

Charles H. Foster Collection
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Finding aid prepared by Benjamin Skinner

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

May 4, 2013

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Title	Charles H. Foster Collection
Date	1940-1995
Extent	0.21 Linear feet
Language	English

Biography

Charles Howell Foster was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1913. His father, who was a pharmaceutical executive expected his son to grow up to become a business man. However, Charles' interests were more in literature and letters. To this end he decided to become a poet, and began corresponding with Robert Frost during his prep school education. In 1936 he recieved his Bachelors degree in English from Amhurst college. In 1937 he recieved a Masters in english from the University of Iowa followed by a Ph.D in 1939.

Although he managed to publish several poems, he decided to turn his talents to academia. Foster became recognized internationally for his expertise in 19th century American literature, and wrote several books on the subject. These included a Biography of Harriet Beecher Stowe which recieved rave reviews from the New York times. In addition, he was also on the board of editors for the New England Quarterly and wrote book reviews for the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

In addition to his writing he was also a respected educator. He taught at a number of colleges in the U.S. including the Univeristies of Iowa and Collorado, and was the chairman of the English department at Grinnell College. He began teaching at the University of Minnesota in 1958, and was the director of the American Studies Department in addition to being part of the English Graduate Studies Division. This was to be his final teaching position which he would hold until his retierement in 1971.

Furthermore, Foster was also a collector of rare 19th century books, pamphlets, and manuscripts. Many of these were copies of the early American authors that he so loved. Eventually he would donate a significant number of these items to the Minneapolis public library.

After his retirement Foster moved to Luray Virginia for a number of years, but returned to Minnesota in 1994. In 1995 he passed away due to complications with Pneumonia.

Description of Collection

The Charles H. Foster Collecton consists of a single box and conains materials such as: correspondence, manuscripts, and materials related to his donation of items to the Minneapolis Public Library.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library May 4, 2013

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Foster, Charles H. (Charles Howell), 1913-1995

Subject(s)

- 19th Century American Studies Collection (Minneapolis Public Library)
- American literature -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis.
- American poetry -- 20th century.
- American poetry -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Charles Foster and the Minneapolis Public Library	1	1
Charles Foster: Correspondence	1	2
Manuscripts: The People: An Opera in One Act and F.B. Sanborns Unpublished Lecture on John Brown	1	3
Papers	1	4
Photograph (1964) and Obituary (1995)	1	5