

**The New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Swinburne Hale papers  
1901-1924**

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## Summary

<b>Main entry:</b>	Hale, Swinburne
<b>Title:</b>	Swinburne Hale papers, 1901-1924
<b>Size:</b>	2.3 linear ft. linear feet ((8 boxes, 1 oversized folder))
<b>Source:</b>	Purchased from Serendipity Books, Berkeley, California, 1995.
<b>Abstract:</b>	Chiefly correspondence documenting the personal life of Swinburne Hale (1884-1937), a New York City lawyer and poet, who from 1910 to 1920 was married to Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale, actress and feminist author and lecturer, and from 1921 to heiress Marie Tudor Garland.
<b>Access:</b>	Collection is open to research. Apply in Special Collections Office.
<b>Copyright information:</b>	
<b>Preferred citation:</b>	Swinburne Hale papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
<b>Special formats</b>	Love letters.
<b>Alternate formats:</b>	

## Biographical note

Swinburne Hale was born in Ithaca, N.Y., probably in 1884, the oldest of four children. His father, William Gardner Hale, was a classical scholar and one of the founders of the American School of Classical Studies in Rome and its first director, and head of the department of Latin at the then new University of Chicago. His mother, Harriet Knowles (Swinburne) Hale, was a Vassar alumna, active in various organizations and sympathetic to woman suffrage. Gardner Hale, his brother, was a painter and married to the author Marice Rutledge. His sister Margaret was married to the artist Ralph M. Pearson and his youngest sister Virginia was also an artist.

Hale attended Harvard University and obtained his A.B. in 1905. He then went on to Harvard Law School and graduated in 1908 with an LL.B. After his studies, he moved to New York City and worked for the law firm of Masten and Nichols. Later he founded Ehlerman, Hale and Wright. In the late 1910s he founded another law firm, Hale, Nelles and Schorr, with his friend Walter Nelles.

Hale married twice. In 1910 he married Beatrice Forbes-Robertson (1883-1967), a successful stage actress and niece of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson. Mrs. Hale continued working after her marriage, became a woman suffrage advocate and feminist and prolific author and lecturer. They had three daughters: Sanchia and the twins Rosemary and Clemency. They were divorced in 1920. After the divorce, Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale returned to England, but visited the U.S.A. on many occasions and remained involved in the women's rights movement. Hale's second wife, whom he married in 1921, was Marie Tudor Garland. She had caused headlines in 1912 when she forfeited a large estate by marrying her second husband Francis Cushing Green. Between 1922 and 1924 Hale spent most of his time in Taos, New Mexico and had a relationship with Greta R. Hercz, a young art student from Chicago.

Hale was briefly involved with the publication of a new magazine called *New France* (1917-1921), that dealt with relations between the United States and France and the reconstruction of France after World War I.

In 1918 Hale served as a Captain of the Intelligence Division to the General Staff of the U.S. Army. In 1920 Hale, together with Alfred Bettman, former Special Assistant U.S. Attorney General in charge of sedition prosecutions, testified before the Committee on Rules of the House of Representatives, on the need for more sedition laws. Hale was active in the socialist movement, was a member of the Committee of Forty-eight and played a role in their Chicago convention in 1920 when the Committee of Forty-eight and the Labor Party tried to form a third major party. The same year he was counsel for some communists who were taken to Ellis Island for deportation.

A collection of his poems, *The demon's notebook: verse and perverse*, was published in 1923 by N.L. Brown, N.Y.

Hale had a history of nervous problems, suffered a major breakdown in 1925 and died in 1937 at the age of 53 in a sanitarium in Westport, Connecticut.

## **Scope and content note**

The Swinburne Hale Papers consist primarily of personal correspondence (about 600 letters) from family and friends, documenting a small portion of the private life of Swinburne Hale, from about 1908, when Hale moved to New York City, to 1924, when he was living in Taos, N.M. The papers do not reflect his activities as a lawyer or his socialist sympathies.

About 140 letters are from his first wife, Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale, and deal primarily with family matters but also contain some observations of the many people and places she visited while touring the USA as a speaker on feminism, as well as some of her views on marriage. Some reference in the letters is also made to Hale's aspiration to become a poet and to his brief involvement with the magazine *New France*.

The letters from his family pertain mostly to family matters. The majority of the letters were written by Hale's mother, either from Chicago, where his parents lived, or from the family compound, Aguiden Lodge, in Kineo, Maine, where they spent summers.

Hale wanted to become a poet and some letters from Mrs. Warren of Tahanto Farms and one from Harriet Monroe, editor of *Poetic Verse* reflect these aspirations. Some other correspondents of interest are the playwright H.W. Bynner, the editor (and Hale's uncle) W.C. Brownell and the scholar and philosopher G.H. Palmer.

Shortly after his second marriage, Hale separated and tried to obtain a divorce, documented in some correspondence between him, Walter Nelles and R. Renegan. Around that same time, he met Greta R. Hercz and their correspondence reflects the intense relationship they had during 1922-1924.

Included in this collection, although not related, are some correspondence and juvenilia of Greta R. Hercz.

## **Arrangement note**

The Swinburne Hale papers are organized in the following series:

- Series 1: Incoming correspondence
- Series 2: Outgoing correspondence
- Series 3: Other correspondence / miscellaneous materials
- Series 4: Greta R. Hercz materials

## Series descriptions and container list

Box

Fol

### Series 1: Incoming correspondence

4 boxes

Letters and some telegrams from Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale (box 1), were written between 1913 and 1919 when she was touring the USA as a lecturer and speaker on women's rights or while spending the summers in Scituate, Massachusetts. The letters pertain mostly to family matters, such as finances, housing, the children, travel arrangements, and their marriage and its problems because of Hale's infidelities. Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale also discussed the books she was writing and her support for her husband's aspirations to become a poet and his desire to quit working as a lawyer. She described the many places and people she visited while traveling as well as the attendance and success of her many lectures.

Letters from Hale's family (box 2) span 1908 to 1918, are primarily from his mother and deal mostly with family matters. The one letter from his sister Margaret contains an original bookplate etching by her husband, the artist Ralph M. Pearson.

Box 3 of this series contains the letters from Greta R. Hercz. She had come to Taos, presumably to work for Ralph M. Pearson. The letters date from December 1922, when she returned to Chicago to January 1924, when she joined Hale again in Taos. Many of the more intimate letters were reportedly burned at his insistence.

Other correspondents (box 4) include W.C. Brownell, H.W. Bynner, G. H. Palmer and Walter Nelles. (Note: more correspondence with Walter Nelles can be found in Series 3, box 7, pertaining to Hale's divorce proceedings and related and real estate issues). Included with the letters from Mrs. Warren are two annotated typed poems by Hale, titled Daemon and War, and one manuscript plot for a story.

### Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale, 1913-1919

1	1	1913
	2	1914
	3	1915-1916
	4-5	1917
	6-7	1918
	8	1919

### Family Letters

2	1	Hale, Gardner, 1911-1917
	2	Hale, Harriet K., 1908-1909
	3	Hale, Harriet K., 1913-1916
	4	Hale, Harriet K., 1917-1918
	5	Hale, Margaret Pearson, 1918
	6	Hale, Virginia, 1911-1917
	7	Hale, William Gardner, 1913-1917
3	1-6	Hercz, Greta R., 1922-1923

Box      Folder

**Letters from Others**

4	1	Brownell, W.C. Bynner, H.W.
	2	Monroe, H. Nelles, W
	3	Palmer, G.H.
	4	Warren, Mrs.
	5	B-G
	6	H-M
	7	N-Z

Box      Fol

**Series 2: Outgoing correspondence**

Two boxes

This series includes some early letters sent by Hale to his mother, including one (1915) discussing his new law firm, and some love letters to Evelyn (last name unknown) (Dec. 1918-Jan.1919). The bulk of this series consists of his love letters to Greta R. Hercz (May 1923-Jan. 1924), and deal primarily with their relationship, his life out West, building a house, and his health, both physical and mental.

5	1-7	Letters to Greta R. Hercz, 1923 May - Dec.
6	1	Letters to Greta R. Hercz, 1924 Jan.
	2	Letters to Others, 1901-1918

Box      Fol

**Series 3: Other correspondence / miscellaneous materials**

One box

This series contains two letters to Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale, a copy of a letter from Olive Schreiner to Gertrude Forbes-Robertson (Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale's mother), discussing Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale's book and dress reform, two letters to Hale's sister, and one to his mother, from his aunt Virginia Swinburne.

Also included is an office memorandum from the law firm of Ehlerman, Hale and Wright, detailing a new profit-sharing plan for the employees. This series also contains some correspondence (Oct. 1923-June 1924) between Hale, Nelles and Renegan (a Sante Fe lawyer) about Hale's divorce and related real estate issues.

Newspaper clippings included are about Hale's engagement and upcoming marriage to Beatrice Forbes-Robertson, a full page newspaper article (Fort Wayne Gazette, April 24, 1921) about Hale's second wife, Marie Tudor Garland, and a copy of an article about the fiftieth anniversary of the Class of 1873 (Vassar College) and the Brownell Prize Fund, in memory of Virginia Swinburne, Hale's aunt and the wife of W.C. Brownell (Boston Evening Transcript, June 8, 1923).

7	1	Other correspondence
	2	Office memo/legal/real estate
	3	Miscellaneous items
	4	Clippings (Oversized clippings filed in charter case.)

Box

Fol

**Series 4: Greta R. Hercz materials**

One box

This series consists of letters sent to Hercz by her family and friends in 1913 and from 1922 to 1924. Also included are a notebook and some juvenilia.

Correspondence, 1913-1924		
8	1	1907-1913
	2	1913-1917
	3-4	1922
	5	1923
	6	1924; undated
	7	Notebook; juvenilia