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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

# Guide to the William Stanley Braithwaite Papers

JWJ MSS 72



by H. Dean and Olivia Coates

2010

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** JWJ MSS 72

**CREATOR:** Braithwaite, William Stanley, 1878-1962

**TITLE:** William Stanley Braithwaite Papers

**DATES:** 1797–1942

**BULK DATES:** 1830–1942

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.25 linear feet (5 boxes + 2 broadside folders)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The William Stanley Braithwaite Papers document his personal and professional life and span the dates 1797 to 1942. The Papers contain correspondence, writings, and other papers, which provide evidence of Braithwaite's career as a writer, publisher, and anthologist. The Papers also includes third-party correspondence, notably, a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to J. Nicol from circa 1797.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.braithwa>

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## 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 <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.braithwa>.

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](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

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

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Walter R. Benjamin and Margaret Carpenter on the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts & Letters Fund, 2003 and from William Reese Company on the Danford N. Barney, Jr. Fund, 1991.

The addition was purchased from Southpaw Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2015.

Other material came to the library in small quantities from various sources as indicated on individual folders.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The William Stanley Braithwaite 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.

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## Preferred Citation

William Stanley Braithwaite Papers. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Part of the William Stanley Braithwaite Papers are derived from JWJ MSS Small Collections. A list for JWJ MSS Small Collections was created in the 1980s by graduate students who conducted a survey of collections under the direction of the curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature. The Beinecke Library received additional Braithwaite material after this list was created. In 2010 the Papers received further processing, at which time JWJ MSS Small Collections Braithwaite was interfiled with Za Braithwaite, Uncat.JWJ MS.47, and JWJ Zan B731 +1.

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## Existence and Location of Copies

Portions of the collection are microfilmed, as noted on individual folders.

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## William Stanley Beaumont Braithwaite (1878-1962)

William Stanley Braithwaite was born in Boston, December 6, 1878, to William Smith Braithwaite and Emma DeWolf. He led a difficult life as a child of two mixed race parents and due to the death of his father in 1886, he left school early and joined the workforce at the age of twelve. His first employment was fortuitous; he was apprenticed in a Boston publishing house where he was exposed to the works of John Keats. Braithwaite acquired a passion for romantic poetry which drew him to a literary life. In 1903 he married Emma Kelly with whom he had seven children. Following his marriage, he committed himself even more intensely to his literary career, and completed and published his first volume of poetry, *Lyrics of Life and Love* (1904). He traveled to New York City in search of a career in journalism, but encountered an unfamiliar atmosphere of racial prejudice and soon returned to Boston where he found employment in 1906 as a critic and reviewer for *The Boston Evening Transcript*. While at *The Transcript* he published his first anthologies as collections of the year's best poetry. In 1908 he completed his best-known work of poetry, *The House of Falling Leaves*, in which he explored the development of African-American writing in the U.S. He attempted to start up his own literary publication, *The Poetic Journal* and a publishing house, B.J. Brimmer, which he founded with fellow poet Winifred Virginia Jackson. Both ventures proved unsuccessful and Braithwaite was beset with financial difficulties. In 1935, after having received several honorary degrees he was offered a professorship at Atlanta University which he held until 1945. Braithwaite returned to New York City and completed his final collection of poems, *Selected Poems*, in 1948 and remained there until his death on June 8, 1962.

## Scope and Contents

The William Stanley Braithwaite Papers document his personal and professional life and span the dates 1797 to 1942. The Papers contain correspondence, writings, and other papers, which provide evidence of Braithwaite's career as a writer, publisher, and anthologist.

Braithwaite's correspondence records his professional and, to a lesser degree, personal relationships. Correspondents include poets such as Stephen Vincent Benét, William Rose Benét, Witter Bynner, Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn, Grace Hazard Conkling, Olive Tilford Dargan, Rebecca Harding Davis, John Gould Fletcher, Georgia Douglas Johnson, James Weldon Johnson, James Joyce, Joyce Kilmer, Aline Murray Kilmer, Vachel Lindsay, Philip Ainsworth Means, and Louis Untermeyer. Other correspondents include W.E.B. DuBois and George E. Haynes. The correspondence series also contains third-party correspondence; notably, a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to J. Nicol from circa 1797.

Proofs, clippings of articles, and publicity materials represent Braithwaite's career as an anthologist and as an author for *The Boston Evening Transcript*. Other papers document his work as a publisher (with B.J. Brimmer) and lecturer. The papers also contain a portrait and a photograph of Braithwaite as well as his collection of autographs.

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## Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, circa 1797, 1877-1942. II. Writings, 1908-1928. III. Other Papers, 1830-1935, undated. IV. Addition, 1911-1935.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, circa 1797, 1877–1942

0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)

The series contains correspondence dating from 1797 to 1942 documenting Braithwaite's career. The correspondence provides insight into Braithwaite's relationships with authors and pertains to his work as a critic and anthologist. There are numerous letters between Braithwaite and authors regarding his anthologies. In their letters correspondents often grant permission to Braithwaite to include their pieces in his anthologies and some authors enclose copies of their poems and details regarding last minute changes to their writing (such as edits to a particular poem and justifications for such changes). Braithwaite also corresponded extensively with Arthur Upson's mother Mrs. Julia Upson and fiancée Ruth Shepard Phelps following Upson's death in 1908. Correspondents include: Stephen Vincent Benét, William Rose Benét, Witter Bynner, Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn, Grace Hazard Conkling, Olive Tilford Dargan, Rebecca Harding Davis, William E. B. DuBois, John Gould Fletcher, George E. Haynes, Georgia Douglas Johnson, James Weldon Johnson, James Joyce, Joyce and Aline Murray Kilmer, Vachel Lindsay, Philip Ainsworth Means, and Louis Untermeyer.

The series also includes third-party correspondence such as a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to J. Nicol and correspondence between Frederick A. Kent and various government officials. Braithwaite's correspondence with Rebecca Harding Davis includes correspondence with Mary Allen and other third-parties. Braithwaite collected autographs so it is possible that some of the third-party correspondence reflects this pursuit. Braithwaite's autograph collection is in Series III.

The series is organized into two subseries: William Stanley Braithwaite Correspondence and Third-Party Correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

#### William Stanley Braithwaite Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1	General "Adams-Arden"	1896-1917
b. 1, f. 2	General "Baker-Byles"	1897-1918
b. 1, f. 3	Benét, Stephen Vincent	undated
b. 1, f. 4	Benét, William Rose	1915-1916
b. 1, f. 5	Branch, Anna H. To: 0 / From: 3	1905-1918
b. 1, f. 6	Brooks, Edmund D. Includes clippings re: Arthur Upson	1909
b. 1, f. 7	Bynner, Witter	1917
b. 1, f. 8	General "Cabell-Crawford"	1910-1917
b. 1, f. 9	Church, Robert R. Letter from B. J. Brimmer Co.	1922
b. 1, f. 10	Cleghorn, Sarah Norcliffe	1915-1917
b. 1, f. 11	Colcord, Lincoln	1915-1916
b. 1, f. 12	Conkling, Grace Hazard	1916

## William Stanley Braithwaite Correspondence (continued)

b. 1, f. 13	General "Da-Dz"	1898-1919
b. 1, f. 14	Daly, Thomas Augustine	1912-1913
b. 1, f. 15	Dargan, Olive Tilford	1916
b. 1, f. 16	Davis, Rebecca Harding Includes correspondence between Rebecca Harding Davis and Mary Allen.	undated
b. 1, f. 17	Delta Phi Delta To: 1 / From: 0	1938
b. 1, f. 18	Dodson, Owen To: 0 / From: 1	1942
b. 1, f. 19	DuBois, William E. B. Includes letter from B. J. Brimmer Co. To: 1 / From: 1	1918, 1922
b. 1, f. 20	General "Ea-Ez"	1891-1914
b. 1, f. 21	Edgett, Edwin F. To: 17 / From: 0	1908-23
b. 1, f. 22	Evans, Donald	undated
b. 1, f. 23	General "Fa-Fz"	1906-1910
b. 1, f. 24	Fletcher, John Gould	undated
b. 1, f. 25	General "Ga-Gz"	1877-1932
b. 1, f. 26	G. Bell & Sons	1910
b. 1, f. 27	George Allen & Sons	1910
b. 1, f. 28	General "Ha-Hz"	1910-1932
b. 1, f. 29	Hagedorn, Hermann	1916
b. 1, f. 30	Hale, R. T. To: 1 / From: 0	1909
b. 1, f. 31	<a href="#">Haynes, George E.</a> To: 10 / From: 3	1926-27
b. 1, f. 32	General "Ia-Jz"	1910
b. 1, f. 33	Jackman, Harold To: 0 / From: 1	1942

## William Stanley Braithwaite Correspondence (continued)

b. 1, f. 34	Johnson, Georgia Douglas Includes two poems and correspondence regarding Georgia Douglas Johnson To: 1 / From: 3	1921-22
b. 1, f. 35	Johnson, James Weldon Includes miscellaneous material regarding James Weldon Johnson To: 2 / From: 2	1921, undated
b. 1, f. 36	Johnson, Robert Underwood	1915-1918
b. 1, f. 37	Joyce, James	1910
b. 1, f. 38	General "Ka-Kz"	1910-1932
b. 1, f. 39	Kilmer, Aline Murray	1914-1918
b. 1, f. 40	Mr. King To: 0 / From: 1	1911 March 11
b. 1, f. 41	Kreymborg, Alfred	1916-1921
b. 1, f. 42	General "La-Lz"	1885-1918
b. 1, f. 43	Le Gallienne, Richard	undated
b. 1, f. 44	Lewis, Sinclair	1914-1915
b. 1, f. 45	Lindsay, Vachel	1913-1918
b. 1, f. 46	Lodge, Henry Cabot	1890-1912
b. 1, f. 47	General "Ma-Mz"	1890-1932
b. 1, f. 48	MacKaye, Percy	1914-1919
b. 1, f. 49	Malone, Walter	1913-1915
b. 1, f. 50	Masters, Edgar Lee	1915
b. 2, f. 51	Means, Philip Ainsworth	1915
b. 2, f. 52	Mitchell, Ruth Comfort	1915
b. 2, f. 53	General "Na-Nz"	1910-1921
b. 2, f. 54	General "Oa-Oz"	1910-1919
b. 2, f. 55	General "Pa-Pz"	1897-1932
b. 2, f. 56	Peabody, Josephine Preston	undated
b. 2, f. 57	Percy, William Alexander	1915-1916
b. 2, f. 58	<a href="#">Phelps, Ruth Shepard</a> To: 6 / From: 0	1908-25

## William Stanley Braithwaite Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 59	<a href="#">Phelps, -----</a> To: 0 / From: 4	1908
b. 2, f. 60	"Punch" proprietors	1910
b. 2, f. 61	General "Ra-Rz"	1910-1920
b. 2, f. 62	Reese, Lizette Woodworth	1917-1921
b. 2, f. 63	<a href="#">Rittenhouse, Jessie E.</a> Includes draft of introduction by WSB To: 2 / From: 0	undated
b. 2, f. 64	Robinson, Corrine Roosevelt	1915-1918
b. 2, f. 65	Robinson, Edwin Arlington	1915-1920
b. 2, f. 66	<a href="#">Roth, Samuel</a> To: 1 / From: 0	1918 Mar 22
b. 2, f. 67	General "Sa-Sz"	1910-1932
b. 2, f. 68	Smith, Elder & co., publishers, London	1910
b. 2, f. 69	Sprague, Charles	undated
b. 2, f. 70	Sterling, George	1912-1915
b. 2, f. 71	Stephens, Wallace	1911
b. 2, f. 72	Stork, Charles Wharton	undated
b. 2, f. 73	General "Ta-Tz"	1910-1919
b. 2, f. 74	Teasdale, Sara	1915-1920
b. 2, f. 75	Torrence, Ridgely	1916-1918
b. 2, f. 76	Untermeyer, Louis	1915
b. 2, f. 77	Unwin, T. Fisher	1910
b. 2, f. 78	Upson, Arthur Includes three poems by Upson and correspondence regarding Upson To: 8 / From: 0	1906, 1908, undated
b. 2, f. 79-80	<a href="#">Upson, Julia</a> To: 29 / From: 0	1908-11, undated
b. 2, f. 81	Van Dyke, Henry Includes correspondence with Teritius Van Dyke To: 3 / From: 1	1912-34

## William Stanley Braithwaite Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 82	Viking Press To: 3 / From: 1	1927, 1928
b. 2, f. 83	General "Wa-Wz"	1909-1918
b. 2, f. 84	Wattles, Willard	1919
b. 2, f. 85	Wilcox, Ella Wheeler	1886-1914
b. 2, f. 86	Wood, Clement Includes correspondence regarding Clement Wood To: 6 / From: 5	1921-30
Third-Party Correspondence		
b. 2, f. 87	Banks, Sir Joseph to J. Nicol	circa 1797
b. 2, f. 88	Goodspeed's Book Shop Contains correspondence with Donald Wing regarding the Beinecke Library's purchase of Braithwaite's correspondence	1946
b. 2, f. 89	Kent, Frederick A. Contains correspondence from Samuel W. McCall, Henry E. Burnham, Jacob H. Gallinger, and other government officials	1890-1913

**Series II: Writings, 1908-1928***0.21 linear feet (1 box)*

The series contains extensive publicity material for Braithwaite's writing projects, both as an anthologist and a journalist. Braithwaite's career with the *The Boston Evening Transcript* is reflected in the various clippings of his writings (loose and as part of a scrapbook) from the newspaper dating from 1916 to 1924. The series also includes page proofs for *The Book of Victorian Verse* and a handwritten list of permissions for an anthology.

Arranged alphabetically by title.

b. 3, f. 90	<i>Anthology of Magazine Verse</i> , publicity material	1914-1928
b. 3, f. 91	"The Best Books of the Year," <i>The Boston Evening Transcript</i>	1911
b. 3, f. 92	<i>The Book of Victorian Verse</i> , page proofs	1909 November
b. 3, f. 93	<i>Christmas Books for Children</i> , reprinted from the <i>The Boston Evening Transcript</i>	circa 1913
b. 3, f. 94	<a href="#">Cornhill Company publicity material</a>	1917
b. 3, f. 95	"An Improving Product and an Improving Public Taste," <i>The Boston Evening Transcript</i>	1912 December 11
b. 3, f. 96	<i>Our Lady's Choir</i> , publicity material	1931
b. 3, f. 97	"Sculptured Worship," poem	undated
b. 3, f. 98	<i>The Wounded Eros</i> by W.W. Gibson, introduction by Braithwaite	1908
b. Oversize Box 4, f. 99-100	Scrapbook of various articles from <i>The Boston Evening Transcript</i>	1916-1924
b. 101 (Broadside)-102 (Broadside)	Loose clippings removed from <i>The Boston Evening Transcript</i> scrapbook	1916-1924
b. 3, f. 103	List of permissions for an anthology	undated
b. 3, f. 104	Miscellany Material missing since 1996	undated

**Series III: Other Papers, 1830-1935, undated**

Other Papers contains material that provides evidence of Braithwaite's career as a publisher, with the B.J. Brimmer Company, and as a lecturer. The series also includes Braithwaite's autograph collection, a portrait, and a photograph of Braithwaite.

b. 3, f. 105	B.J. Brimmer Company publicity material	circa 1927
b. 3, f. 106	"Braithwaite's Course on the Theory and Practice of Verse," publicity material	1930
b. 3, f. 107	Lecture series, publicity material	1934-1935
b. 3, f. 108	Memo with Braithwaite's addresses	undated
b. 3, f. 109	Autograph collection and citizenship paper	1830-1894
b. 3, f. 110	Portrait of Braithwaite by K.B.	undated
b. 3, f. 111	Photograph of Braithwaite	undated

**Series IV: Addition, 1911-1935***0.21 linear feet*

The addition contains correspondence, writings, and printed material relating to William Stanley Braithwaite.

Purchased from Southpaw Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2015. Vendor list is filed at the beginning of the series.

The series is organized into three subseries: Correspondence, Writings, and Printed Material.

	Correspondence	1929-1934
b. 5, f. 112	Boie, Mildred Concerns Boie's request for Braithwaite to send a letter to Mrs. Edward McDowell of the McDowell Colony on behalf of Boie. Enclosed is a typescript draft short story by Boie, entitled "Cold Countries", clippings of writings by Boie, and Braithwaite's draft to McDowell	1932
b. 5, f. 113	Davis, Edwards Includes typescript and typescript carbon drafts of opinions by others on Davis's <i>Lovers Of Life: An Epic Biography Of A Soul</i> .	1934 July 28 and August 27
b. 5, f. 114	Library of Congress. Copyright Office, includes copyright registration form and application	1934 July 12
b. 5, f. 115	Mason, Francis	1929 August 16
b. 5, f. 116	Mooney, Tom	1934 May 7
	Writings	1915, undated
b. 5, f. 117	Untitled holograph draft of a review or comment on a book concerning paralysis caused by fear	undated
b. 5, f. 118	Untitled holograph draft on "the place of the Negro race in American life"	undated
	Printed Material	1911-1935
b. 5, f. 119	Copyright and dedication pages from proof of <i>Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1914</i>	1914
b. 5, f. 120	Proofs, fragments, corrected, of <i>Anthology of Magazine Poetry for 1915</i>	1915
b. 5, f. 121	Printed card for B. J. Brimmer Company, Publishers, announcing an upcoming office relocation Braithwaite was president of the company	undated
b. 5, f. 122	Booklet, "Coming Home and Goodbye by E. Sewell Hill" with a forward referring to Braithwaite's "The Poet and the Magazines" in <i>Boston Transcript</i> , December 9, 1911.	undated
b. 5, f. 123	Printed postcard from Cornhill Company, Publishers that mentions Braithwaite	1917
b. 5, f. 124	Promotional brochure and order form for Braithwaite's <i>Sandy Star, A Book of Poems</i>	undated

## Printed Material (continued)

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b. 5, f. 125	Reproduction of a drawing of Braithwaite	undated
b. 5, f. 126	Brochure for lectures by Braithwaite	1934

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## **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**

African American authors -- 20th Century --  
Archives  
African American critics -- 20th Century  
American literature -- 20th Century  
American poetry -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Braithwaite, William Stanley, 1878-1962