

ROBINSON, LENNOX, 1886-1958.

Lennox Robinson collection, 1940-1958

Emory University
Robert W. Woodruff Library
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Robinson, Lennox, 1886-1958.
Title: Lennox Robinson collection, 1940-1958
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 246
Extent: 1 linear foot (2 boxes) and 3 oversized papers boxes (OP)
Abstract: Collection of materials relating to Irish dramatist Lennox Robinson including correspondence regarding the Yeats Memorial Fund, manuscripts of Robinson's work on W.B. Yeats, and materials relating to Robinson's 1956 trip to China.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Information on copyright (literary rights) available from repository. All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Related Materials in This Repository

W.B. Yeats collection and in the Gregory family papers.

Source

Purchase, 1982 with subsequent additions.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Lennox Robinson collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Esme Stuart Lennox Robinson, Irish dramatist, was born on 4 October 1886, in the town of Douglas near Cork, Ireland. His father, Andrew Craig Robinson, originally a stockbroker, became a protestant minister at age 50, taking his family to Kinsdale in 1892. During this time Robinson was educated at home. A subsequent move in 1900 to Ballymoney brought the family in the proximity of a protestant school which Robinson attended for three years. Ill health plagued Robinson throughout his childhood, shortening his school career and leaving him leisure time to fish, read voraciously, and come to know the people of his town and country. This time also allowed him to begin his writing career. His first poem was published in 1907 and in 1908 his first play, *The Clancy Name* was produced at the Abbey Theater, Dublin. The next year saw his second play produced, and near the end of 1909, Robinson was asked by W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory to be director of plays and manager of the Abbey Theater.

The rest of Lennox Robinson's life was tied to theater in some form or another. He served as manager of the Abbey Theater from 1910-1914 and 1919-1923. In 1922 he was appointed a member of the Board of Directors of Abbey Theater for life. Robinson also served as librarian for the Carnegie Trust (1915-1925), was on the staff of the Irish Convention (1917-1918), and he continued to write plays, essays, and books throughout his life. Lennox Robinson also served as the chairman for the Yeats Memorial Fund Committee until his death in 1958.

Lennox Robinson married Dorothy Travers Smith in 1931 in London. Dorothy Smith, the daughter of Dr. Smith of Dublin and granddaughter of Edward Dowden, was an artist, and she worked at the Abbey Theater as a scene designer. The couple had no children. Lennox Robinson died on 14 October 1958 in Dublin and he is buried at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Through his career as a dramatist, Robinson met many prominent literary and theatrical figures including W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, George Bernard Shaw, and Micheal Mac Liammoir. He travelled in America during his lifetime, and this exposure, as well as his work with Yeats and Lady Gregory, influenced his life and work. Robinson was awarded an honorary D. Litt. degree from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1948.

Lennox Robinson's works include plays, books, poems, and essays. Some of his plays include *The Clancy Name* (1908), *The Cross Roads* (1909), *The Patriots* (1912), *The Whiteheaded Boy* (1916) one of Robinson's most famous works, *The Round Table* (1924), *The Big House* (1926), *The Far Off Hills* (1928), *Ever the Twain* (1929), *Drama on Inish* (later renamed *Is Life Worth Living?*)(1933), *Church Street* (1934), and *Killicreggs in Twilight* (1937). Robinson's books include two autobiographies, *Three Homes* (1938) and *Curtain Up* (1942), and two biographies, *Poems by Thomas Parnell* (1927) and *Bryan Cooper* (1931). There is also a published volume of his essays, *I Sometimes Think* (1957). Sources of information about Lennox Robinson include a comprehensive biography, *Lennox Robinson* by Michael J. O'Neill (Twayne Publishers, New York, 1964). Also used were the *London Times* (October 15, 1958, p.15d, obituary notice), *The Oxford Companion to the Theater*, edited by Phyllis Hartnoll (4th ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, p.701), and *Contemporary Authors*, edited by Hal May (Gale Research Co., Detroit, 1987, v.120, p. 309-310).

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of 105 items, and is made up of correspondence (75 items) and manuscripts (30 items). The correspondence, which is filed first in the collection, dates from 1953 until the time of his death in 1958 and consists of letters to and from Robinson concerning the Yeats Memorial Fund. The manuscripts which form the remainder of the collection are undated, but seem to have been written shortly after Yeats's death in 1939.

The collection also includes a variety of materials relating to Robinson's 1956 trip to China to participate in a lecture honoring George Bernard Shaw. Also present are approximately 150 drawings, including stage designs, costume designs, and other sketches, by Dorothy (Dolly) Robinson and, perhaps, others. Among these drawings is a painting for Hyacinth Halvey by Lady Gregory that was designed and painted by Dolly Robinson.

Arrangement Note

Organized into four series: (1) Correspondence and (2) Manuscripts and (3) Chinese trip, 1956 and (4) Artwork.

Description of Series

[Series 1: Correspondence, 1953-1958](#)

[Series 2: Manuscripts](#)

[Series 3: Chinese trip, 1956](#)

[Series 4: Artwork](#)

Series 1
Correspondence, 1953-1958
Box 1: folder 1-2

Scope and Content Note

The seventy-five items of correspondence in the collection relate to the Yeats Memorial Fund, established in 1953. The correspondents include Joseph Hone (7 letters, 1954, 1956, 1957), Michael Scott (4 letters, 1954, 1956), Michael Mac Liammoir (4 letters, 1954), William Walsh (39 letters, 1953-1958), and Raymond McGrath (11 letters, 1954, 1956, 1957), all members of the Yeats Memorial Fund Committee. Correspondence to and from Walter Starkie, director of the Abbey Theatre for seventeen years, is also found in the collection (2 letters, 1954, 1958). Also included are copies of letters from sculptor Henry Moore to the Fund Committee concerning his work on the Yeats Memorial. The correspondence, then, chronicles the events following the founding of the Yeats Memorial Fund including fundraising plans, discussion of the possible purchase of a bust of Yeats by Augustus John, development of a competition for artists to design memorial sculptures, the subsequent abandonment of the competition and request for Henry Moore to complete the memorial at St. Stephen's Green in Dublin, and plans and correspondence with Moore concerning his work on the memorial.

Robinson's death in 1958 cut short the exchange of letters, and, therefore, the outcome of the Memorial Fund Committee's work can not be discerned directly from the collection. Problems involved with the artist's competition and the subsequent decision to ask Moore to complete the memorial are not well documented in the correspondence. However, the book *Henry Moore* by Ulrich Ruchti, Designer, and Ann Goedde, Editor (Harry N. Adams, Incorporated: New York, 1976) contains photographs of the completed William Butler Yeats memorial. A cast of "Standing Figure: Knife-edge" by Henry Moore, is located in St. Stephen's Green Park, the largest of Dublin's great squares. A nearby wall contains a plaque bearing the inscription: "W. B. Yeats 1865-1939, A Tribute in Bronze by Henry Moore, Erected by Admirers of the Poet October 1967."

Arrangement

Arranged in chronological order with undated items interfiled in their apparent order according to supplied dates.

| Box | Folder | Content |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Yeats Memorial Fund: 1953-1955 |
| 1 | 2 | Yeats Memorial Fund: 1956-1958 |

Series 2
Manuscripts
Box 1: folders 3-27

Scope and Content Note

The manuscripts in this series consist of thirty items. Twenty-one folders contain various editions of a three part work which was apparently to be titled "Life of Yeats." Revised editions of two parts of this work, "Personality" and "The Dramatist," were published in *Scattering Branches: Tributes to the Memory of W.B. Yeats* (MacMillan Co.: New York, 1940). The manuscripts which appear to be earlier editions of this published material are located in folders 4 and 12.

The manuscripts for the "Life of Yeats" work are divided into three parts, according to the outline for the work provided by Robinson in the explanation of the work (folder 3). The first part is titled "Personality," the second is "The Early Poems," and the third is "The Dramatist," all of which concern Yeats and his work. Each part of the proposed "Life of Yeats" was revised by Robinson, resulting in multiple copies and revisions of each part. The most complete version of each part is arranged first in each section with incomplete manuscript parts following. Since none of this material is dated, this supplied arrangement does not necessarily indicate chronological order in the creation of these manuscripts.

The remaining manuscripts include a short description by Robinson of Yeats's funeral, an incomplete typescript of a possible article concerning Yeats's later poems, and some handwritten notes apparently concerning Yeats's work.

“Foreword” [from proposed “Life of Yeats”]

| Box | Folder | Content |
|-----|--------|---|
| 1 | 3 | Foreword and Explanation of work: Typescript (carbon), 2 p. foreword with revisions, Typescript (carbon), 1 p. explanation (2 copies) |

“Personality” [from proposed “Life of Yeats”]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | “William Butler Yeats: Personality”: Typescript (carbons), 12 p. with revisions (2 copies) |
| 1 | 5 | “W.B. Yeats - Background and Personality”: Typescript (carbon), 14 p. with revisions (incomplete) |
| 1 | 6 | “W.B. Yeats - Background and Personality”: Typescript (carbon), 14 p. with revisions (incomplete) |
| 1 | 7 | “Background and Personality”: Typescript (original), 10 p. with revisions (incomplete) |

“The Early Poems” [from proposed “Life of Yeats”]

| | | |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | 8 | “The Early Poems”: Typescript (original), 18 p. with revisions, Typescript (carbon), 16 p. with revisions (incomplete) |
| 1 | 9 | “Yeats: The Early Poems”: Typescript (carbons), 17 p. (2 copies) |
| 1 | 10 | “The Early Poems of W.B. Yeats”: Typescript (original), 6 p. with revisions, Typescript (carbon), 6 p. |

1 11 "The Early Poems": Typescript (part original, part carbon), 6 p. (incomplete)

"The Dramatist" [from proposed "Life of Yeats"]

1 12 "W.B. Yeats: Dramatist": Typescript (original), 56 p.

Complete Abridged and Revised Editions

1 13 "The Dramatist": Typescript (original), 23 p. with revisions

1 14 "W.B. Yeats: Dramatist": Typescript (part original, part carbon), 23 p.

1 15 "W.B. Yeats: Dramatist": Typescript (carbon), 21 p.

Incomplete Versions

1 16 "W.B. Yeats: Dramatist": Typescript (original), 19 p. (incomplete)

1 17 "W.B. Yeats: Dramatist": Typescript (original), 16 p. with revision (incomplete)

1 18 "W.B. Yeats: Dramatist": Typescript (carbon), 15 p. (incomplete)

1 19 ["W.B. Yeats: Dramatist"]: Typescript (original), p.14 - 22 with revisions (incomplete)

1 20 ["W.B. Yeats: Dramatist"]: Typescript (part original, part carbon), p.14 -50 with revisions (incomplete)

1 21 ["W.B. Yeats: Dramatist"]: Typescript (carbon), p.14 - 22 with revisions (2 copies; incomplete)

1 22 ["W.B. Yeats: Dramatist"]: Typescript (original), p.13 - 40 with revisions (incomplete)

1 23 ["W.B. Yeats: Dramatist"]: Typescript (carbon), p.37 - 70 (incomplete)

Other Writings on Yeats

1 24 "W.B. Yeats": Typescript (carbon), 2 p. with revisions, description of Yeats's funeral in Sligo, Ireland

1 25 "The Later Poems": Typescript (original), 2 p. with revisions (incomplete), beginning of work about Yeats's later poems

1 26 "Recipe for a National Theatre": Typescript (original), 9 p., includes photo of newsclipping from the *Irish Times* of Robinson speaking at the Abbey Theatre when Yeats and Lady Gregory portraits were presented to the theatre by the Haverty Trust [Accession 2001-10-07]

1 27 Handwritten notes: Handwritten material concerning Yeats's work

Series 3
Chinese trip, 1956
Box 2: folders 1-36

Scope and Content Note

The series consists of materials relating to Robinson's trip to Communist China in 1956. As senior Irish dramatist, Robinson was invited by the Chinese government to lecture on George Bernard Shaw for the centenary celebration of Shaw's birth. The materials include correspondence, invitations, speech material, and photographs.

Also included are a number of manuscripts (some written while Robinson was in Peking) relating mainly to George Bernard Shaw and theatre programs from The Dublin Drama League in which Robinson served as Vice President and W.B. Yeats served as President.

| Box | Folder | Content |
|------------|---------------|---|
| 2 | 1 | Addresses in China |
| 2 | 2 | Bookmark (?) with portrait of Shaw and Ibsen |
| 2 | 3 | Correspondence, 1956 |
| 2 | 4 | Envelopes [empty] |
| 2 | 5 | Invitations [in Chinese] |
| 2 | 6 | Name [Lennox Robinson's] in Chinese |
| 2 | 7 | Notes [outline] by Robinson on China trip |
| 2 | 8 | Passport, 1946-1956 |
| 2 | 9 | Photographs, Church scene |
| 2 | 10 | Photographs, Misc. |
| 2 | 11 | Photographs, Shaw-Ibsen conference [includes shots of Robinson] |
| 2 | 12 | Photographs, Theatre scenes |
| 2 | 13 | Printed material: "George Bernard Shaw," by Lennox Robinson |
| 2 | 14 | Program [in Chinese] |
| 2 | 15 | Program, Theatre: "Nora" [in Chinese] |
| 2 | 16 | Program, Theatre: "Three Mountains," China Peking Operation Institute |
| 2 | 17 | Radio script, broadcast of Lennox Robinson, Peking, August 1956 |
| 2 | 18 | Receipt, Moscow, 1956 |
| 2 | 19 | Report, "La Vie Religieuse et L'Activite des Chretiens de L'Engise Catholique du Diocese de Shanghia," TS |
| 2 | 20 | Speech notes, Peking, August 1956 |

Manuscripts

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| 2 | 21 | "G.B.S.," TS [Review of St. John Ervine's Bernard Shaw (written while in Peking, 1956)] |
| 2 | 22 | "Opera," TS (written while in Peking, dated August 10 [1956]) |
| 2 | 23 | "Playwriting," TS |

- 2 24 "Section Two: Early London Days," TS
- 2 25 "Shanghai," TS
- 2 26 Fragments, re Shaw

Theatre Programs, The Dublin Drama League

- 2 27 "Fashions for Men," by Frantz Molnar, The Dublin Drama League, 24 and 25 April [?]
- 2 28 "Heartbreak House," by George Bernard Shaw, The Dublin Drama League, 14 and 15 March [?]
- 2 29 "The Pretty Sabine Women," by Leonid Andreyev and "A Night at an Inn," by Lord Dunsany, The Dublin Drama League, 27 April 1919
- 2 30 "The Stronger," by August Strindberg; "The Saloon," by Henry James; "A Perfect Day," by Emile Mazarin, The Dublin Drama League, 13 and 14 November 1921 [with clipping]
- 2 31 "The Passion Flower," by Jacinto Benavente, The Dublin Drama League, 9 and 10 November 1924
- 2 32 "The Cloister," by Emile Verhaeren, The Dublin Drama League, 15 and 16 March 1925
- 2 33 "Trifles," by Susan Glaspell and "The Emperor Jones," by Eugene O'Neal, The Dublin Drama League, 17 and 17 January 1927
- 2 34 "Caesar and Cleopatra," by George Bernard Shaw, The Dublin Drama League, 29 and 30 May 1927

Miscellaneous

- 2 35 Correspondence, to and from Millie, her parents, her brother Bob, 1937-1941 [relationship to collection unknown]
- 2 36 Illustration: Lennox Robinson portrait by James Sleator, 1942

Series 4**Artwork****Box 2: folder 37-38; OP1-3****Scope and Content Note**

The series consists of approximately 150 undated drawings, including stage designs, costume designs, and other sketches, by Dorothy (Dolly) Robinson and, perhaps, others. Among these drawings is a painting for Hyacinth Halvey by Lady Gregory that was designed and painted by Dolly Robinson. Also present are photographs of stage design, as well as a single tapa of South Pacific origin.

Dorothy Robinson

| Box | Folder | Content |
|------------|---------------|--|
| OP1 | 1 | Costume design for King Lear |
| OP1 | 2 | Costume design |
| OP1 | 3 | Costume design |
| OP1 | 4 | Drawings of nudes |
| OP1 | 5 | Painting for Hyacinth Halvey by Lady Gregory, designed and painted by Dolly Robinson |
| 2 | 37 | Pencil drawings |
| OP1 | 6 | Pencil drawings |
| 2 | 38 | Photographs of stage design |
| OP1 | 7 | Sketchbook |
| OP1 | 8 | Sketchbook |
| OP1 | 9 | Stage design |
| OP1 | 10 | Stage design |
| OP1 | 11 | Stage design |
| OP2 | 1 | Stage design |
| OP1 | 12 | Various paintings |

Other

| | | |
|-----|---|------------------|
| OP3 | 1 | Tapa (barkcloth) |
|-----|---|------------------|
