

James Carleton Young Collection

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Creator	Young, James Carleton, 1856-1918
Title	James Carleton Young Collection
Date	1901-1991
Extent	1.25 Linear feet
Language	English

Biography

James Carleton Young was born July 29, 1856 in Marion, Iowa and died on January 7, 1918 from having been “stricken by apoplexy” (such as a stroke, embolism, or thrombosis). He graduated with an M.A. from Cornell College in 1876, and in 1909 Cornell presented him with its first-ever Doctor of Literature degree. In 1880 he stood on the steps of the Parthenon and wondered why the world’s best literature had not been collected under one roof. For the purpose of building this envisioned library himself, and without financial means at that time, he decided to raise the necessary fortune by conducting a large land and colonization business to buy up vacant acreage in Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas, often for less than \$1.00, which he then sold for hundreds of dollars per acre in order to purchase first editions. In 1913 he retired to devote himself to building his collection, with the intention of either presenting it when completed to the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, or to an American university, or instead constructing a library in Loring Park.

Indulging his lifelong love of literature, Young collected first editions of both contemporary and non-contemporary works (including pre-inscribed works by Hugo, Daudet, Dumas, Kipling, and Hans Christian Anderson) then sent the contemporary monographs to their authors with a request that they likewise inscribe them, earning Young the term “bibliophile,” and in Europe, “*Le Roi des Livres*” (“King of Books”). Young was named honorary commissioner to the Paris exposition of 1878, elected as one of the three foreign members to the *Société Des Amis Des Livres* in Paris, awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor in 1910, and made a Fellow to the Royal Geographical Society of London, as well as many other important American bookclubs and societies. The books in his library ultimately numbered in the tens of thousands and required the services of a full-time librarian and bookkeeper, several assistants, catalogers, translators, and agents. His sent up to 5000 letters a year seeking autographs, and insisted upon responding personally to each reply, resulting in bad health, which prompted his physician to advise him to end his work.

Mounting obstacles to his dream of keeping the collection together forced him to allow it to be auctioned off in installments by the Anderson galleries in New York in 1916, and Young took consolation that his books would “pass into the possession of my fellow collectors and enrich hundreds of public and private libraries.” He ended up being better known abroad than in America, and relatively unknown in Minneapolis. He was survived by his wife, Etta May Rogers, and one daughter, Marguerite.

Description of the Collection

One box and one oversize item. Includes biographical materials, newspaper clippings, catalogs of book collections, and correspondence.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

Related Materials

Related Materials

See the Autograph Collection for inscribed books from the James Carleton Young Collection.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Book collecting.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Partial biography in triplicate taken from the <i>National Cyclopedia of American Biography</i> , p.271; transcriptions and/or mimeographs of articles from newspapers (<i>Minneapolis Morning Tribune</i> , <i>Eastern Gazette</i>), magazines (<i>Literary Digest</i>), and books (<i>World's Work</i> , Vol. XIX) 1903-1910	1	1
Clippings: <i>Hartford Courant</i> , <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i> , <i>Historic Preservation</i> , relating to Carleton Young's concern over book deterioration 1978-1991	1	2
List of books transfered to autograph collection	1	3
Catalog, <i>Inscribed Books from the Library Collected by James Carleton Young, Part II, To Be Sold Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, December 11, 12, 13, and 14 1916</i>	1	4
Catalog, <i>Inscribed Books from the Library Collected by James Carleton Young, Part III, To Be Sold Wednesday and Thursday, February 14 and 15 1917</i>	1	5
Clippings of book sale ads, <i>Saturday Review</i> , and correspondence regarding book sales 1970-1972	1	6

Clippings, <i>Minneapolis Star</i> , <i>Minneapolis Journal</i> , <i>Christian Science Monitor</i> , regarding Romanian royal family and Carleton Young's death 1923-1970	1	7
Clippings 1903-1910	1	8
Correspondence from Queen Elisabeth of Romania (Pauline Elisabeth Ottilie Luise zu Wied, pen name Carmen Sylva) to Carleton Young, 1901-1902, with appraisal form from Walter R. Benjamin Autographs, 1968	1	9
Correspondence from various writers to Celia Olney Goodale, great-niece of James Carleton Young, in response to her inquiries 1973-1974	1	10
Correspondence from Robert Nikirk, Grolier Club librarian, and various other authors to Celia Olney Goodale, great-niece of James Carleton Young, regarding her research 1970-1973	1	11
Correspondence from various authors to Celia Olney Goodale, great-niece of James Carleton Young, regarding books given to Cornell College 1970-1973	1	12
Correspondence from various authors to Celia Olney Goodale, great-niece of James Carleton Young, and to other recipients, regarding her research 1970-1973	1	13
Correspondence to and from Julian Olney, nephew of James Carleton Young, and clippings, 1954-1984; Letter to first cousins Julian and Dorothy from Mrs. Marguerite Harper regarding the death of Mrs. Young	1	14

(Etta May Rogers), 1935; Mimeographs of letters from James Carleton Young and his secretary, Louise E. Fischer, 1908

Pages from Messrs. Methuen catalog advertising upcoming novel, <i>Master Christian</i> by Marie Corelli, 1902?; Personal money order from Celia Olney Goodale to Cornell College, 1970	1	15
Celia Goodale's research notes	1	16
		Box
Binder: clippings, mimeographs, and transcriptions of articles, papers, correspondence, and auction catalogs, collected by Julian Olney by Celia Olney Goodale 1903-1918		1
Binder: Celia Goodale's research notes, including contacts, biography and dates, genealogy, notes on articles, organizations visited, list of inscribed books, and family tree 1970		1
		Oversize
<i>Throne</i> , a private newspaper written for, published by, and circulated among the royal families of Europe, with article on James Carleton Young on page 33 September 15, 1906		1