

Mark Twain: Papers of Charles M. Underhill, circa 1886-1950 [bulk 1886-1935]

Administrative Information

Creator

Underhill, Charles Munson

Call Number

RBR PS 1331 .A4 1886

Extent

1 manuscript box (.5 linear feet)

Repository

Rare Book Room, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

Abstract

Consists of manuscript material, correspondence, journals, and books relating to the life and works of Mark Twain, as collected by Charles M. and Irving S. Underhill.

Terms of Use

The *Mark Twain: Papers of Charles M. Underhill* collection is open for research.

Reproduction of Materials

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Preferred Citation

[Description and dates], Box/folder number, *Mark Twain: Papers of Charles M. Underhill*, Central Library: Rare Book Room, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library.

Acquisition

The *Mark Twain: Papers of Charles M. Underhill* collection were gifted to the Rare Book Room of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library by the Underhill family in March, 1993.

Biographical Note

About Charles M. Underhill

Charles Munson Underhill was born September 4, 1839. He was an alumnus of Genesee College (now Syracuse University), and elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa society. "For several years he was instructor in Latin and literature in Falley seminary at Fulton. He became connected with the coal business when he entered the employ of the Anthracite Coal Association at Rochester [New York]. Later, Mr. Underhill came to Buffalo as general salesman of that association,

eventually became a member of the firm J. Langdon and Company of Elmira and finally a director of the Pittsburgh Coal Company of Pennsylvania.”¹ Underhill was married to Anna A. Price and had three children: Bertha P., Irving S., and Augustus P. Underhill. He died in 1924.

About Irving S. Underhill

Irving Sears Underhill was born March 18, 1866 in Fulton, New York. After leaving William College, he founded and served as president of the Underhill Coal Company. “Known as a book collector, Mr. Underhill had a large library of first editions. His collection of first editions of Mark Twain’s books is especially well known.”² Underhill was married to Edith Nichols and had four children: Charles S., Irving Jr., Walter N., and Ruth Ann. He died in 1937.

Mark Twain in Buffalo

In August of 1869, Mark Twain arrived in Buffalo to take up the reins of his one-third interest in one of the city’s foremost newspapers, *The Buffalo Morning Express*, an opportunity made possible by a \$12,500 loan from his future father-in-law, Jervis Langdon of Elmira, NY.

In Buffalo, Twain joined the Young Men’s Association, probably at the urging of his friend and fellow *Buffalo Express* editor, Josephus N. Larned and/or his soon to be best friend in Buffalo, David Gray, a poet and the editor of the *Express*’ chief rival the *Buffalo Courier*. He was a dues paying member for the years 1870 and 1871, and oddly enough for 1872 when no longer a resident. In March of 1871 the Twains left Buffalo and moved to Elmira, New York.

¹ “C.M. Underhill, in Coal Business Long Time, Dies at Home. *The Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, December 19, 1924.

² “I.S. Underhill is Dead at 68,” *The Buffalo Evening News*, September, 1937.

Scope and Content

This collection is highlighted by its small, but noteworthy set of original Mark Twain correspondence. These letters and uniquely addressed envelopes were mainly sent to Charles M. Underhill. However, one letter is simply addressed “Dear Madam,” and consists of a rejection by Twain to lecture; for whom is unclear. Copies of *Niagara Book* and *The Gleaner* include the Twain essays “Was the Garden of Eden at Niagara Falls?” and “The First Authentic Mention of Niagara Falls” respectively. Lastly, a cartes de visite of Twain and his contemporaries Petroleum V. Nasby and Josh Billings round out the collection.

Container List

Please note: Original Twain correspondence is fragile in nature and closed; please use provided facsimiles in 1.3.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject/title.

- 1.1 By-laws: Buffalo Public Library, 1897; includes booklet: *The Buffalo Public Library: Important Documents Relating to it, Together with its By-Laws and Rules.*
- 1.2 Clippings, 1884, 1950; includes articles regarding illustration error in first printing of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; Huck Finn musical.

- 1.3 Correspondence: facsimiles, 1995; includes photocopies of letters/envelopes to Charles Underhill [Dombrowski]; 1876 New Year card; unaddressed letter declining an offer to lecture, “cat” card [cat reportedly owned by the Slee family while Twain was visiting Buffalo in 1886].
- 1.4 *The Gleaner*, 1928; includes the essay “Was the Garden of Eden at Niagara Falls?” by Mark Twain. [vol. 1 no. 8, March]
- 1.5 *Niagara Book*, 1893; includes essay: “The First Authentic Mention of Niagara Falls” by Mark Twain. [Original dust jacket in 1.6]
- 1.6 *Niagara Book*: dust jacket, 1893 [**Fragile**. See librarian for handling.]
- 1.7 Photograph, 1928, n.d.; includes image of Mark Twain, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nasby. [cartes de visite]
- 1.8-1.9 Mark Twain, 1876, 1886, 1893, n.d.; includes letters/envelopes to Charles Underhill [Dombrowski]; 1876 New Year card; unaddressed letter declining an offer to lecture, “cat” card [cat reportedly owned by the Slee family while Twain was visiting Buffalo in 1886]. [**Closed**. Please use facsimiles in 1.3]
- 1.10 Irving S. Underhill., c.1929-1940; includes correspondence, manuscript: *The Underhill Collation of Huckleberry Finn: Footnotes to “The Haunted Book”* [typewritten].

Separated materials

Accession materials containing correspondence, photographs, notes, labels, and research material pertaining to the Underhill papers and the resulting Rare Book Room exhibition were relocated to the Rare Book Room vertical file [“RBR—Gifts—Underhill, Charles”] See librarian for access.

Search Terms

Authors

- 600 Twain, Mark, 1835-1910—Correspondence
 600 Twain, Mark, 1835-1910—Miscellanea
 600 Twain, Mark, 1835-1910—*Extracts from Adam’s Diary*
 600 Underhill, Charles Munson
 600 Underhill, Irving S., 1866-1937
 630 Underhill family

Subject terms

- 700 Twain, Mark, 1835-1910
 700 Underhill, Charles M.
 700 Underhill, Irving S., 1866-1937

700 Underhill family
730 *Niagara Book*
730 *Gleaner*

Genre terms

655 articles
655 books
655 bylaws (administrative records)
655 correspondence
655 journals (periodicals)
655 manuscripts