



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Paul Leicester Ford papers

1869-1902 [bulk 1885-1895]

MssCol 1043

Summary

Creator: Ford, Paul Leicester, 1865-1902

Title: Paul Leicester Ford papers

Date: 1869-1902 [bulk 1885-1895]

Source: Gift of the Ford family.

Abstract: Paul Leicester Ford (1865-1902) was a historian, novelist and playwright. The bulk of the collection consists of general and family correspondence and manuscripts and typescripts of Ford's writings.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Paul Leicester Ford Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: John Stinson; machine readable finding aid created by APEX data services and revised by Chatham Ewing.

Creator History

Paul Leicester Ford (1862-1902) was born at Brooklyn, New York, the seventh child and third son of Gordon Lester Ford (1823-91) and Emily Ellsworth Fowler Ford (1826-93). On his mother's side he was a great grandson of Noah Webster. As a child Ford suffered a spinal injury which gravely stunted his growth. Born into a bookish family and surrounded by his father's vast library of Americana, he acquired at an early age a taste for learning and scholarship.

From his first publication, (1876) a Webster genealogy printed on his own printing press, Ford went on to edit or publish a large oeuvre of scholarly and bibliographical publications in the field of Americana including editions of the writings of John Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson, bibliographies of Hamilton and Jefferson, and biographical studies of Washington and Franklin. Many of his works were privately printed by the Historical Printing Club of Brooklyn which he formed in association with his brother,

Worthington Chauncey Ford (1858-1941).

In his late `twenties Ford turned to fiction where he achieved considerable popularity as a novelist especially for his novel *The Honorable Peter Stirling* (1894) which dealt with the political morés in New York during the Cleveland era. Ford also wrote several plays one of which was produced on the stage.

For many years Ford was associated with Richard Rogers Bowker in the editing of *The Library Journal*. In 1900 he married Grace Kidder of a socially prominent Brooklyn family. His life was ended tragically when his brother Malcom, in a fit of insane jealousy, shot him dead in his study before taking his own life.

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of the papers consist of correspondence and writings. There are also papers relating to the Historical Printing Club, miscellaneous papers and press clippings. The correspondence is arranged into general and family correspondence (in chronological order) and is mainly letters received although there are scattered drafts or copies of outgoing correspondence. The general correspondence (1870-1902) is with scholars, historians, librarians, publishers, editors, printers, officials of historical societies, friends and associates. The correspondence relates mainly to Ford's historical researches and to the publication of his books, bibliographies and historical writings. There is some correspondence relative to the dramatization of his novels and the production of his plays, correspondence relative to his editorship of *The Library Journal*, and to his compilation of a bibliography of the writings of members of the American Historical Association. His personal and social liife is also represented although to a lesser degree. Correspondents include Herbert B. Adams, John Bigelow, Clarence W. Bowen, Richard Rogers Bowker, Thomas F. Clark, Augustin Daly, Dodd, Mead & Co., Wilberforce Eames, Harper & Brothers, Albert Bushnell Hart, Ripley Hitchcock, Henry Holt, Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, Beatrice Cameron Mansfield, Richard Mansfield, Charles Nordhoff, Walter Hines Page, G.P. Putnam's Sons, Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Scribner's Sons, Horace Elisha Scudder, Lindsay Swift, and Edith Thomas.

The family correspondence (1879-1893) which is only partially sorted consists of letters from his brother, Worthington, and from his sisters, Emily, Rosalie, and Kathleen. The letters from Worthington concern editorial and publishing matters as well as personal and family affairs.

The writings are arranged in to fictional and non-fictional writings and include manuscript and typescript drafts of his novels, plays, historical and bibliographical writings. Some of the manuscript drafts are incomplete. Included also are miscellaneous writings consisting (in part) of articles describing Ford's journey (1877) to the West Indies and a manuscript copy and galley proofs of a shipboard newspaper ("The Occasional Barracoutean") edited by Ford during the trip. There are also drafts of editorials and reviews published in *The Library Journal*. The papers relating to the Historical Printing Club consist of copies of publications of the Club printed in limited edition from original documents in the Ford family's collection of Americana. Each copy is numbered as being one of a set. Included also are unsorted printed ephemera, a few manuscript drafts of advertisements, and page and galley proofs of *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighhteenth Century*, by Stephen B. Weeks (HPC, 1891).

The miscellaneous papers include a childhood photograph of Ford, bills & receipts, cards and invitations, membership certificates, and obituaries.

The press clippings are loose clippings of reviews of Ford's published writings arranged by title of the work. There are also two boxes of unsorted papers.

Key Terms

Subjects

Bibliography
History -- Research
Journalism -- Editing
Publishers and publishing -- New York (State) -- New York
Stage adaptations
Theater -- Production and direction

Occupations

Dramatists
Editors
Historians
Novelists

Titles

Library journal

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photoprints

Names

Ford, Paul Leicester, 1865-1902
Adams, Herbert B. (Herbert Baxter), 1850-1901
Bigelow, John, 1817-1911
Bowen, Clarence Winthrop, 1852-1935
Bowker, R. R. (Richard Rogers), 1848-1933
Clark, Thomas Frederic, 1845-
Daly, Augustin, 1838-1899
Eames, Wilberforce, 1855-1937
Ford, Kathleen, 1950-
Ford, Rosalie
Ford, Worthington Chauncey, 1858-1941
Hart, Albert Bushnell, 1854-1943
Hitchcock, Ripley, 1857-1918
Holt, Henry, 1840-1926
Mansfield, Beatrice Cameron, 1868-1940
Mansfield, Richard, 1857-1907
Nordhoff, Charles, 1830-1901
Page, Walter Hines, 1855-1918
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919
Scudder, Horace Elisha, 1838-1902
Skeel, Emily Ellsworth Ford, 1867-1958
Swift, Lindsay, 1856-1921
Thomas, Edith Matilda, 1854-1925
Ford family
American Historical Association
Charles Scribner's Sons
Dodd, Mead & Company
G.P. Putnam's Sons
Harper & Brothers
Historical Printing Club (Brooklyn, N.Y.)

Container List

General Correspondence

- b. 1 1870-1890, July
- b. 2 1890, Aug. - 1893
- b. 3 1894-95
- b. 4 1896-99
- b. 5 1900-02; undated
- b. 6 Correspondence with Lindsay Swift 1889-1902
- b. 6 Correspondence relating to Ford's fictional writings
- b. 7-8 Correspondence relating to Ford's non-fictional writings
- b. 9 Family Correspondence

Writings

Fiction

- b. 10 *Beauty and the Beast (play)*
- b. 10 *The Best Laid Plans (play)*
- b. 11 *The Boss (play)*
- b. 11 *Cupid's Insurrection (play)*
- b. 12 *Cupid's Insurrection (play)*
- b. 12 *The Great K. and A. Train Robbery (novel)*
- b. 13-14 *The Honorable Peter Stirling and What People Thought of Him (novel)*
- b. 15 *Man Proposes (play)*
- b. 15 *The Sewing Society (play)*
- b. 15 *The Story of an Untold Love (novel)*
- b. 16 *The Story of an Untold Love (novel)*

Non-Fiction

- b. 17 *(American Bibliography). Check List of Bibliographies, Catalogues, Reference-Lists and Lists of Authorities of American Books and Subjects, compiled by PLF 1889*
- b. 18 *(American Historical Association). Report on the Bibliography of the American Historical Association. Also, Bibliography of the Published Works of Members of the American Historical Association.*
- b. 18 *Bibliography of the Constitution (incomplete)*
Bibliotheca Hamiltoniana 1886
- b. 19 *Biographical Sketches of the Members of the First Congress under the Constitution*
- b. 20 *(Continental Congress). Some Materials for a Bibliography of the Official Publications of the Continental Congress 1888*
- b. 21-22 *Essays on the Constitution of the United States. Included are transcripts of articles published in various newspapers relative to the adoption of the Constitution. 1787-1788*
- b. 23 *(The Federalist). A List of Editions of the Federalist 1886*
- b. 23 *Franklin Bibliography, A List of Books Written by or relating to Benjamin Franklin 1889*

Writings (cont.)

Non-Fiction (cont.)

- b. 24 *The New England Primer* 1897
- b. 24 *The Pennsylvania Gazette* 1886
- b. 25 *The True George Washington*
- b. 26 *Webster Genealogy*
- b. 26 *Winnowings in American History*
- b. 27 *The Writings of John Dickinson* 1894
- b. 28 *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*
- b. 29 Miscellaneous
- b. 30 Unsorted and unidentified
- b. 31-32 Historical Printing Club
- b. 33-34 Miscellaneous Papers
- b. 35-37 Press Clippings
- b. 38-39 Unsorted papers
- Addenda
 - b. 40 General Correspondence 1869-1902, n.d.
 - b. 40 Correspondence re Weems research
- Writings - Non-Fiction
 - b. 41 *Sayings of Poor Richard*
 - b. 41 *Franklin Bibliography*
- b. 42 Miscellaneous Papers
 - Various notes; Notes re Weems research