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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale University Divinity School Library  
409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
divinity.library@yale.edu  
http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections

CALL NUMBER: RG 36

CREATOR: Coe, George Albert, 1862-1951

TITLE: George Albert Coe Papers

DATES: 1883–1952

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4 linear feet (7 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence with personal friends reveals Coe’s personality and character, while correspondence with professional colleagues gives insight into the development of Coe’s thought. Notable correspondents include William Clayton Bower, Emil Brunner, Adelaide Case, Harrison Elliott, and A. J. W. Myers. Writings include articles, essays, and drafts. Printed material includes reviews of Coe’s books and committee reports and minutes. George Albert Coe was born in Mendon, New York on March 26, 1862. He received degrees from the University of Rochester and Boston University. He was a prominent author and professor in the fields of psychology of religion, philosophy, and religious education at the University of Southern California, University of Berlin, Northwestern University, Yale University, Union Theological Seminary, and Columbia University. Coe was chairman of the Committee on Militarism in Education and Honorary President of the Religious Education Association. Coe died on November 9, 1951.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.036

Requesting Instructions

To view manuscript and archival materials at the Yale Divinity Library, please submit the request form at https://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/form/yale-divinity-library-mss-request-form.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of George Albert Coe
Conditions Governing Access
Open to qualified researchers.

Preferred Citation
George Albert Coe Papers (RG 36), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical
Date       Event                                                                                           
1862 Mar 26  o Born in Mendon, N.Y., son of a clergyman                                      
1884        o B.A., University of Rochester                                                                 
1887        o S.T.B., Boston University                                                                
1888        o M.A., University of Rochester                                                               
1888 Sep 3  o Married Sadie E. Knowland; she later became a professor at the Northwestern University School of Music and died in 1905.  
1888-1890   o Professor of Philosophy, University of Southern California                              
1890-1891   o At University of Berlin as Jacob Sleeper Fellow of Boston University                           
1891        o Ph.D., Boston University                                                                  
1891-1909   o Professor of Philosophy, Northwestern University                                         
1909        o LL.D., University of Rochester                                                              
1909-1910   o Instructor in Religious Education, Yale                                                  
1909-1922   o Professor of Religious Education and Psychology of Religion at Union Theological Seminary; organized and supervised the Union School of Religion, an experimental and demonstration Sunday School. 
1922-1927   o Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University                               
1951 Nov 9  o Died (Biographical Material, Box 7, Folder 58)                                         

George Albert Coe has been called one of the three foremost pioneers in the field of psychology of religion along with William James and Edwin D. Starbuck. Coe served for many years as chairman of the Committee on Militarism in Education and was Honorary President of the Religious Education Association. He was a prolific writer throughout his life, producing noteworthy articles through his eighth decade. In one of the many tributes which appeared after Coe's death, Stewart G. Cole wrote: "He enlisted his germinal mind and his social passion in rethinking religion in terms of the needs of man's experience, the growth of human personality and the social issues affecting the well-being of every individual." (Cole, Stewart G., "A Tribute", Religious Education, March-April, 1952, p. 88.)

Scope and Contents
The first series, Correspondence is divided into three sections:
   a) General
b) Letters of sympathy received at the time of the death of Mrs. Coe.
c) Letters received at the time of Coe’s retirement in 1927

The General section includes correspondence with Coe’s professional colleagues and personal friends. Correspondence with friends sheds light on Coe’s personality and character. Substantive letters to and from colleagues give insight into the development of Coe’s thought throughout his long career, a development which led Coe to write at age eighty-two: “I have reexamined my own position with the result of becoming to a significant extent a dissenter from some of my own published writings.” (Preface of Coe’s book, What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences?) Notable correspondents include: William Clayton Bower, Emil Brunner, Adelaide Case, Harrision Elliott, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Hugh Hartshorne and A. J. W. Myers. Correspondence from the period before 1915 is included in the scrapbooks maintained by Coe to document the reception of his published works.

The second series, Writings, dates from 1883 to 1951. The writings are primarily articles and essays in printed or reprint form with a few typescript drafts. Manuscripts of Coe’s major works are not represented in this series.

   a) Reviews of Coe’s books (1924-1943). Reviews of earlier publications are included in the four scrapbooks which follow Series IV.
   b) Reports and minutes of the Committee on Militarism in Education of which Coe was chairman for many years (1936-1940).
   c) Miscellaneous (1924-1947, n.d.): Includes material from the Military Intelligence Association, Inc., which disapproved of Coe’s pacifist stance and of the activities of the Committee on Militarism in Education.

The fourth series, Personal Items and Memorabilia, includes three folders. The first contains biographical material regarding Coe, including bibliographies of his published works. The second folder contains photographs of Coe and ones taken by him. The third folder contains material regarding Coe’s wife, Sadie Knowland Coe, including photographs, newspaper clippings regarding her death, and music composed by her.

The four bound volumes date from 1900 to 1920. They contain reviews and correspondence regarding Coe’s published works.

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**Arrangement**

I. Correspondence, 1915-1950, n.d.
II. Writings, 1893-1951
IV. Personal Items and Memorabilia, 1905-1952, n.d.
Collection Contents
Series I. Correspondence

General Correspondence: The letters are arranged chronologically. One folder of letters regarding Coe’s resignation from Union Theological Seminary follows the material which is chronologically arranged. This folder is to be used only with the permission of the Head Librarian.

Letters of Sympathy: arranged alphabetically by author.

Letters received at the time of Coe’s retirement: These letters are in a bound volume, left in their original order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1-10</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1915–1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 11-20</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1938–1950, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 21</td>
<td>Correspondence with Union Seminary</td>
<td>1919–1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 22</td>
<td>A-C</td>
<td>1905,1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 23</td>
<td>D-L</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 24</td>
<td>M-Y</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 25</td>
<td>Telegrams and Calling Cards</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 26</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1927</td>
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</table>
Series II. Writings

The writings are arranged chronologically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 27-36</td>
<td>Writings</td>
<td>1883–1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5, f. 37-45</td>
<td>Writings</td>
<td>1915–1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 46-53</td>
<td>Writings</td>
<td>1936–1951, n.d.</td>
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Series III. Printed Material

The material is arranged in three sections:

a) Reviews of Coe’s books, listed alphabetically by title.
b) Reports, minutes of the Committee on Militarism in Education
c) Miscellaneous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 54</td>
<td>Reviews: “Educating for Citizenship”</td>
<td>1932–1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 54</td>
<td>“Law and Freedom in the School”</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 54</td>
<td>“Motives of Men”</td>
<td>1928–1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 54</td>
<td>“What Ails our Youth?”</td>
<td>1924–1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 55</td>
<td>Reviews: ‘What is Christian Education?’</td>
<td>1929–1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 55</td>
<td>“What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences”</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 56</td>
<td>Reports, minutes of Committee on Militarism in Education</td>
<td>1936–1940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Series IV. Personal Items and Memorabilia

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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 58</td>
<td>Biographical material re: Coe</td>
<td>1950-1952, n.d.</td>
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<td>b. 7, f. 58A</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 59</td>
<td>Biographical material re: Coe's wife</td>
<td>1905, 1906, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ov1-Ov4</td>
<td>Four Scrapbooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1900–1920</td>
<td></td>
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</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
Authors
Educators
Psychology, Religious
Religious education

Names
Bower, William Clayton, 1878-
Brunner, Emil, 1889-1966
Case, Adelaide Teague, 1887-1948
Coe, George Albert, 1862-1951
Elliott, Harrison S. (Harrison Sacket), 1882-1951
Fosdick, Harry Emerson, 1878-1969
Hartshorne, Hugh, 1885-1967
Myers, A. J. William (Alexander John William), 1877-

Corporate Body
Religious Education Association