragmoor Community Properties, and from 1950-1953, with Wright as President the organization invited theater groups in to perform in the summer.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

After managing the theater for 3 years, Wright retired from the Cragmoor organization, and concentrated on writing articles and manuscripts, mainly autobiographical stories and non-fiction articles, many unrelated to his scholarly texts. Wright wrote about his early time in New York, particularly when he lived on the Bowery, including an autobiographical story "Groton on the Bowery." He wrote on literary topics, particularly poetry, ethics, and Shakespeare. Wright also became interested in social commentary, and produced articles about safe driving, rules of the road, and the politics of violence in film. One of these articles about how to skip stones was published in *Scientific American* in 1957, and Wright received many responses to the question. Wright also wrote a series in the *New York Times* called "Speaking of Books."

His health slowly deteriorated throughout the 1950's and 1960's, and he died in 1968. Mary Wright died a year later and bequeathed her husband's papers to Columbia University.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Summary

The Ernest Hunter Collection comprise manuscripts, correspondence, diaries, legal and banking papers, and a few photographs. The collection focuses on the period between 1947 and 1968 when Wright died, and is concentrated in the management of the Cragmoor Community Properties.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is arranged is arranged in five series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. xml document instance created by Lea Osborne EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2009-06-26 2011-02-17 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML approves permission to publish that which it physically owns; the responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Estate of Mrs. Wright. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1969. Accession number--M-69.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 09/--/89.

Processing Information

Papers processed Alison Lotto, New York University and the Palmer School, 2013 2011 February.

Processing Information

Papers recataloged Lea Osborne 2011 February 17.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Selected Related Material at Columbia

Columbia University English Department Letters Collection, MS#0257

Selected Related Material at Other Repositories

Cragsmoor Theatre Programs (Cragsmoor, N.Y.). New York State Library

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Community organization
- Literature -- Study and teaching
- Theater
- Women -- Diaries
- Correspondence
- Manuscripts (documents)
- Personal papers
- Photographs
- Prints (visual works)
- Report cards
- Wright, Ernest Hunter, 1882-1968
- Columbia University. Department of English and Comparative Literature
- Columbia University -- Faculty
- Cragsmoor Theater

Collection Inventory

Series I: Manuscripts, 1930-1968

Scope and Contents

Series I of the Ernest Hunter Wright papers mainly documents the period between Wright's retirement from Columbia in 1947 and his death in 1968. He was very busy and prolific during this time, and wrote many articles on a variety of subjects. The manuscripts in the collection are quite varied, reflecting his many interests, and most remain unpublished. The manuscripts are almost entirely undated, and are

organized alphabetically. There are multiple drafts of many of the manuscripts, which are in separate folders, and as close to the order they were written as could be discerned.

Title/Description	Instances	
"A Poet's Secret", undated	box 1	folder 1
"Are You a Safe Driver?", undated	box 1	folder 2
"Enchantress, Wake Again!", 1943	box 1	folder 3
"Ethics of the Dust", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 4 to 5
"Forgotten Bards", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 6 to 7
"Groton on the Bowery", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 8 to 9
"Hamlet, an Ill Made Play", undated	box 1	folder 10
"Have You Learned How to Be Happy", undated	box 1	folder 11
"Helen Keller", undated	box 1	folder 12
"Just Accident?", undated	box 1	folder 13
"King of the Bowery", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (3 Folders)	box 1	folder 14 to 16
"Moriturus Saluto", undated	box 1	folder 17
"Not Greek to Him", undated	box 1	folder 18
"One Wandering Word", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 19 to 20
"The Royal Road to Learning", undated	box 1	folder 21
"Speaking of Books", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 22 to 23
Short Stories, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (4 Folders)	box 1	folder 24 to 27
"To My Scientific Friends", undated	box 1	folder 28
"Tom", undated	box 2	folder 1
"Universal Tune", undated	box 2	folder 2
Untitled Book, Chapter 1, undated	box 2	folder 3
Untitled Book, Notes, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 2	folder 4 to 5
Untitled Manuscripts, undated		

<u>Physical Description</u> : (6 Folders)	box 2	folder 6 to 11
Untitled Poem, undated	box 2	folder 12
"What the Russians Must Think of Us", undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 2	folder 13 to 14
"What Man Has Thought of Man", 1961 <u>Physical Description</u> : (3 Folders)	box 2	folder 15 to 17

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series II: Correspondence, 1908-1968

Scope and Contents

A portion of the personal correspondence contained in this series is between Ernest Hunter Wright and Mary Thomas Branham, a former student who sent also sent him an unpublished manuscript that she wrote about living in Dublin as a disabled woman. There is one letter from his daughter written right before his death, and a few letters from while he was completing his PhD. There is also a group of letters related to an article Wright wrote in *Scientific American* posing a question about the mechanics of skipping stones on water. Many people responded with ideas, and Wright had an extended correspondence with a young man named Kirtson Koths on the subject.

Title/Description	Instances	
Branham, Mary Edith, 1962	box 3	folder 1
General, 1908-1968	box 3	folder 2
<i>Scientific American</i> , 1957-1968	box 3	folder 3
Koths, Kirtson, 1966-1968	box 3	folder 4

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series III: Personal Papers, 1892-1962

Scope and Contents

The papers are related to his time at Columbia University as well as his retirement. A number of the papers are related to Mary Edith Branham, a student of Wright's at Columbia. She was in a wheelchair after a childhood bout of polio, and worked as an assistant to the President. Branham moved to Dublin with her husband after Columbia, and wrote a manuscript about life as an academic and handicapped woman traveling in Ireland. During Wright's time as chair of the English Department, his responsibilities required him to deal with a variety of department transactions and this series contains receipts, speeches and notes. The personal papers also contain Wright's report cards from Lynchburg, Virginia in the 1890's. There is also a folder of greeting cards and Christmas papers, and a small print of a hill signed by Heskell. Five photographs are included in the personal portion of the collection.

Title/Description	Instances	
Notes--Branham, Mary Thomas, 1962	box 3	folder 5

"Dublin or Nothing," 1962	box 3	folder 6
Notes--Dean Hawkes	box 3	folder 7
Department Transactions, 1942	box 3	folder 8
Speech at the English Graduate Union, 1943	box 3	folder 9
Program of English Department Dinner, 1944	box 3	folder 10
Notes--Copy of 18th century French Correspondence	box 3	folder 11
Report Cards, 1892-1898	box 3	folder 12
Miscellaneous Cards, 1892-1898	box 3	folder 13
Print (visual work), undated	box 3	folder 14
Man and Two Women, undated	box 3	folder 15
Two Women Facing Vista, House, undated	box 3	folder 16
Unidentified Gentleman, Photograph, undated	box 3	folder 17
Unidentified Gentleman, Photograph, undated (oversized), undated	folder 14- P-1	

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series IV: Cragmoor Community Properties, 1950-1954

Scope and Contents

A large part of the collection is contained within Series IV, a group of papers related to the Cragmoor Community properties. This series is made up of correspondence and organization files, with some legal papers interspersed among the letters. The general correspondence file contains letters regarding the general fundraising and upkeep up the theater from a variety of local artists and friends. Wright wrote extensively to raise money, both to buy and maintain the theater, and organized all of the tenants of the theater and adjoining restaurants. Many of the letters contain financial pledges to the community, or responses to his requests. Because of the financial difficulties of maintaining the theater, Wright also wrote to the creditors of the theater. This series also contains insurance policies, leases, and other business papers in relation to the letters. Wright also kept meeting minutes, leases, and legal papers related to the community ownership of the theater.

Title/Description	Instances	
General, 1950-1954 <u>Physical Description:</u> (5 Folders)	box 3	folder 18 to 22
Performers, 1950	box 3	folder 23
Foley, Paul, 1951-1952	box 3	folder 24
By-laws and Incorporation Documents, 1950	box 4	folder 1
The Terwilliger Insurance Agency, 1950-1954	box 4	folder 2
Financial Transactions and Correspondence, 1949-1954	box 4	folder 3

Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1950-1954	box 4	folder 4
Leases and Correspondence, 1950-1952	box 4	folder 5
List of Plays, 1952	box 4	folder 6

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series V: Mary Heritage Wright

Scope and Contents

Series V is entirely focused on Mary Heritage Wright, and is some of the earliest material in the collection. Mary Wright's diaries from the 1920's describe the Wright's daily life at Columbia and Cragmoor, and detail their personal lives and work. Mary Wright's series also contains a complete draft of a book she edited, *Your Land and Mine*, a compilation of poems and fictional works by a variety of authors. Many were reprinted versions of published works, including previously published writings by Robert Frost and Henry David Thoreau. The book is organized by geographic region and concentrates on New England.

Title/Description	Instances	
1923 January 1-1923 December 31	box 4	folder 7
1924 January 1-1925 September 5	box 4	folder 8
1927 June 5-1928 September 13	box 4	folder 9
List of Authors, 1930s	box 5	folder 1
<i>Your Land and Mine</i> , 1930s	box 5	folder 2 to 5

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)