

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION  
ACCESSION SHEET

Accession # \*85-M 23

Location Annex

Title George Haven Putnam Papers

Shelf location

Approximate inclusive dates 1887-1930 (bulk dates 1914-1930)

Date of receipt 1930

Received from Mrs. <sup>(Emily)</sup> George Haven Putnam

Volume on arrival

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 18

Condition The papers themselves are in quite good shape; the folders and boxes, as well as many newspaper clippings in the collection are crumbling badly.

Restrictions none

Description George Haven Putnam (1844-1930) was a publisher and author best known for his life-long commitment to the establishment of national copyright legislation in the United States, and to American adherence to the international copyright Convention of Berne. He was the son of George Palmer Putnam (1814-1872), also a publisher and author who lobbied for an American and international copyright, as early as 1837. George Haven Putnam joined his father as a partner in his publishing business (George P. Putnam & Son) at the early age of 22, (1866) after a varied education- Columbia Grammar School, Columbia University, and Gottingen University- that was interrupted by Putnam's service in the Civil War. Putnam saw active service from 1862 to 1865, including one year as a prisoner; by the age of 20, he attained the rank of major, a rank and title that he continued to use for the rest of his business and private life.

Upon his father's death in 1872, Putnam assumed control of the company, a position that he maintained until his own death. This long career coincided with his life-long concern for copyright. He became an expert on the legal implications of copyright, and as such testified in many court cases, congressional hearings, and in 1879 before the English Royal Commission on Copyright. In 1886 he formed the American Publisher's Copyright League. He remained the secretary of the organization until it was absorbed into the National Association of Book Publishers in 1922, where he continued as the chairman of the copyright bureau. These organizations were in large part responsible for the passage of the copyright bills of 1891, 1909, and the eventual entrance of the United States in the Berne Convention. In addition to Mr. Putnam's efforts on behalf of copyright, he was a prominent member of New York and London societies; born in London, he spent several months there every year, maintaining G.P. Putnam and Son's London office. Active in politics, he campaigned for both American and British candidates. In addition, Putnam was a member of the American Free Trade

Special Formats  Photographs  Maps  Audio Tapes  Films  Graphics (cont.)  
 Artifacts  Machine-readable records  
 Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary catalog card added entries R.R. Bowker(1848-1933) Joseph H. Harper(1850-1938)  
Henry Holt(1840-1926) Charles Scribner(1854-1930) Copyright History-Sources-Publishing  
Publishers and Publishing Thorvald Solberg(1852-1949)

Accessioned by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

League, The Allies Bazaar, as well as the Committee of Fifteen and the Committee of Fourteen, two organizations dedicated to the eradication of commercialized vice in New York City.

3 on 4  
The papers of George Haven Putnam (1887-1930, bulk dates 1913-1930) are comprised for the most part of correspondence relating to his efforts at establishing and improving Copyright legislation in the United States. This correspondence was directed to, or emanated from the two organizations that Putnam headed- the American Publishers Copyright League, or the National Association of Book Publishers, but to a remarkable extent the correspondence of the two organizations was identical. The rest of the papers consist of 3 Minute Books: 1894-1897; 1887-1889, 1894-1910; 1914-1910, and clippings relating to copyright- both in the United States, and Canada and Europe, and reprints of the many government publications, hearings and legislation on the subject of copyright. There is also a small amount of material relating to Putnam's involvement with the Allies Bazaar, a largely honorific committee dedicated to the raising of monies for the French and British War efforts of 1916. Finally there are the correspondence and clippings revolving around the publication and distribution of presentation copies of Putnam's book The Censorship of the Church of Rome (2 Volumes, 1906-1907) two volumes dealing with the questions of an earlier era on the rights of authors, publishers, and readers.

The correspondence itself breaks down into several series. There is the official correspondence of the organizations themselves to their members, the many publishers and their representatives. The membership included among others D. Appleton, and Co. , The Atlantic Monthly Press, Bobbs Merrill, R.R. Bowker Co. , Brentano's, The Century Co. , E.P. Dutton, Harper and Bros. , Henry Holt and Co. , Little Brown and Co. , The Macmillan Co. and Charles Scribner's Sons. In addition to this formal correspondence concerning dues , meetings, etc., there is also the more informal communication between Putnam as copyright expert and many of his peers in the field of publishing on the subject of the various bills before Congress, as well as individual copyright infringements. These correspondents include R.R. Bowker, Henry Holt, Joseph Harper, Frederick Stokes, William Morrow, and Charles Scribner. There is also a substantial body of letters to and from Thorvald Solberg, register of Patents and Copyright at the Library of Congress, who at various times was considered an ally or an enemy, depending on his support of the particular bill under consideration in the House or Senate. Finally, there are the requests from many sources for Putnam's interpretation of particular copyright issues.

The Putnam papers provide very good access to the copyright concerns of the publishers and not incidentally to those of the librarians, authors and typesetters unions- that is, a broad constituency of the American book world. These papers represent a documentation not just of the specific legislation, but also of the nature of the discussion of the issues of intellectual and economic property, and the relationship of labor business, artists and government to these questions.

GEORGE HAVEN PUTNAM PAPERS

BOX

CONTENTS

American Publishers Copyright League

- 1 1888-1891; letters re "Censorship of the Church of Rome" 1906-1907
- 2 1898-1914
- 3 1914-1919
- 4 1919-1921
- 5 1905-1906; correspondence of Secretary (G.H. Putnam), revision of copyright status
- 6 1918-1920
- 7 Scrapbook - Copyright League notices, 1905-1921

National Association of Book Publishers, Copyright Bureau

- 8 Correspondence A-B
- 9 C-L
- 10 M-N
- 11 N-P
- 12 Q-Z
- 13 Correspondence, 1922-1929
- 14 1929-1930; copyright bills
- 15 Pending measures
- 16 Selected papers re copyright
- 17 Allies Bazaar correspondence, June 1916; copyright cases and decisions
- 18 Copyright - old bills, printed matter (English and American)