Emily Hale Letters from T.S. Eliot,
1895-1957(bulk 1931-1940): Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number: C0686
Repository: Princeton University. Library. Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division
One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA

Language(s) of Material: English

Abstract: Consists mostly of letters from British-American poet T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale (1891-1969), a teacher, actress, and close friend of Eliot's. Also included are copies of typescripts by Eliot's photographs and ephemera, and a brief narrative of the relationship between the two penned by Hale.

Location: This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.
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Emily Hale was born on October 27, 1891. She was an actress and stage director, and taught drama and voice instruction at Simmons College, Milwaukee-Downer College in Wisconsin, Scripps College, and Abbott Academy. She met T.S. Eliot while he was at pursuing a graduate degree at Harvard, and maintained a lifelong and close friendship with the poet, corresponding with him and routinely visiting him over several decades. She died in 1969.

T.S. Eliot, the noted modern poet, dramatist, and literary critic, was born in St. Louis, Missouri. He earned a master's degree from Harvard University, which is when he met Emily Hale in 1913. The two formed a close bond, and when Eliot moved to the United Kingdom in 1914 to begin his PhD studies (eventually becoming a British subject in 1927) they remained in contact, establishing a robust correspondence that would continue intermittently for years. In addition to his writing, Eliot worked as a schoolteacher and a bank accounts manager before joining the publishing firm of Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber) in 1925, where he worked for the remainder of his career. Best known for such poems as The Waste Land, The Hollow Men, and Four Quartets, Eliot was the recipient of the 1948 Nobel Prize in Literature.

The collection consists primarily of letters by poet, dramatist, and literary critic T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale (1891-1969), a teacher, actress, and lifelong friend of Eliot's. Also included are a small portion of correspondence between Hale and others, as well as some photographs, ephemera, clippings, copies of typescript material by Eliot, and a brief narrative of the relationship between the two penned by Hale.

Emily Hale and T.S. Eliot first met in Cambridge, Massachusetts, while Eliot was working towards a graduate degree in philosophy. They struck up a friendship, and Eliot expressed a romantic interest in Hale soon after. Though Hale did not initially share that interest, they remained friends and stayed in close contact after Eliot moved abroad, corresponding frequently for decades. The bulk of the letters were written during the 1930s and provide a detailed account of their intimate friendship, as well as Eliot's work and personal life.

Eliot often enclosed other materials in his letters to Hale, such as photographs and letters he had received from friends and contemporaries (including Virginia Woolf and Ezra Pound). In a letter from December 29, 1930, Eliot addressed this practice, writing “I shall from time to time slip in a note or letter to me from my acquaintances, as these do I think to help make one’s life seem more real to another person.” A number of the letters also include handwritten annotations and corrections.

Emily Hale's friendship with former Princeton professor and literary critic Willard Thorp and his wife Margaret is also evident from letters between the three included with the correspondence. It was partially at the urging of Professor Thorp that Hale wrote a short explanation of her relationship with Eliot to be included with the collection when it came to Princeton. It was also because of Emily Hale's...
relationship with the Thorps and their connection to Princeton that she chose to donate the letters to the University. T.S. Eliot was not initially pleased with this decision, and his opinions regarding this are discussed in letters to Hale between 1956 and 1957.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged chronologically by type.

Access and Use

Access

Open for research.

Researchers may be asked to use digital surrogates of material if more than one patron requests to use a box at the same time.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

All material written by T.S. Eliot remains under copyright but will enter the public domain January 4, 2035. These materials may not be photocopied. Also, no self-service reference photography either with a camera, cell phone or tablet will be allowed of the Eliot materials. As such, no cameras, cell phones, or tablets are permitted in the reading room. For materials not written by T.S. Eliot, single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Inquiries should be directed to Special Collections Public Services staff at rbsc@princeton.edu. The library has no other information on the status of literary rights in the collection and researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition

Gift of Emily Hale in 1956 (AM 15768). The letters were sealed until January 2, 2020, by agreement with Hale.

A handful of additional letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale concerning the donation of the collection to Princeton were given to the library in 1957.

Appraisal

No materials were removed from the collection during 2019 processing beyond routine appraisal practices.

Related Materials
Related Archival Material

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation
Identification of specific item; Date (if known); T.S. Eliot Letters to Emily Hale, Box and Folder Number; Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Works Cited
Letter, 1930 December 29. Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot; Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Encoding
This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2019-11-15T13:08-0500

Descriptive Rules Used
Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings

- Actresses -- United States -- 20th century -- Correspondence.
- Poets, English -- 20th century -- Correspondence.
- Love letters.
- British literature
Correspondence, 1895-1957

Description: The bulk of the correspondence is from T.S. Eliot, and many letters are interfiled with enclosures that were sent with them. Also included is correspondence between Emily Hale and others, particularly her friends Margaret and Willard Thorp. The Thorps were also associates of Eliot, and they were aware of the close relationship between he and Hale.

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1930 October-1956

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1930 October-December
  - Box: 1 Folder: 1
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 January-February
  - Box: 1 Folder: 2
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 March
  - Box: 1 Folder: 3
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 April
  - Description: Includes enclosures from Virginia Woolf, Stephen Spender, William Rothenstein, and John Middleton Murry.
  - Box: 1 Folder: 4
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 May
  - Description: Includes enclosure from Allen Tate.
  - Box: 1 Folder: 5
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 June
  - Description: Includes enclosure from John Middleton Murry.
  - Box: 1 Folder: 6
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 July
  - Box: 1 Folder: 7
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 August
  - Box: 2 Folder: 1
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 September
  - Box: 2 Folder: 2
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 October
  - Description: Includes enclosures from Virginia Woolf and John Middleton Murry.
  - Box: 2 Folder: 3
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 November
  - Box: 2 Folder: 4
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1931 December
  - Description: Includes enclosures from Virginia Woolf and Ezra Pound.
  - Box: 2 Folder: 5
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 January
  - Description: Some letters from January 1932 incorrectly dated 1931.
  - Box: 2 Folder: 6
- Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 February
  - Description: Includes enclosure from Virginia Woolf.
  - Box: 2 Folder: 7
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 March          Box: 2 Folder: 8
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 April        Box: 3 Folder: 1
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 May          Box: 3 Folder: 2
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 June         Box: 3 Folder: 3
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 July         Box: 3 Folder: 4
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 August-September Box: 3 Folder: 5
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 October      Box: 3 Folder: 6
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 November     Box: 4 Folder: 1
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1932 December     Box: 4 Folder: 2
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 January-February Box: 4 Folder: 3
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 March        Box: 4 Folder: 4
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 April-May    Box: 4 Folder: 5
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 June         Box: 4 Folder: 6
  Description: Includes enclosures from Ezra Pound and Allen Tate.
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 July-August   Box: 4 Folder: 7
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 September-October Box: 5 Folder: 1
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1933 November-December Box: 5 Folder: 2
  Description: There is one letter, circa 1933 with no month indicated, at the end.
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1934 January-February Box: 5 Folder: 3
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1934 March-April   Box: 5 Folder: 4
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1934 May-July      Box: 5 Folder: 5
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1934 August-July   Box: 5 Folder: 6
  Description: There are two letters, circa 1934 with no month indicated, at the end.
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1935 January-March  Box: 6 Folder: 1
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1935 April-June    Box: 6 Folder: 2
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1935 July-September Box: 6 Folder: 3
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1935 October-December Box: 6 Folder: 4
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, circa 1935          Box: 6 Folder: 5
  Description: Contains letters circa 1935 with no months indicated.
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1936 January-March  Box: 6 Folder: 6
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1936 April-June  
Box: 6 Folder: 7

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1936 July-August  
Box: 7 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1936 September-October  
Box: 7 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1936 November-December  
Box: 7 Folder: 3

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 January-February  
Box: 7 Folder: 4

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 March-April  
Box: 7 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 May-July  
Box: 7 Folder: 6

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 August-September  
Box: 7 Folder: 7

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 October  
Box: 8 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 November  
Box: 8 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1937 December  
Box: 8 Folder: 3

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1938 January-February  
Box: 8 Folder: 4

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1938 March  
Box: 8 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1938 April-May  
Box: 8 Folder: 6

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1938 June-August  
Box: 9 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1938 September-October  
Box: 9 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1938 November-December  
Box: 9 Folder: 3

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 January-February  
Box: 9 Folder: 4

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 March  
Box: 9 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 April  
Box: 9 Folder: 6

Description: Includes enclosure from Dorothy L. Sayers.

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 May-July  
Box: 10 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 August-September  
Box: 10 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 October  
Box: 10 Folder: 3

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1939 November-December  
Box: 10 Folder: 4

Description: Includes enclosure from Virginia Woolf. There is one letter, circa 1939 with no month indicated, at the end.

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1940 January-February  
Box: 10 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1940 March-April  
Box: 10 Folder: 6

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1940 May-August  
Box: 11 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1940 September-December  
Box: 11 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1941 January-May  
Box: 11 Folder: 3
Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1941 June-August  
Box: 11 Folder: 4

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1941 September-December  
Box: 11 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1942 January-May  
Box: 11 Folder: 6

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1942 June-December  
Box: 12 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1943 January-May  
Box: 12 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1943 June-December  
Box: 12 Folder: 3

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1944 January-June  
Box: 12 Folder: 4

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1944 July-December  
Box: 12 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1945  
Description: Letter received April 26 and noted to be from 1945 included in folder.  
Box: 12 Folder: 6

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1946 January-September  
Box: 12 Folder: 7

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1946 October-December  
Box: 12 Folder: 8

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1947  
Box: 13 Folder: 1

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1948  
Description: There is one envelope with enclosures, circa 1948 with no month indicated, at the end.  
Box: 13 Folder: 2

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1949-1950  
Box: 13 Folder: 3

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1951-1952  
Box: 13 Folder: 4

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1953-1955  
Description: There is one letter, circa 1955 with no month indicated, at the end.  
Box: 13 Folder: 5

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale, 1956-1957  
Description: There is one letter, circa 1956 with no month indicated, at the end.  
Box: 13 Folder: 6

Other Letters, 1895-1957

Arrangement: Arranged by correspondent.

Willard and Margaret Thorp Correspondence, 1933-1957
Description: Contains letters between Emily Hale, Princeton professor Willard Thorp, and his wife Margaret, who were also friends of Eliot's.

Margaret Thorp Letters to Emily Hale, 1933 January-August  
Box: 13 Folder: 7

Margaret Thorp Letters to Emily Hale, 1936 June-1938 June  
Box: 14 Folder: 1

Letters from Emily Hale to Willard and Margaret Thorp, 1956-1957  
Box: 14 Folder: 6
Sophie Krauss Letters to Emily Hale, 1933 June-1936 August  Box: 14 Folder: 2

Ashley Dukes Letters to Emily Hale, 1937 November-1938 January  Box: 14 Folder: 3

Isabel Whiting Letters to Emily Hale, 1939 March-1943 January  Box: 14 Folder: 4

Letters from Others to Emily Hale, bulk 1931-1943, 1895-1943  Box: 14 Folder: 5

Description: Includes single letters from Janet H. Clark, Millie (Mrs. George Abbot) Morison, Edith Perkins (Hale’s aunt), Ada E. Sheffield (T.S. Eliot’s sister), John Carroll Perkins (Hale’s uncle), William A. Neilson, Mary Lee Ware, Evelyn A. McCourtee, and others. The 1895 letter is from Edward Hale to Edith Perkins.

Letter from Emily Hale to President Hard, Scripps College, Claremont, California, 1945 September 20  Box: 14 Folder: 7

Narrative Written by Emily Hale, 1957-1965  Box: 14 Folder: 8

Description: Includes several drafts of an account of the relationship between T.S. Eliot and Emily Hale, written by Emily Hale. Also included are letters from Hale to former University Librarian William S. Dix concerning corrections made to the drafts.

Typescripts, undated  Box: 14 Folder: 9

Description: Contains two original typescripts of works by T.S. Eliot.

Charles Whibley: A Memoir, undated

The Modern Dilemma, undated  Box: 14 Folder: 10

Clippings and Photographs, 1930-1942  Box: 14 Folder: 11

Description: Includes photographs of T.S. Eliot, as well as related clippings and ephemera.


Description: Bulletin to members of the Books Across the Sea literary movement.