

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the John J. Slocum Papers Relating to Ezra Pound

YCAL MSS 171



by Diane J. Ducharme

June 2003

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 171

CREATOR: Slocum, John J.

TITLE: John J. Slocum papers relating to Ezra Pound

DATES: 1938-1950

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.42 linear feet (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence between Slocum and Pound concerning Slocum's attempts to place works by Pound in American magazines; Pound's political and economic views; general literary matters; and their mutual friend James Laughlin. The collection also contains typescripts of three articles by Pound, including "In War Begin Responsibilities," and of a talk on Pound by Slocum, "Cast a Cold Eye."

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.slocum>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.slocum>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of John J. Slocum in 1981.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research. Box 2: Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Use

The John J. Slocum Papers Relating to Ezra Pound is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

John J. Slocum Papers Relating to Ezra Pound. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Former call number: ZA Pound Slocum.

JOHN J. SLOCUM, 1914-1997

John Jermain Slocum, Foreign Service officer, James Joyce bibliographer and rare book collector, was born in 1914 Lakewood, New Jersey in 1914. In 1936 he was graduated from Harvard College, where he met David Rockefeller and James Laughlin, and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1938. He then became a press aide to New York City mayor LaGuardia on Rockefeller's recommendation, but resigned in 1941 to enlist in the Army, where he served in various public information posts, including a stint as spokesman for the forces conducting atomic bomb testing on the Marshall Islands in 1946.

After the war, he joined the United States Information Agency and served with them until 1970, representing the agency in Germany and Egypt and traveling to Asia and South America as part of their inspection team.

Slocum assembled what was widely considered the world's leading collection of James Joyce printed and manuscript material. The collection was acquired by Yale University in 1951. In 1953 Yale University Press published *A Bibliography of James Joyce* by Slocum and Herbert Cahoon. *Stephen Hero*, a new edition of the Joyce "draft" that became *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, was published by Laughlin's New Directions press in 1963.

Slocum was the founding president of the Friends of the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1974 and a leading member of the American Numismatic Society. He also served on a Presidential Cultural Advisory Committee; and participated in an effort to reorganize the Smithsonian Institution.

John Jermain Slocum lived in Newport, Rhode Island, where he died on August 12, 1997. He was survived by his wife of many years, Eileen Gillespie Slocum, and their two daughters.

Scope and Contents

The John J. Slocum Papers Relating to Ezra Pound document Slocum's friendship with the poet, which began during Slocum's travels in Europe with James Laughlin in the summer of 1934. The papers span the dates 1938-1950 and have been organized into two series: I. *Correspondence*, and II. *Writings*.

[Series I, Correspondence](#), is located in folders 1-15 and consists primarily of letters from Ezra Pound to Slocum, in some cases accompanied by carbon copies of Slocum's replies. The early correspondence

primarily concerns Slocum's efforts to place articles and poems by Pound in various American periodicals, and folders 4-7 contain typescript carbons of four such pieces, including "In War Begin Responsibilities," "To Whose Profit Roosevelt," and "Augment of the Novel." Being Pound's informal agent in the United States was no easy task. For example, in a letter of November 4, 1940, Slocum writes, "I would like your permission to cut anti-church, anti-jooish references out of ["To Whose Profit Roosevelt"] before sending it out;" Pound replied "All right, you can cut and doctor them articles....." in December.

Other topics include the increasing difficulties of correspondence and payment methods as the war progressed; Pound's general political and economic views; James Laughlin; and Pound's visit to the United States in 1939. The earliest letter in the series concerns Pound's enthusiasm for microfilming as a publication method and his prediction of "the revolution in actual publishing."

Folders 9-10 contain letters exchanged in 1947-50 concerning Slocum's founding of the James Joyce Society. Pound disapproved, urging him to found a Confucius Society instead. When Slocum protested that there was much more interest in Joyce, who "was Occidental," Pound replied "oxidental nuts. he wuz a blinkin Byzantine" and ceased replying to Slocum.

Other correspondents include Dorothy Pound, who wrote urging Slocum to "learn at least a few facts-- Cornell never did," and John Edwards. Folders 13-15 contain Third-Party Correspondence, letters mentioning Slocum addressed to James and Anne Laughlin.

[Series II, Writings](#), is located in folders 16-17 and consists of a typescript of "Cast a Cold Eye," a talk given by Slocum on his friendship with Pound.

[Restricted Fragile Papers](#) are housed in Box 2.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence

JOHN J. SLOCUM CORRESPONDENCE

b. 1, f. 1	Edwards, John H.	1950 Nov 20
b. 1, f. 2	Pound, Dorothy	1950 Jun 2
b. 1, f. 3	Pound, Ezra	1938-39
b. 1, f. 4	Pound, Ezra With: typescript carbon, corrected and signed, of "In War Begin Responsibilites," 1940 Jun 1	1940 Jun
b. 1, f. 5-6	Pound, Ezra With: typescript carbon, corrected and signed, of "To Whose Profit Roosevelt," "1940 Summer" With: typescript carbon, corrected and signed, of "Culture as (Unusually) Usual (in Siena)," enclosed with letter of 1940 Oct 22	1940 Sep-Oct
b. 1, f. 7	Pound, Ezra With: typescript carbon, corrected and signed, of "Augment of the Novel" annotated "New Directions 1941"	1940 Nov-Dec
b. 1, f. 8	Pound, Ezra 1941 Feb 28 letter refers to enclosed Canto for <i>Vice Versa</i> (not present)	1941 Feb-Aug
b. 1, f. 9-10	Pound, Ezra	1947-50
b. 1, f. 11	Quinn, Kerker	1941 May 14
b. 1, f. 12	Willson, Patty	1941 Jun 10
THIRD PARTY CORRESPONDENCE		
b. 1, f. 13	Paige, Douglas Duncan to Anne [Laughlin?], 2 copies	1947 Jul 15
b. 1, f. 14	Pound, Dorothy to James Laughlin	1947 Sep 5
b. 1, f. 15	Pound, Ezra to James Laughlin	[1948?]

Series II: Writings, n.d.

b. 1, f. 16-17	"Cast a Cold Eye:" typescript carbon Text of a talk by Slocum on his relationship with EP With: photocopies of poems read during the talk	n.d.
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Restricted Fragile

Box 2: Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

b. 2, f. 18	Box 1, folder 3
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b. 2, f. 19	Box 1, folder 4
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b. 2, f. 20	Box 1, folder 5
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b. 2, f. 21	Box 1, folder 6
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b. 2, f. 22	Box 1, folder 7
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b. 2, f. 23	Box 1, folder 8
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b. 2, f. 24	Box 1, folder 9
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Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

American literature -- 20th Century
American poetry -- 20th Century
Little magazines
Modernism (Literature)

Names

Laughlin, James, 1914-1997
Paige, D. D.
Pound, Dorothy
Pound, Ezra, 1885-1972
Pound, Ezra, 1885-1972 -- Political and social views
Slocum, John J.