

# **Clara and Rudolf Kirk collection of William Dean Howells material**

**Ms. Coll. 1027**

**Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.**

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Last updated on April 14, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2014 September 17

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Kirk, Clara Marburg, 1898-1976
<b>Creator</b>	Kirk, Rudolf, 1898-1989
<b>Title</b>	Clara and Rudolf Kirk collection of William Dean Howells material
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1027
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1860-1963
<b>Extent</b>	2.8 linear feet (7 boxes)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	The Clara and Rudolf Kirk collection of William Dean Howells material consists of literary and visual materials by or about William Dean Howells, an American author, playwright, and literary critic. It was compiled by Clara and Rudolf Kirk, who were scholars studying Howells, circa 1940-1963. The collection includes essays and reviews written by or about Howells, correspondence and newspaper clippings by or regarding Howells, six scrapbooks about Howells' life and career, and other miscellaneous materials.

**Cite as:**

Clara and Rudolf Kirk collection of William Dean Howells material, 1860-1963, Ms. Coll. 1027,

Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

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## Biography/History

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William Dean Howells (1837-1920) was an American author, playwright, and literary critic born in Ohio and self-educated through intensive literary and language study. He traveled throughout the United States, and in 1861, he was sent to Italy for four years as the U.S. Consul to Venice. Following his time in Italy, Howells returned to the United States for a fifteen-year editorial career with *The Atlantic Monthly*, during which he published work by and became close friends with Mark Twain and Henry James. He continued to be an important presence in the literary world until his death in 1920 and was often called the "Dean of American Letters." During his lifetime, Howells wrote over one hundred books across the genres of fiction, poetry, literary criticism, plays, memoirs, and travel narratives, but he is best known today for his realistic fiction.

Clara Marburg Kirk (1898-1976) and Rudolf Kirk (1898-1989) were "the major active figures among the traditional scholars of Howells" (Carrington, 2). Both Clara and Rudolf Kirk spent much of their careers as English professors at Rutgers University and frequently worked as a team to research and write articles. **Works Cited** Campbell, Donna M. "W. D. Howells Biography." W. D. Howells Society official website, accessed September 11, 2014. <http://howellssociety.wordpress.com/biography/howells-biography/>. Carrington, George C. *The Immense Complex Drama*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966.

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## Scope and Contents

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The Clara and Rudolf Kirk collection of William Dean Howells material consists of literary and visual materials by or about William Dean Howells compiled by Clara and Rudolf Kirk circa 1940-1963. The Kirks donated this material along with over two hundred volumes that was aggregated when the Kirks "caught the fever and purchased small items as [they] thought [they] needed them in [their] home library" (*Library Chronicle*).

The collection comprises seven series: I. Pamphlets, articles, and reviews about Howells; II. Issues of magazines containing reviews of James and Howells by each other; III. Reviews, essays, and commentary by and about Howells; IV. Newspaper clippings dealing with Howells' life and work or containing a Howells association; V. Scrapbooks; VI. Correspondence; and VII. Miscellanea. Researchers should be aware that little of this material is original and instead is a set of photocopies probably utilized by the Kirks for their own research.

Series I is composed of pamphlets, articles, and reviews about Howells, the bulk of which were written by the Kirks between 1941 and Van Pelt Library's acquisition of the collection in 1963. Other significant authors include George Arms, Louis J. Budd, Edwin Cady, William M. Gibson, and Donald Pizer. These

articles focus mainly on Howells' literary work but also contain a few published versions of Howells' correspondence with various interlocutors, including Mark Twain.

Included in Series II are issues of magazines containing reviews of Howells and Henry James by each other. Publications in this series include: *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Century*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*, *The Independent*, *The Nation*, and *The North American Review*.

Series III contains reviews, essays, and commentary by and about Howells spanning the years 1860 to 1969, with the majority of the material having been written before Howells' death in 1920. Pieces by Howells include such genres as travel writing, literary criticism, and fiction. Pieces about Howells are mainly reviews and commentaries on Howells' work or life.

The fourth series comprises photocopied newspaper clippings, originally published between 1883 and 1924, that deal with Howells' life and work or relate to Howells in some way. These vary widely in topic and include, among other things: literary criticism, interviews, editorial letters, biographical information, a debate transcript, commentary about the literary world, memorial pieces written after Howells' death, and the occasional bit of humor.

The fifth series is made up of correspondence falling into two subseries. The first subseries includes correspondence to and from Howells and is composed of photocopies and handwritten transcriptions of correspondence that Howells sent or received. Money, writing, and travel are common topics in these letters. One folder is devoted to photocopies of typed transcriptions of Howells' correspondence regarding the Chicago Haymarket Riot. The second subseries contains correspondence by multiple authors about Howells, including several about his Swedenborgian influences, and includes a curated list of Mark Twain's letters to Howells along with commentary by an unnamed author.

Series VI includes six scrapbooks, which, according to the Kirks, were intended to "cast an oblique light on the less known sides of Howells' long life" (*Library Chronicle*). Scrapbook I contains short writings by Howells as well as newspaper and magazine clippings about him that were compiled by Mary Magruder and given to the Kirks upon her death in 1940. The remaining scrapbooks were all compiled by the Kirks and contain images, photocopies of articles and correspondence, and clippings regarding Howells' life. Scrapbook II covers Howells' childhood and early life in Ohio and Massachusetts. Scrapbook III deals with most of Howells' time spent in New York. Scrapbook IV contains material regarding Howells' time in Maine and his later time in New York; it also includes holograph letters by Howells and letters to the Kirks from members of Howells' family. Scrapbook V includes photocopies and clippings of text written by and about Howells as well as mementos of the Kirks' Howells-related trips around the United States. Scrapbook VI is composed of photocopies of newspaper articles, primarily from the *Boston Daily Advertiser* spanning the years 1862 to 1865. These articles are either unsigned or signed as some variation on "Our Correspondent."

The final series contains miscellaneous materials relating to the Kirks' research on Howells as well as a few documents whose connection to Howells or the Kirks is unknown.

This collection will probably prove useful to those studying Howells or how Howells' works affected scholars. Since most of the collection is composed of reproduced materials aggregated for research purposes, it may serve as a helpful starting point for a project on Howells or those who have studied him.

**Works Cited** Campbell, Donna M. "W. D. Howells Biography." W. D. Howells Society official website, accessed September 11, 2014. <http://howellssociety.wordpress.com/biography/howells-biography/>.  
Carrington, George C. *The Immense Complex Drama*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966.

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## Administrative Information

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2014 September 17

Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.

### **Access Restrictions**

The bulk of this collection is open for research use, however use of Howells - James correspondence beyond simple study requires permission of the Houghton Library (Harvard), correspondence may not be photocopied. Clearly-stamped restrictions on certain files in Box 6 Folder 6 prohibit photocopying of those materials.

### **Use Restrictions**

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

### **Custodial History note**

Gift of Clara and Rudolf Kirk, 1963.

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

At American Antiquarian Society: William Dean Howells, Papers, 1903-1914

At Columbia University: William Dean Howells papers, 1883-1919

At Harvard University: Howells family papers, 1850-1954

William Dean Howells Correspondence and compositions, 1894-1917

William Dean Howells papers

John Knight Reeves William Dean Howells collection

Other collections at Harvard University

At Princeton University: William Dean Howells collection

At Texas State University: Clara and Rudolf Kirk Papers

At University of Virginia: Papers of William Dean Howells, 1866-1919

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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**FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Correspondence
- Reprographic copies
- Scrapbooks
- Writings (document genre)

**PERSONAL NAME(S)**

- Howells, William Dean, 1837-1920
- James, Henry, 1843-1916
- Twain, Mark, 1835-1910

**SUBJECT(S)**

- Authors
- Authors, American--19th century
- Authors, American--20th century
- Literature
- Literature--Study and teaching

## Collection Inventory

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### I. PAMPHLETS, ARTICLES, AND REVIEWS ABOUT HOWELLS.

	Box	Folder
Abel-Anonymous, 1956-1957, 1960.	1	1
Arms, George (multiple titles), 1942-1944, 1946, 1967.	1	2
Ayers-Budd, 1951-1953, 1955, 1957, 1959.	1	3
Buitenhuis-Cady, 1948, 1953, undated.	1	4
Carter-Clark, 1949-1950, 1953, 1961.	1	5
Coyle-Eble, 1956-1957, 1959.	1	6
Foster-Fox, 1952, 1959.	1	7
Gibson (multiple titles), 1947, 1958, 1967.	1	8
Gifford-Harlow, 1949, 1958.	1	9
Kirk, Rudolf and Clara M., 1941, undated.	1	10
Kirk, Rudolf and Clara M. in <i>Journal of Rutgers University Library</i> , 1950, 1957-1959.	1	11
Kirk, Rudolf and Clara M., 1958-1959.	2	1
Kirk, Rudolf and Clara M., 1961-1963, 1969.	2	2



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Manierre-Pizer, 1950, 1956, 1959-1962.	2	3
Reeves-Richardson, 1942, 1950-1951, 1958, 1961.	2	4
Rischin-Smith, 1953, 1958, 1961.	2	5
Sokoloff-Watts, Multiple Authors, 1950-1951, 1958-1960, 1968, 1970, undated.	2	6

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**II. ISSUES OF MAGAZINES CONTAINING REVIEWS OF JAMES AND HOWELLS BY EACH OTHER.**

	Box	Folder	
<i>The Atlantic Monthly</i> , 1869, 1875.	2	7	
<i>The Atlantic Monthly</i> , 1878-1880.	3	1	
<i>The Century</i> , 1882, 1885.	3	2	
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , 1887-1888.	3	3	
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , 1889-1890.	3	4	
<i>Harper's Weekly</i> , 1895 July 27.		50	Fold
	Box	Folder	
<i>The Independent</i> (Photocopy). <i>The Nation</i> (Photocopy), 1874-1875.	5	1	
<i>North American Review</i> (multiple issues, some photocopies), 1868, 1875, 1903, 1912.	5	2	

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**III. REVIEWS, ESSAYS, AND COMMENTARY BY AND ABOUT HOWELLS (PHOTOCOPIES, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED).**

**BY HOWELLS.**

	Box	Folder
1860.	5	3
1865-1866.	5	4
1899, 1902-1904.	5	5
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , "Editha-A Story", 1905 January.	4	1
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , "London Films, Part III", 1905 June.	4	2
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , "London Films, Part IV", 1905 July.	4	3
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , "A Fortnight in Bath", 1905 November.	4	4
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , "Kentish Neighborhoods", 1906 September.	4	5
<i>Harper's Magazine</i> , Centennial Issue: 1850-1950, 1950.	4	7

**ABOUT HOWELLS.**

	Box	Folder
1866, 1868.	5	6
1882-1883, 1887.	5	7
1890-1892, 1898-1899, 1908.	5	8

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After his death, (originals and one photocopy), 1952, 1962, 1964, 1969.	5	9
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**IV. NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS DEALING WITH HOWELLS' LIFE AND WORK OR CONTAINING A HOWELLS ASSOCIATION, 1883-1924.**

	Box	Folder
1883, 1887, 1889.	5	10
1890-1894.	5	11
1896, 1899.	6	1
1900.	6	2
1901, 1905, 1908, 1912.	6	3
1920, 1924.	6	4
undated.	6	5

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**V. CORRESPONDENCE.**

**CORRESPONDENCE TO AND FROM HOWELLS (PHOTOCOPIES AND HANDWRITTEN TRANSCRIPTIONS).**

	Box	Folder
Photocopied correspondence from Howells (with one letter to Howells from	6	6

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Augustus Hoppin), 1861-1908.

Handwritten transcriptions of correspondence to and from Howells with some correspondence of John Mead Howells and Miriam Howells, 1860-1927.

6

7

**Photocopies of correspondence to and from Howells concerning the Chicago Haymarket Riot, 1887-1888.**

6

8

**Scope and Contents note**

Includes two photocopies of publication covers concerning the Chicago Haymarket Riot.

**CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT HOWELLS.**

Box

Folder

Rudolf Kirk correspondence with multiple authors regarding location of Howells' letters, 1940-1941, 1946.

6

9

Correspondence between multiple authors regarding Howells' Swedenborgian influence, 1914, 1947, 1951.

6

10

List of Howells' correspondence with Mark Twain including excerpts from Twain's letters, undated.

6

11

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**VI. SCRAPBOOKS.**

Box

Folder

Scrapbook I, compiled by Mary Magruder, 1940.

6

12

Scrapbook II, undated.

6

13

Scrapbook III, undated.	6	14
Scrapbook IV, undated.	7	1
Scrapbook V, undated.	7	2
Scrapbook VI, undated.	7	3

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**VII. MISCELLANEA.**

	Box	Folder
Clara Kirk's personal card file of Kirk-Howells Collection, undated.	7	4
Slides of houses associated with Howells, 1958-1959, 1961-1962, undated.	7	5
Materials concerning "The Kinsmen", 1882-1887, undated.	7	6
"Mark Twain's 70th Birthday" supplement to <i>Harper's Weekly</i> , 1905 December 30.	7	7
<i>Harper's Monthly Magazine</i> , "The Witnesses. A Poem," by Mildred Howells, 1906 October.	4	6
Poem, "Rhyme & Reason" by Mrs. E.B. Browning and Kirks' book list of Howells, Emerson, Twain, Whitman, and Scott, undated.	7	8