

Harry Persons Taber Papers, circa 1875-1947, undated

Administrative Information

Creator

Taber, Harry Persons, 1865-

Call Number

RBR Roycroft 1881 .T33

Extent

2 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize box. (2.2 linear feet)

Abstract

Collection of materials from Harry Persons Taber, a founding member of the Roycroft Shop and editor of the *Philistine* journal. Includes correspondence, writings, biographical records, and Roycroft publications.

Terms of Use

The *Harry Persons Taber Papers* are open for research.

Reproduction of Materials

See librarian for information on reproducing materials from this collection, including photocopies, digital camera images, or digital scans, as well as copyright restrictions that may pertain to these materials.

Preferred Citation

[Description and dates], Box/folder number, *Harry Persons Taber Papers*, Central Library: Rare Book Room, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library.

Acquisition

Harry Persons Taber donated his papers to the Grosvenor Library (a precursor to the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library), in the late-1940s, date undetermined.

Biographical Note

Printer, author, and chemist, Harry Persons Taber was born in 1865 in East Aurora, New York. Although he is best known for his work as editor of the Roycroft journal *The Philistine*, Taber's professional life took many turns. Before joining Hubbard in 1895, he served as a journalist at the *Denver Republican* newspaper from 1892-1894.

Controversy surrounded Taber's relationship with Hubbard and the circumstances of the founding of the Roycroft Shop and *The Philistine*. The *Stephen Crane Encyclopedia* describes the situation as follows:

“Taber is credited as editor in the July through December issues and as copyright holder from the September through January 1896 issues. In the January issue he

is listed as ‘Datary’ instead of editor. Taber had sold his share in the Roycroft Shop and the Philistine to Hubbard in November 1895....After his association with Hubbard ended, Taber repeatedly claimed that he was the exclusive founder of both the Roycroft Shop and the Philistine and that Hubbard was a mere interloper...” (Wertheim, pp.331).

After the dissolution of his business relationship with Hubbard, Taber served as editor of the *Buffalo Times*, and later, the *Springfield Union* in Massachusetts. By the World War I era, Taber had moved to Wilmington, Delaware and started Taber Laboratories, a chemical company. Clients included the federal Department of Commerce Bureau of Standards, and focused on cellulose products, synthetic gums, lacquers, and plastics.

Although Taber had turned his pursuits to science, he did not completely abandon writing, and continued to write articles for journals and newspapers. Additionally, he authored and co-authored 5 works of fiction and poetry from 1904 to 1943: *The Gordon Elopement*, *The Matrimonial Bureau*, *Songs of Good Fighting*, *The Rubaiyat of the Commuter*, and the fictionalized-autobiography *Ezra and Me*. He died in Wilmington, Delaware on November 14, 1951.

* Wertheim, Stanley. "Taber, Harry Persons (1865-?)." *Stephen Crane Encyclopedia*. 1997.

Scope and Content

Although not comprehensive, this collection offers important documentation of the personal life and professional career of Harry Persons Taber, and is comprised of three series: Biographical, Roycroft, and Writings. Notable biographical records include the 1881 diary Taber kept at age 16, recording some of his early printing efforts, and a scrapbook of correspondence and clippings with broad coverage from 1898-1937.

Roycroft records are notable for the aggregation of publications written or contributed to by Taber, including the journal *The Philistine*, broadsides, and a collection of printed and hand-drawn motifs. (*Note*: many of the Roycroft publications are fragile; see librarian for handling). A reproduction of the original Taber-Elbert Hubbard agreement, as well as correspondence and articles regarding Hubbard and Stephen Crane are included.

Series III contains typescripts and copies of Taber’s numerous articles for newspapers and journals, proofsheets for *Ezra and Me*, and an unknown typewritten manuscript, possibly written by Roycroft contributor Paul Allan.

Arrangement

- Series I. Biographical, circa 1875-1947, undated
- Series II. Roycroft, circa 1895-1945, undated
- Series III. Writings, circa 1896-1945, undated

Container List

Series I. Biographical, circa 1875-1947, undated

Scope and content: Contains collected autographs; article clippings; correspondence: personal, Taber Laboratories; childhood diary; portraits; scrapbook.

Arrangement: Alphabetic by subject.

- 1.1 Articles, 1932-1934; regarding Taber: "Looking Back over a Busy Life," "Makes a New Kind of Decorative Paper in Irvington."
- 1.2 Autographs, 1875, 1883, undated; includes S.J. Douglass, William Steele Holman, Helena Modjeska, George Maxwell Robeson?.
- 1.3 Clippings, 1927, undated; includes articles regarding Major Sylvester W. Rennie; Great Depression; image of painting: "Old Elm, Taber Hill;" poem.
- 1.4 Correspondence, circa 1880-1947; includes Taber's sister Grace; Charles Burchfield; Frank Cobb; Tom W. Hamilton; Judge Louis Bret Hart; S.E. Kiser [?]; Griff Lloyd; Henry E. Luhrs; Julian Park; invitation from White House [Edith Roosevelt]; Wilbur Macey Stone; George A. Taber.
- 1.5 Diary: age 16, 1881; covers personal doings: weather, church, lectures he attended, etc.; printing projects including Livingston Hopkins' *Comic History of the United States*; death of Czar Alexander II.
- 1.6 Genealogy, undated; includes Prentice family (1741-1898).
- 1.7 Pamphlets, circa 1862-1927; includes Beltonian Society: Annual Exhibition; The Lamb: membership rosters; American Union Against Militarism: "Where was Lieutenant James W. Wadsworth...?"
- 1.8 Photographs, circa 1867-1892, undated; includes portraits of Taber; Lou Hartigan. [3 photos: b/w]
- 1.9 Scrapbook, circa 1898-1937; includes correspondence with Paul Allan; drawings; invitation to lunch with President Theodore Roosevelt; Associated Press bulletin regarding Spanish-American War. [disbound]
- 1.10 Taber Laboratories, circa 1917-1921; includes correspondence regarding work for federal government.

Series II. Roycroft, circa 1895-1945, undated

Scope and content: Contains Roycroft publications; clippings on Elbert Hubbard and Roycroft; reproduction of Taber-Hubbard agreement. See also Series III, 2.8, Manuscripts: Roycroft.

Arrangement: Alphabetic by subject.

- 1.11 Agreement, undated; includes transcription, images of agreement [2 photos: b/w; 1 transparency: b/w]; correspondence from William McIntosh to Elbert Hubbard [typewritten reproductions].
- 3.1+ Broadsides, undated; includes “Special Notice- Good Roycrofters do not get their fun out of fire and explosions...” [2 copies: **Fragile**. See librarian for handling.]
- 1.12 Clippings, circa 1936-1938, undated; regarding Roycroft, East Aurora.
- 1.13 Stephen Crane, circa 1918-1932; correspondence regarding Crane includes Thomas Beer, H.G. Wells, Frank W. Noxon, Christian Robinson. [**Note:** Original Hubbard letter to H.G. Wells located in 1.14 is CLOSED. Please use photocopy provided within 1.13.]
- 1.15 Elbert Hubbard, 1905-1967; includes correspondence: Harry Esty Dounce, Julian Park; article reprints: “The Secret Monita, or Secret Instructions of the Jesuits,” “Elbert Hubbard,” *Scribner’s*, September, 1937; “Elbert Hubbard’s Roycrofters as Artist-Craftsmen,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, 3 (1967); Hubbard’s divorce from wife Bertha.
- 3.2+ Motifs, undated; includes stamped, hand drawn designs. [pencil, ink]
- 1.16 *The Philistine*, circa 1915-1945; includes correspondence, clippings.
- 2.1-2.4 Publications, circa 1895-1918; includes *Papyrus*, vol. 4 no. 4 (April, 1905); *The Philistine*: vol. 1 no. 1 (June, 1895); vol. 1 no. 2 (July, 1895); vol. 1 no.3 (August, 1895); vol.1 no. 4 (September, 1895); vol. 2 no. 1 (December, 1895); vol. 2 no. 3 (February, 1896); vol. 4 no. 1 (December, 1896); vol. 5 no. 4 (September, 1897); vol. 9 no. 6 (November, 1899); vol. 13 no. 4 (September, 1901); vol. 25 no. 2 (July, 1907); vol. 41 no. 2 (July, 1915); *Roycroft*, vol. 3 no. 2 (October, 1918) “**The Standard Oil Company**,” 1910 reprint of article from *The Fra*. [**Fragile**. See librarian for handling.]
- 2.5 *Saturday Review of Literature*, circa 1926-1936; includes correspondence, book review by Taber: “The Sage of East Aurora.”

Series III. Writings, circa 1896-1945, undated

Scope and content: Mainly consists of manuscripts written by Taber, including articles, proofsheets for his book Ezra and Me, and autobiographical writings Taber tentatively collected as "Footnotes to Memory." Also includes manuscript possibly written by Paul Allan (2.9).

Arrangement: Alphabetic by subject.

- 2.6 Articles, circa 1896-1945; includes "The Cruise of Norna;" "Miss Barrymore's Books;" "The Ten 'Best' - and Some Others;" response to "Books and Other Things;" "An 'Old Maid' and Her Kittens;" "The Famous Triple Hanging in Lafayette Square." [Note: Original newsprint of "The Famous Triple Hanging in Lafayette Square" is in 3.4+. Please use photocopy provided within 2.6]
- 3.3+ *Ezra and Me*, circa 1943; includes proofsheets of chapter 3.
- 2.7 Manuscripts: "Footnotes to Memory," undated; includes typescripts: "Daniel;" "The Genesis of Illusion;" "In the Beginning;" "The Man of Silence;" "The Music Master;" "Phineas;" "Prelude to Adventure;" "Processional;" "Timothy;" "Zeke." [typescripts]
- 2.8 Manuscripts: Roycroft, undated; includes chapters: "The Philistine and Roycroft," "Not that it Matters...." [typescripts]
- 2.9 Manuscript: unknown, undated; consists of letters, diary entries [possibly written by Paul Allan]. [typescript]
- 2.10 "Notes for J.S.," undated [typescript]
- 2.11 "The Odyssey of Parson's Pants," circa 1929 [typescript]
- 2.12 "...Whence these Legends," undated; concerning Millard Fillmore, Three Thayers. [typescript]

Related Materials***History and Bibliography of the Roycroft Printing Shop: Papers of Paul McKenna, circa 1899, 1927-1983, undated***

Abstract: Contains research materials of author Paul McKenna used in the creation of his book, *History and Bibliography of the Roycroft Printing Shop*. Includes photographs, audio materials, correspondence, printed publications, and photocopies of journal articles.

Papers of Ernest Simmons, circa 1894-1966, undated**RBR Roycroft 1894 .S56**

Abstract: The papers of Ernest E. Simmons, employee of the Roycroft organization. Collection consists mainly of correspondence, advertisements, newspaper clippings, and photographs.

Search Terms

Authors

- 600 Taber, Harry Persons, b. 1865
- 600 Hubbard, Elbert, 1856-1915
- 610 Roycroft Shop
- 610 Society of the Philistines (East Aurora, N.Y.)

Subject terms

- 650 Roycroft Shop--History--Archival materials

Genre terms

- 655 articles
- 655 correspondence
- 655 magazines (periodicals)