

**The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Flora May Holly
Papers, 1902-1959**

**Genna Rae McNeil, 1982
Revised: John D. Stinson, 1998**

Summary

Title: Flora May Holly Papers, 1902-59

Size: 5.2 lin. ft. (15 boxes)

Source: Visiting Nurse Association of Stamford, Connecticut, 1961 (bulk)

Access: Unrestricted

Abstract The papers consist of correspondence, authors' manuscript control cards, personal miscellaneous papers, miscellaneous financial papers and printed ephemera. The papers reflect the career and (to a lesser extent) the personal life of Flora May Holly, literary agent of New York City and Stamford, Connecticut, who during the decades of the 1920's - 1940's represented many prominent American authors including Gertrude Atherton, Theodore Dreiser, Edna Ferber and numerous other writers of fiction and non-fiction for the popular press. Included are miscellaneous papers relating to her friend and companion, the author and editor, Arthur Bartlett Maurice.

Biographical Note

Flora May Holly (1868-1960) was born in Stamford, Connecticut, the daughter of Charles E. Holly and Elizabeth Turnbull Holly. After attending private schools in Connecticut and a business school in New York City, Ms Holly worked as an editorial assistant on the staff of *The Bookman*. By the mid-1920's she had become established as one of the leading independent literary agents in New York. During the course of her career she represented many prominent authors, including Gertrude Atherton, Theodore Dreiser, Edna Ferber, and numerous lesser-known writers of fiction and non-fiction earmarked for the publishers of popular magazines. In the early 1940's she transferred her office from New York to Stamford (Conn.) where she continued her career as literary agent in addition to hosting a local radio show on current books and authors. During her later years she was active in several local civic organizations including the National League of American Pen Women of Connecticut, of which she became president, and the Stamford Business and Professional Women's Club. She was never married. For many years she was a close friend and companion of the author and editor, Arthur Bartlett Maurice.

Note On The Dreiser-Holly Correspondence

Theodore Dreiser's correspondence with Flora May Holly is available to researchers in the Manuscripts & Archives Division on a microfilm copy acquired through the courtesy of the Special Collections Department, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania (3420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6206) which has custody of the original microfilm. (The whereabouts of the original correspondence from which the microfilm was made is not known). Permission to reproduce or publish this correspondence should be obtained from the Van Pelt Library.

Arrangement Note

The papers are arranged into three series: I. Papers as Literary Agent; Personal Papers; and III. Papers relating to Arthur Bartlett Maurice. The series are described in sequence below.

Series Descriptions

SERIES I. PAPERS AS LITERARY AGENT

(CONTAINERS #1-6)

The bulk of the papers consist of correspondence of Ms Holly with authors, writers, editors, publishers, and literary agents relative to the placing of her clients' manuscripts with publishers of books and magazines, her evaluations of manuscripts submitted to her, royalties received, and related matters. The files are arranged alphabetically and are mainly in the period 1920's-1940's. Some of the correspondence contains collateral papers including authors' scripts, agreements, and royalty statements. There is also a file of authors' manuscript control cards (arranged alphabetically) which record the title and date of manuscripts received by Holly and the actions taken to place them with publishers. Correspondents include Gertrude Atherton, Faith Baldwin, Whitman Chambers, Robert Hobart Davis, Dodd, Mead & Co., Lucille Selk Edgerton, Edna Ferber, Temple H. Fielding, Philip M. Fisher, Jay Garon, Guy Gilpatric, Fannie Hurst, Mary W. King, Margaret Larson, Richard Le Gallienne, Sinclair Lewis, Travis Mason, Arthur Mizener, Ann Ritner, Edith S. Stebbins, Toni Strassman, Ida M. Tarbell, and Philip Wylie. The correspondence with Edith S. Stebbins, who managed Ms Holly's office, provides a detailed account of the methods employed by Ms Holly in marketing her clients' manuscripts.

As noted above the Theodore Dreiser correspondence is available to researchers on microfilm acquired through the courtesy of the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania which has custody of the original microfilm. The microfilm (which is shelved separately in the Division's microfilm collection) contains five letters from Dreiser to Holly; a photograph of Dreiser with two unidentified men; and two letters to Holly from Ripley Hitchcock.

SERIES II. PERSONAL PAPERS

(CONTAINERS #7-14)

The personal papers are arranged into four subseries: A. Personal Correspondence; B. Personal Miscellaneous Papers; C. Financial Papers; D. Printed Matter.

A. The Personal Correspondence (1910-59), which is arranged chronologically (followed by a section arranged alphabetically in separate folders), consists of miscellaneous correspondence of Ms Holly with friends, associates, and others including her brother Graham Holly. The correspondence concerns miscellaneous matters relating to her financial affairs and to her personal and social life including her speaking engagements, teas, luncheons, radio broadcasts, and her membership in the Connecticut Pioneer Branch of the National League of American Pen Women. Other correspondents include Louis Adamic (5/26/34); Cleveland Amory (separate folder); Louis Bromfield (9/17/33); Shelton Dewey (separate folder); Frederick Taber Cooper (7/24/29); Havelock Ellis (1/8/22, 4/13/23, 11/12/24, 5/18/33); Geraldine Farrar (11/3/38); Federated Garden

Clubs of Connecticut (separate folder); John Lodge (separate folder); Clare Booth Luce (9/17/42, 11/8/50); Arthur Bartlett Maurice (undated); National League of American Pen Women (separate folders); Charles Hanson Towne (10/2/31, 2/26/31); and Peggy Wood (6/27/31). The correspondence with her brother, Graham Holly (in separate folders), relates in large part to Ms Holly's financial affairs. Included are letters of sympathy sent to Ms Holly on the death (1953) of Graham Holly.

B. The Personal Miscellaneous Papers include desk diaries (1954, 1958); scripts of miscellaneous writings including book reviews ("Book Notes"); a scrapbook (unbound) of personal clippings; water color sketches of Ms Holly; photographs of her and of other persons (many of whom are unidentified); and other miscellany.

C. The Financial Papers consist of miscellaneous bank statements; bills and receipts; canceled checks; insurance papers; miscellaneous royalty statements; income tax papers; a bank book; two ledgers; and check stubs.

D. The bulk of the Printed Ephemera consists of publishers' book lists, news releases and publicity flyers; and clippings from magazines of articles by writers whom Ms Holly represented.

SERIES III. PAPERS RELATING TO ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE
(CONTAINER #15)

Arthur Bartlett Maurice (1873-1946), author and editor, was a longtime friend and companion of Ms Holly's. He was formerly editor of *The Bookman* and literary editor of the New York *Herald* and the New York *Sun*.

The papers (1902-46) consist of miscellaneous correspondence received by Maurice arranged chronologically; miscellaneous legal papers; personal miscellany including passport photos, documents relating to Maurice's service as member of the Commission for Relief in Belgium during World War I.; a few typescript drafts of writings; and two literary notebooks. Some of the correspondence received is from readers of *The Bookman* and from readers of Maurice's books. Correspondents include Arthur St. John Adcock (4/18/22); George P. Brett (2/17/21); Marion Thompson Davies (7/3/16); Arthur Guiterman (2/11/16); Arthur Stringer (6/30/15); and Charles Hanson Towne (9/14/34). The literary notebooks contain notes and drafts of articles for issues (1909-10) of *The Bookman*.

Container List

Container No.

I. Papers As Literary Agent

A. Correspondence

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | “A”, “B”, “C”
Chambers, Whitman
“D”, “E”
Edgerton, Lucille Selk |
| 2 | “F”
Fisher, Philip M.
“G”
Garon, Jay
Gilpatric, Guy
Gilpatric, M. S. (Mrs.) |
| 3 | “H”, “I”, “J”, “K”, “L”
Lane, Jeremy
Larson, Margaret
Leffingwell, Albert
“M”
MacGregor, Dollie Sullivan |
| 4 | Mason, Travis
“N”, “O”, “P”, “R”
Ritner, Ann
“S”
Strassman, Toni
“T” |
| 5 | Tebbins, Edith S.
“V”, “W”
Wright, Priscilla H.
“Y”, “Z”; unidentified
Form letters; notebook of shorthand letters (1954) |

6 B. Authors' Manuscript Control Cards

II. Personal Papers

- 7 **A. Personal Correspondence**
- (Chronological)
 1910-1959 and undated; Xmas cards
- (Alphabetical)
 Amory, Cleveland
 Dewey, Shelton
 Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut
 Holly, Graham
 -letters (1939, 1942-53)
 -letters (1952-53) re Graham Holly
- 8 Lodge, John
 National League of American Pen Women - Connecticut
 Pioneer Branch
- 9 **B. Personal Miscellaneous Papers**
- desk diaries (1954, 1958)
 -legal papers
 -miscellany (water color drawings of Ms Holly;
 genealogy; lists; luncheons & teas; notes for
 autobiography; codicil to will)
 -photographs
 -publicity (biographical; scrapbook of clippings)
 -Stamford Business & Professional Woman's Club
- 10 -writings (miscellaneous)
- C. Financial Papers**
- 11 -bank statements
 -bills & receipts
 -canceled checks
 -insurance papers
 -royalty statements
 -tax papers
- 12 -bank book (1937-42)
 -ledgers (1950-52)
 -check stubs (1946-54)

13 -check stubs (1954-57)

14 **D. Printed Ephemera**

15 **III. Papers Relating To Arthur B. Maurice**