Guide to the Coburn Britton Papers

YCAL MSS 650

by Beinecke staff

2012-10-09

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

Last modified at 5:20 a.m. on Saturday, November 10th, 2018
# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .......................................................................................................................... 3  
Requesting Instructions .................................................................................................................. 3  
Administrative Information .............................................................................................................. 4  
  Immediate Source of Acquisition ................................................................................................. 4  
  Conditions Governing Access ...................................................................................................... 4  
  Conditions Governing Use .......................................................................................................... 4  
  Preferred Citation ....................................................................................................................... 4  
Processing Information ................................................................................................................... 4  
Coburn Haskell Britton (1935-1997) .......................................................................................... 4  
Scope and Contents ........................................................................................................................ 5  
Arrangement ................................................................................................................................... 5  
Collection Contents .......................................................................................................................... 6  
  June 2002 Acquisition ................................................................................................................ 6  
  Oversize ......................................................................................................................................... 9  
Selected Search Terms .................................................................................................................... 10
Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 650

CREATOR: Britton, Coburn

TITLE: Coburn Britton papers

DATES: 1919–1997

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.91 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection contains correspondence, writings, and personal papers documenting the life and literary activities of American poet and publisher Coburn Britton. The correspondence features a nearly three-decade long exchange between Britton and Jack Sullivan, some of which was compiled and published as Letters from Jack: Sex & Hell in Manhattan and Backwoods Maine (2002). In addition, there are small groups of correspondence with others, including Glenway Wescott, Edward Dahlberg, and Lincoln Kirstein, dating chiefly from the 1970s, as well as approximately 150 postcards from graphic artist Willyum Rowe, with whom Britton collaborated on An ABeCedarium for Poets and Readers (1989). Many if not most of the postcards from Rowe are decorated, for example, with cutouts and stamps, providing a large group of postcard or mail art from the period. Writings include printed versions of Britton’s Second Seasons (1982), Lesser Goods and Other Poems (1987), and An ABeCedarium for Poets and Readers (1989), and drafts of the later Adrian Sonnets (1995) and shorter works. Others materials include photographs of family and friends, printed materials, and documents.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.britton

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.britton.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Elizabeth Harries, 2002.

Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
The Coburn Britton Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation
Coburn Britton Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information
This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and in some instances minimal organization.

As a rule, descriptive information found in the Collection Contents section is drawn in large part from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Former call number: Uncat MSS 377.

Coburn Haskell Britton (1935-1997)
Coburn Britton was born in Cleveland, Ohio to Mr. and Mrs. Brigham Britton of Bratenahl, Ohio. He attended University School, Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, Yale University, and Trinity College, Dublin, as a Fulbright scholar, before settling in New York City. Britton was an editor at Doubleday and Company and co-publisher of Horizon Press in the 1960s and then founder of the magazine Prose in 1970. After closing the magazine in 1974 he divided his time between writing poetry and tending to his farm in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Britton’s works include Second Seasons (1982), Lesser Goods and Other Poems (1987), An ABCedarium for Poets and Readers (1989), and Adrian Sonnets (1995). He died 26 November 1997 in Lebanon, New Jersey.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains correspondence, writings, and personal papers documenting the life and literary activities of American poet and publisher Coburn Britton. The correspondence features a nearly three-decade long exchange between Britton and Jack Sullivan, some of which was compiled and published as *Letters from Jack: Sex & Hell in Backwoods Maine* (1997). In addition, there are small groups of correspondence with others, including Glenway Wescott, Edward Dahlberg, and Lincoln Kirstein, dating chiefly from the 1970s, as well as approximately 150 postcards from graphic artist Willyum Rowe, with whom Britton collaborated on *An ABeCedarium for Poets and Readers* (1989). Many if not most of the postcards from Rowe are decorated, for example, with cutouts and stamps, providing a large group of postcard mail art from the period. Writings include printed versions of Britton’s *Second Seasons* (1982), *Lesser Goods and Other Poems* (1987), and *An ABeCedarium for Poets and Readers* (1989), and drafts of the later *Adrian Sonnets* (1995) and shorter works. Others materials include photographs of family and friends, printed materials, and documents.

Arrangement

Organized into one grouping by date of acquisition: June 2002 Acquisition.
### Collection Contents

**June 2002 Acquisition**

*3.83 linear feet (5 boxes)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.1</td>
<td>Correspondence with Jack Sullivan</td>
<td>[circa 1971–1997]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.1</td>
<td><em>Letters from Jack: Sex &amp; Hell in Backwoods Maine,</em> draft, computer printout</td>
<td>[circa 1997]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.1</td>
<td>Correspondence with Jack Sullivan</td>
<td>1971–1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Correspondence with Jack Sullivan</td>
<td>1989–1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Letter from unidentified correspondent</td>
<td>1994 June 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Printed material</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Material relating to Margaret Anderson</td>
<td>1973, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Unidentified manuscript</td>
<td>1954, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Certificate of Occupancy form, completed (copy)</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Material relating to Deerfield</td>
<td>1952–1954, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>“Letters from the 1950s...”</td>
<td>1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Genealogical and other material</td>
<td>1977, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Photograph album and other material</td>
<td>1964–1975, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Printed and other material</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Letter from [Hussey?]</td>
<td>1973 October 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Miscellaneous material</td>
<td>1942–1962, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.2</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>1919–[1957?], undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also stored in: Oversize, Box 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.3</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>1964–1995, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. 3  Correspondence with Jack Sullivan  
    37 folders  
    1980–1991

b. 4  “Adrian letters + poems”  
    undated

b. 4  Correspondence and other material  
    3 folders  
    1928–1978

b. 4  “John Pope-Hennessy”  
    1970–1972

b. 4  “Robin Magowan”  
    1972, undated

b. 4  “Paul Metcalf”  
    1972–1973

b. 4  Glenway Wescott  
    1972

b. 4  “Patrick White”  
    1970

b. 4  Clippings and other material  
    Also stored in: Oversize, Box 6  
    1970–1985, undated

b. 4  “Edward Dahlberg”  
    1976–1977, undated

b. 4  Lincoln Kirstein  
    1970–1973

b. 4  “Jonathan Williams”  
    1970–1973

b. 4  Alex Gildzen  
    1970 November 16

b. 4  Miscellaneous material  
    1945–1995, undated

b. 4  Unidentified poem  
    undated

b. 4  Stories by Britton  
    undated

b. 4  Correspondence  
    2 folders  
    1978, 1996

b. 4  “Letters about Adrian Sonnets”  
    1996, undated

b. 4  “Willyum Rowe”  
    9 folders  
    Includes photographs  
    1972–1981, undated

b. 4  “Sonetto XXV,” drafts  
    1997, undated

    “Tovarish Archimedes and Co.,” draft by Howard [Hassey?]  
    Stored in: Oversize, Box 6  
    undated

    Pastel by [Lunda?] Britton  
    Stored in: Oversize, Box 6  
    1983 November

b. 4  Printed materials  
    2 folders  
    1982–1989
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Colby's Own Stuff&quot;</td>
<td>1965–1995, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence and other material</td>
<td>1954–1996, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 folders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Oversize**

*0.08 linear feet (1 box)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. 6</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
<th>1919, [195?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 6</td>
<td>Clipping</td>
<td>1985 December 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6</td>
<td>“Tovarish Archimedes and Co.,” draft by Howard [Hassey?]</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6</td>
<td>Pastel by [Lunda?] Britton</td>
<td>1983 November</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
American literature -- 20th Century
Authors and publishers -- United States
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Publishers and publishing -- United States

Genres / Formats
Mail art -- United States -- 20th Century
Photographic prints

Occupations
Authors -- United States -- 20th Century
Poets -- United States -- 20th Century

Names
Britton, Coburn
Dahlberg, Edward, 1900-1977
Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996
Rowe, William, 1946-
Sullivan, Jack, 1936-
Wescott, Glenway, 1901-1987