

Joseph Hergesheimer collection

Ms. Coll. 1097

Finding aid prepared by Ben Rosen.

Last updated on April 14, 2017.

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

2015 July 3

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Hergesheimer, Joseph, 1880-1954
Title	Joseph Hergesheimer collection
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1097
Date [inclusive]	1954-1956
Extent	0.5 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	Joseph Hergesheimer (1880-1954) was a prominent American novelist and short story writer of the early 20th century whose best-known novels include <i>The Lay Anthony</i> (1914), <i>Three Black Pennys</i> (1917), and <i>Java Head</i> (1919). This collection presents a fragmentary sample of his notebooks which include drafts of stories, poetry, and recollections of F. Scott Fitzgerald. These are supplemented by autobiographical material, bibliographies, a reminiscence about writer James Branch Cabell, and correspondence (from Dorothy Hergesheimer and Louisa Jessup) with William McCarthy, the donor of the collection.

Cite as:

Joseph Hergesheimer collection, 1954-1956, Ms. Coll. 1097 Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Joseph Hergesheimer (1880-1954) was a prominent American novelist and short story writer of the early 20th century born in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Having made an unsuccessful attempt at becoming a painter while studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Hergesheimer quickly took up writing after taking a proofreading job for the writer Adeline Kingscote (who published as "Lucas Cleeve"). Once decided upon his new career, he worked incessantly, completing many novels and stories in a short period of time, the most famous of these being *The Lay Anthony* (1914 - his first published novel), *Three Black Pennys* (1917), and *Java Head* (1919). Though it took some time for him to gain recognition, Hergesheimer eventually became quite popular, and was voted best contemporary author in 1922. His fame didn't last for long, however. His "aesthetic" style, as it is known, with its florid prose centering around upper class characters, began to lose favor with an increasingly disillusioned public facing the Great Depression and the World Wars. He published his last novel in 1936 and abandoned his aestheticism for an intense reading of history, philosophy, and religion. He died in 1954. For more information please see Victor E. Gimmetstad's monograph, *Joseph Hergesheimer*.

Scope and Contents

Coming from a writer who published fourteen books in twenty years, this single box of nine folders represents a mere fraction of the papers Joseph Hergesheimer must have created. The first folder collects a few typed drafts of autobiographical material. One draft refers to Hergesheimer in the third person, but seems likely to have been written by him as well. The second contains a complete bibliography of Hergesheimer's works from the year of his death, as well as several inventories: "Books by Joseph Hergesheimer at Biddle Street," a list of Hergesheimer's magazine publications, and a few lists of books owned by Dorothy Hergesheimer which include works of her husband as well as H. L. Mencken. The third folder contains a single sheet of Hergesheimer's reminiscences of writer James Branch Cabell. The five folders of fragmentary notebooks provide a small window into Hergesheimer's working method, preserving handwritten drafts for a variety of texts, including stories, poetry, and recollections of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Many loose pages appear mixed in with bound notebooks and have been kept in the order in which they were found. Finally, the last folder contains correspondence with William McCarthy, who is responsible for bringing the collection to the University of Pennsylvania. Aside from one letter authored by Louisa Jessup, these were written by Hergesheimer's wife Dorothy.

Administrative Information

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

2015 July 3

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

Gift of William McCarthy, 1960.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

At the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin: Joseph Hergesheimer collection, 1902-1975 (MS-1921) and Joseph Hergesheimer Literary File.

At the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania: E. Sculley Bradley papers, 1876-1970 (bulk: 1944-1962), Ms. Coll. 1083, Theodore Dreiser papers, and Miscellaneous Manuscripts.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Autobiographies

- Correspondence
- Inventories
- Notebooks

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Cabell, James Branch, 1879-1958

SUBJECT(S)

- Authors
- Authors, American--20th century
- Literature

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Autobiographies, undated.	1	1
Bibliographies, 1954, 1956, undated.	1	2
Cabell, James Branch, reminiscence by Hergesheimer, undated.	1	3
Notebooks, undated.	1	4-8
William McCarthy correspondence with Dorothy Hergesheimer and Louisa Jessup, 1956, undated.	1	9