Summary

Main entry: Towne, Charles Hanson, 1877-1949

Title: Charles Hanson Towne Papers, 1891-1948

Size: 5 linear feet (9 boxes)


Abstract: Charles Hanson Towne (1877-1949) was an author, editor and popular New York celebrity. His papers consist of letters from his friends and associates, many of them prominent in the theatre, literature and the arts, as well as Towne’s writings, financial papers, press clippings, photographs, and ephemera.

Access: Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.

Preferred citation: Charles Hanson Towne Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Special formats: Photographs
Biographical note

Charles Hanson Towne (1877-1949), was an author, editor, and popular New York celebrity. He moved from Kentucky to New York City with his family at the age of three. Towne began his literary career quite early as the eleven year old “publisher” of the *Unique Monthly*, a children’s magazine written by and for Towne and his friends. After a year at City College, Towne got his first break as an editorial assistant at *Cosmopolitan* magazine. In 1901 he moved to the *Smart Set*, a new magazine for a sophisticated urban clientele, where he held numerous positions before becoming editor in 1904. *Smart Set* was the first of the many important magazines Towne was to edit, including the *Delineator* (1907-1910), *Designer* (1910-1915), *McClure’s* (1914-1920), and *Harper’s Bazaar* (1926-1929). In addition to his editorial duties, Towne was a prolific writer. He authored numerous volumes of poetry, novels, plays, travel essays, an etiquette book, song cycles, lyrics for musicals and operettas, and memoirs. Much of his writing celebrates New York City, most notably his work *Manhattan: A Poem* (1909) and his books of reminiscences. Towne was felt by many to be the quintessential New Yorker. From 1931-1937 he wrote a personal and literary column for the *New York American*, taught a poetry course at Columbia University, and in 1940 joined the touring company of the Broadway hit, *Life With Father*. In 1945 Towne summed up his career with the autobiography, *So Far, So Good*. 
Scope and content note

The Charles Hanson Towne Papers contain correspondence, his writings, financial papers, press clippings, photographs, and ephemera. The correspondence, 1922-1948, is arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent, and contains letters from Towne's friends and fans, many of them prominent in literature and the arts. His most frequent correspondents represented in the collection include, Gertrude Atherton, Marie Adelaide Belloc, Major Edward Bowes, Royal Cortissoz, Theodosia P. Faulks, Zona Gale, Ellen Glasgow, Carolyn Wells Houghton, Fannie Hurst, Richard Le Gallienne, Edgar Lee Masters, Somerset Maugham and Edgar P. Snow. Following the incoming letters is a small folder of outgoing letters, 1918-1931. However, some copies of Towne's replies can be found filed with incoming letters.

The bulk of the collection consists of Towne's writings. Nine notebooks contain holograph manuscripts of his poems, plays, stories, essays, and newspaper columns, 1915-1944. Following the notebooks are undated typescripts of many of his works arranged by genre. His writings also appear in the scrapbooks of press clippings.

The remainder of the collection contains financial correspondence and documents, papers relating to the poetry course he taught at Columbia, and additional press clippings, ephemera, and photographs. Among his Columbia papers are poems written by his students, among them, J.D. Salinger.
Container List

**Correspondence, 1918-1948**

Only one or two items per correspondent except where noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Fol</th>
<th>Correspondent</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Abbott, C.D.</td>
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<td>Abbott, Sid</td>
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<td>Adams, George Matthew</td>
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<td>Adams, Samuel Hopkins</td>
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<td>Alda, Frances</td>
<td>19-- Jan 26</td>
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<td>Alexander, Grand Duke of Russia</td>
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<td>Allen, Hervey</td>
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<td>Althouse, James H. W.</td>
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<td>Anderson, Lee</td>
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<td>Anglin, Margaret</td>
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<td>Astror, Helen</td>
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<td>Atherton, Gertrude</td>
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<td>Auslander, Joseph</td>
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<td>Bacheller, Addison Irving</td>
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<td>Bacon, Jospehine Daskam Dodge</td>
<td>1936, 1945</td>
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<td>Baldwin, Ellis K.</td>
<td>1937 (Includes reply from Towne)</td>
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<td>Baldwin, Faith</td>
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<td>Barnes, Margaret Ayer</td>
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<td>Bara, Theda</td>
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<td>Becker, I.S.</td>
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<td>Belloc, Marie Adelaide</td>
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<td>Benefield, Barry</td>
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<td>Bogert, William Russell</td>
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<td>Borie, Lysbeth Boyd</td>
<td>19-- Jul 6</td>
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<td>Bowes, Edward</td>
<td>1936-1943 and undated</td>
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<td>Letter from radio audience, 1942-1943</td>
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<td>Letters from listeners in response to reading of Towne's poem, “Around the Corner”</td>
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<td>Branch, Anna Hempsted</td>
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<td>Branson, James R.</td>
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<td>Briggs, William Harlowe</td>
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<td>Brock, William</td>
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<td>Bromfield, Louis</td>
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<td>Brown, John Mason</td>
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<td>Burke, Billie</td>
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<td>Burke, Thomas</td>
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<td>Burt, Struthers</td>
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<td>Carlton, W.N.C.</td>
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<td>Carter, Juanita</td>
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<td>Case, Frank</td>
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<td>Chrysler, Walter P., Jr.</td>
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<td>Cobb, Irwin S.</td>
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<td>Coffin, Tristram</td>
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Connell, William E., 1931

Cooper, Courtney Ryley, 1937
Cortissoz, Royal, 1924-1943 (11 items)
Covici, Pascal, 1938
Cowl, Jane, 1936; 1945
Criswell, Charles J., 1945
Cross, Wilbur L., 1937
Davis, Elmer, 1939
Daly, Thomas Augustine, undated
Damrosch, Walter, 1940
Derleth, August, undated
Draper, Dorothy, undated
Dreiser, Theodore, 1936
Easterbrook, Norman S., 1933
Eichhorn, Hermene Warick, 1935
Engle, Paul, 1939
Engler, Robert, 1931
Eyre, Harold, 1945
Faulks, Theodosia P., 1930-1943 and undated
Fayant, Frank H., undated
Ferber, Edna, 1933 and undated
Fisher, William Edgar, undated
Fiske, Minnie Maddern, 1924
Forbes, James, 1937
Fox, Lyttleton, 1936
Fried, Johnny
Frohman, Daniel, undated
Gale, Zona, 1924-1933 and undated (8 items)
Garland, Hamlin, 1933 and undated
Gelbfish, Abraham, 1945
Genthe, Arnold, undated
George, Grace (see Mrs. William A. Brady)
Gibbons, Douglas, 1945
Gibbons, Lee Wallis, 1945
Glasgow, Ellen, 1934-1944 (16 items)
Gogarty, Oliver St. John, 1934 (Poem)
Golding, Louis, undated
Gordon, Avery, 1935
Gray, Henry G., 1945
Greene, Belle da Costa, 1924, 1928
Guest, Edgar A., 1941
Guiterman, Arthur, 1925
Hale, Nancy, 1937
Hamilton, Florence, 1945
Hampden, Walter, 1945
Harrison-Irving, Jessamine, undated
Haslett, Elmer, 1936
Henderson, Daniel, 1938
Herford, Beatrice, 1933
Hoover, J. Edgar, 1936
Houghton, Carolyn Wells, 1933-1941 and undated (11 items)
Hoult, Geneva F., 1945
Houston, Carol and James, 1932
Howard, Sidney, 1938
Howells, John Mead, 1945
Hughes, Rupert, 1934
Hurst, Fannie, 1933-1946 and undated (35 items)

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Jackling, Daniel C., 1938
Jacobs, Catherine H., 1945
Janis, Elsie, undated
Johnson, Owen, 1927-1940 (4 items)
Jones, Frederic M., 1931 (1 item plus enclosure and reply from Towne)
Kahler, Hugh McNair, 1944
Kane, Whitford, undated
Kemp, Harry, undated (two items and typescript of sonnet)
Kuerr, Harry Q., 1945
Kucharsky, Mitchell, undated
La Farge, Christopher, 1943
Larremore, Thomas A., 1936
La Rue, Grace, 1945
Lee, Muna, 1931
Le Gallienne, Eva, 1945 and undated (4 items)
Le Gallienne, Hesper, 1932-1948 (4 items)
Le Gallienne, Irma, 1932-1935 and undated (8 items)
Le Gallienne, Richard, 1926-1945 (??)
Lincoln, Joseph C., 1938
Little, Arthur W., 1938
Luce, Clare Boothe, 1942
Lurton, Douglas E., 1945
McCutcheon, John Tinney, undated
McEvoy, Alice, undated
McFee, William, 1932
McIntyre, O.O., 1936
MacKaye, Percy, 1940
McRaye, Walter, 1945
Malone, Ted, 1938
Marbury, Elizabeth, undated
Markham, Edwin, 1921
Marsh, Edward, 1921
Martin, Virginia C., undated
Masters, Edgar Lee, 1936-1946 and undated (22 items)
Maugham, W. Somerset, 19226-1946 and undated (20 items)
Mencken, H. L., 1936
Meredith, Grace, 1931 (1 item with reply from Towne)
Merritt, George Franklin, 1945
Middleton, George, 1936
Mile, Dorothy, 1931
Monroe, Harriet, 1932-1933
Morgan, Anne, 1924

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Nathan, George Jean, undated
Nesbit, Evelyn, 1932
Nevin, Ethelbert (Mrs.), undated
Norburn, Hope R., 1945
Norris, Charles G, 1932
Noyes, Alfred, 1928-1933 (7 items)
Osbourne, Lloyd, 1928-1930 (3 items)
O'Shaughnessy, Sarah, 1945
Peelle, Stanton C., 1931
Pickering, Ada, undated

Pollock, Channing, 1945
Pollock, Helen Channing, 1946
Ranlett, N. A., 1935

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Rascoe, Burton, 1936
Reese, Lizette Woodworth, 1935 and undated
Rhodes, Harrison, 1926
Rhodes, June Hamilton, undated
Richardson, Anna Steese, 1945
Rickman, Maxine
Rinehart, Mary Roberts, 1936, 1941
Robinson, Edgar A., 1932
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1933, 1935
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1917
Roosevelt, Theodore, Jr., 1936-1937 (4 items)
Rose, Ruth
Skinner, Cornelia Otis, 1937 and undated (4 items)
Skinner, Otis, 1938, 1940 and undated (4 items)
Smith, Alfred E., 1931
Smith, Henry Clapp, 1931
Smith, Richard R., 1939
Snow, Edgar P., 1938-1941 and undated (10 items)
Street, Julian, 1931, 1938
Streeter, Edward, 1931 (1 item plus reply from Towne)
Streitbert, Theodore
Strong, Austin, 1934, 1938
Sullivan, Frank, 1931
Swinnerton, Frank Arthur, 1926
Taylor, Laurette, 1936
Terhune, Alice, 1945
Thompson, Dorothy, 1936
Torrence, Frederick Ridgely, 1945
Townsend, Madeleine, 1945
Townsend, Ray, 1929 (1 item plus reply from Towne)
Tritz, W. B., 1927
Tully, Jim, 1934
Tunney, Gene, 1927-1937 and undated (6 items)
Walker, John Brisben, 1926 and undated (4 items)
Wheeler, John Neville, 1937-1938
White, K. S., 1933
White, T. J., 1929 (5 items)
White, William Allen, 1939
Whitty, May (Dame), 1942
Wierdsma, J. Rypperda, 1929
Winslow, Myra Samter, 1927, 1932
Wolcott, Robert T., 1946
Woolcott, Alexander, 1936-1941 (3 items)
Young, Stark, 1935
Unidentified, 1924-1946 and undated (30 items)
Outgoing letters, 1918-1931
Writings

Box
4
Notebooks 1-9, 1915-1944
Stories and articles, A-S
5
Stories and articles, T-Z
So Far, So Good (autobiography)
Radio broadcasts
Poems
Plays
6
Musical works with lyrics by Towne

Financial correspondence and documents

Columbia University poetry course materials

Clippings and memorabilia about Towne
Includes twelve issues of The Unique Monthly

Photographs

7
Writings by others, clippings, lists, etc.

Scrapbooks of clippings
Mostly by and about Towne

8
#1 1902-1914
#2 1924-1926
#4 1926-1928

9
#2 1921
#5 1934-1935
#6 1918-1920 (clippings not about Towne)