

Guide to the Austin Strong Papers

YCAL MSS 619



by Molly Wheeler

2014

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 619

CREATOR: Strong, Austin, 1881-1952

TITLE: Austin Strong papers

DATES: 1899-1951

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 7 linear feet (15 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English.

SUMMARY: The Austin Strong Papers contain correspondence, theater scripts, artwork, notebooks, diaries, sketchbooks, scrapbooks, photographs, photograph albums, printed material, and professional and personal papers. The papers primarily document Strong's professional work as a playwright, stage designer, theater producer, author, artist, and landscape architect. A small amount of material documents his work as a volunteer air raid warden in the 1940s.

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

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.astrong>.

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
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Serendipity Books on the Adele Gutman Nathan Theatrical Collection Fund, 1996.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Austin Strong 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

Austin Strong Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Former call numbers: Uncat Za MS 477 and Uncat Za MS 481. Vendor list is filed in Box 1.

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Austin Strong (1881-1952)

Austin Strong, American playwright, stage designer, theater producer, author, artist, and landscape architect. Strong was born in San Francisco on April 18, 1881 and grew up in Hawaii and Samoa, where he lived with his step-grandfather, Robert Louis Stevenson. Austin attended Wellington College in New Zealand from 1895 to 1898. He married and settled with his wife, Mary, in Nantucket, where he was well regarded for his preservation initiatives and yearly production of the Nantucket Follies. His plays include *The Little Father of the Wilderness* (1906), *The Toymaker of Nuremberg* (1907), *The Pied Piper* (1908), *A Good Little Devil* (1913), *The Dragon's Claw* (1914), *Bunny* (1916), *Three Wise Fools* (1918), *Seventh Heaven* (1922), *Drums of Oude* (1927), and *A Play Without a Name* (1928). Several of Strong's plays also became films. He died in Nantucket on September 17, 1952.

Scope and Contents

The Austin Strong Papers contain correspondence, theater scripts, artwork, notebooks, diaries, sketchbooks, scrapbooks, photographs, photograph albums, printed material, and professional and personal papers. The papers primarily document Strong's professional work as a playwright, stage designer, theater producer, author, artist, and landscape architect. A small amount of material documents his work as a volunteer air raid warden in the 1940s.

Arrangement

Organized into six series: I. Correspondence, 1905-1948. II. Scripts, 1903-1928. III. Artwork, 1903-1926. IV. Notebooks and Diaries, 1899-1947. V. Scrapbooks and Photographs, 1899-1951. VI. Other Papers, 1907-1946.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1905-1948

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Vendor list is filed at the front of Box 1.

b. 1, f. 1-2	Correspondence filed in alphabetized file folders Approximately 85 letters to Strong with approximately 20 replies. Contains theater correspondence and business matters. Correspondents include actors and producers. Accompanied by mimeograph of cast list of <i>The Toymaker of Nuremburg</i> .	1912-1928
b. 1, f. 3	Belasco, David Regards production of <i>And What Happened Then?</i> and includes letters from Percy Jordan and Western Union telegraphs. Most letters are written on Belasco Theatre letterhead.	1912
b. 1, f. 4	Boucicault, Dion Regards producing <i>Drums of Oude</i> and written on Duke of York's letterhead.	1905-1906
b. 1, f. 5	Osbourne, Lloyd Regards seeking renewed collaboration on a play.	1905, 1907
b. 1, f. 6	Letters from Carl Brandt and Houghton Mifflin; letter from Strong to Gertrude Stern Includes copies of "Rochaubeau: A commemoration by the Congress of the United States of America of the services of the French Auxiliary forces in the War of Independence, 1907" and "Note: sur le general Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, 1794"	1948
b. 1, f. 7	Letter from Hugh Walpole to Strong on the production of <i>Seventh Heaven</i> by Strong at the Booth Theatre	1922 November 3

Series II: Scripts, 1903-1928*2.3 linear feet (3 boxes)*

Organized into two subseries: Scripts by Austin Strong and Scripts by Others

Scripts by Austin Strong

Typescripts of plays written by Strong, as maintained by Strong.

b. 2, f. 8	<i>Bunny</i> , bound typescript	undated
b. 2, f. 9	<i>The Dancing Master</i> , manuscript drafts	1904
b. 2, f. 10-13	<i>Drums of Oude</i> , various versions	1918, 1926
b. 2, f. 14	<i>Little Father of the Wilderness</i> , printed version	1924
b. 2, f. 15-17	<i>My Lord of the Road</i> , manuscript drafts	undated
b. 2, f. 18	<i>The Perry Melodrama</i> , manuscript draft	1904
b. 2, f. 19-21	<i>Seventh Heaven</i> , various versions	1922
b. 2, f. 22-24	<i>Three Wise Fools</i> , printed versions	1919
b. 2, f. 25-26	<i>The Toymaker of Nuremburg</i> , various versions	1910, 1921
b. 2, f. 27	<i>When Fortune Flatters</i> , manuscript drafts Includes empty notebooks	undated

Scripts by Others

All scripts by others are bound composite typescripts with portions of printed scripts mounted on the pages. Many contain handwritten and typescript notes by Strong. Strong was likely involved with the production or stage design of each.

b. 3, f. 28	<i>Broadway</i> by Philip Dunning and George Abbott	1927
b. 3, f. 29	<i>Coquette</i> by George Abbott and Ann Preston Bridgers	1928
b. 3, f. 30	<i>Craig's Wife</i> by George Kelly	1926
b. 3, f. 31	<i>Exile</i> by Martin Harvey	1903
b. 3, f. 32	<i>Fata Morgan</i> by Ernest Vajda	1924
b. 3, f. 33	<i>The Front Page</i> by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur	1928
b. 4, f. 34	<i>Hell-Bent Fer Heaven</i> by Hatcher Hughes	undated
b. 4, f. 35	<i>Rain</i> by John Colton	undated
b. 4, f. 36	<i>The Second Mrs. Tangueray</i> by Arthur W. Pinero	undated
b. 4, f. 37	<i>The Show-Off</i> by George Kelly	undated
b. 4, f. 38	<i>The Silver Cord</i> by Sidney Howard	1927
b. 4, f. 39	<i>What Every Woman Knows</i> by J.M. Barrie	undated

Scripts by Others (continued)

b. 4, f. 40

What Price Glory

undated

Series III: Artwork, 1903-1926

A detailed vendor list on the architectural and other drawings in boxes 11 and 12 is filed in box 11.

Items are grouped together by size, format, or other physical characteristics.

Eleven drawings for <i>And What Happened Then?</i> , four drawings for <i>Microscopia</i> and four related watercolors for background and stage scenery Stored in: Oversize Box 11, folder 81	1908
Architectural and other drawings Stored in: Oversize Box 11, folders 82-83 Includes some printed material	1903-1926, undated
Architectural and other drawings Stored in: Oversize Box 14, folders 92-96 Includes some printed material	1903-1926, undated
Sterner, Albert. Original lithograph: "Dinner Given to Walter Hapden by Some of His Fellow Players" Stored in: Oversize Box 13, folder 87 Signed on verso by 22 dinner companions	1919 January 12
Strong, Austin. Ink drawing of gargoyle eating a person Stored in: Oversize Box 15, folder 89	undated
Kessler. Drawing of a figure resembling Father Brown Stored in: Oversize Box 15, folder 90	undated
Sterner, Albert. Drawing inscribed "of and for his friend Harold Gould" Stored in: Oversize Box 13, folder 88	1923

Series IV: Notebooks and Diaries, 1899-1947, undated*0.42 linear feet (1 box)*

b. 5, f. 41-53	<p>Notebooks</p> <p>Fourteen notebooks bound in cloth or wrappers. 20-60 pages each. Notebooks contain ideas for plays; sketches, drawings and colored pictures in each. Some inserted material. Sketch of Gillett as Sherlock Holmes. No. 4 has a playlet written out with finished colored stage drawings. New York, Pairs, Bruges, London, San Francisco.</p> <p>Most notebooks contain writings, notes, and sketches. Some contain mounted clippings.</p>	<p>1899 January 19-1901 September 10</p>
b. 5, f. 54	<p>"Idea Book"</p> <p>Contains notes, sketches, ideas for plays and characters</p>	1906-1909
b. 5, f. 55	<p>"Puritan Play" notebook</p> <p>Contains notes on Puritans for a possible play.</p>	undated
b. 5, f. 56	<p>Diary</p>	1947
b. 5, f. 57	<p>Sketchbook</p>	undated

Series V: Scrapbooks and Photographs, 1899-1951

1.3 linear feet (4 boxes)

Scrapbooks

b. 6, f. 58	Unbound album sheets with autograph manuscript leaves, clippings and photographs mounted. Material regards Strong's commission to design, superintend and lay out the Auckland City Park	1901-1902
	Contains postcards and clippings from England residence; a Churchill broadside, and several original drawings Stored in: Oversize Box 12, folder 85	1903, undated
b. 7, f. 59	Contains clippings; reviews of his plays; poems to Strong from his father; clippings on <i>Moonshine</i> , <i>Bunny</i> , <i>Napoleon</i> , and <i>Three Wise Fools</i> , photographs and drawings	
b. 7, f. 60	Contains 139 original drawings, most colored by Strong, usually for his own plays; <i>My Lord of the Road</i> , <i>Pan</i> , and <i>Boomerang</i> but also with clippings and a few photographs	1907-1910
b. 8, f. 61	Three-ring letter album, includes letters to Strong from various individuals, programs of plays and operas, sketches by Strong, clippings on Robert Louis Stevenson, photographs, and other ephemera	1950-1951
b. 8, f. 62	Photograph by J. Edward Graeme of Robert Louis Stevenson monument in San Francisco	circa 1932
	Photograph albums	
b. 9, f. 63	Contains 362 photographs, nearly all are not captioned. Photographs depict Austin and Mary Strong, their travels, and other individuals	1899, undated
	Contains 21 photographs, including some snapshots and larger images of stage figures/actors, Strong, Sidney Howard, and Stewart Edward White Stored in: Oversize Box 12, folder 86	undated
	Photograph of several individuals, with signatures on mat Stored in: Oversize Box 15, folder 91	1919 July

Series VI: Other Papers, 1907-1946, undated*1 linear foot (1 box)*

Contains professional papers relating to Strong's theatrical productions, a short story he wrote entitled "All on a Winter's Night," his *Drums of Oude's* inclusion as a service text by the War Department, and his work as a landscape architect. The series also contains personal papers, including financial papers; a printed version of an article his wife wrote in Nantucket's newspaper, *The Cobble*; and handbooks for his volunteer work as a New York City air warden.

This series is arranged chronologically. Undated material is filed at the end of the series.

b. 10, f. 64	Royalty statements for Strong's plays From Chas Frohman, Century Play, Samuel French, John Golden, and E. Marbury	1907-1929
b. 10, f. 65-73	Financial papers filed in alphabetized file folders Contains bills and receipts for goods, services, purchases, and dues for New York City and Nantucket homes. Also contains papers relating to dividends from investments, bills and receipts, and property and taxes.	1926-1929
b. 10, f. 74	Haymarket Theatre program for <i>Rip Van Winkle</i> by Strong	1911 September 21
b. 10, f. 75	<i>Report of Military Entertainment Committee of the War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities</i> Contains "Report of Austin Strong, Librarian of the Manuscript Division of the Department of Dramatic Activities Among the Soldiers"	1918
	<i>The Cobble</i> , newspaper from Nantucket, MA Stored in: Oversize Box 11, folder 84 Contains a column written by Mary Strong	1919 September
b. 10, f. 76	Nantucket Yacht Club Theatre program for the Nantucket Follies production of <i>The Jolly Roger</i> by Frederick Kitson Cowley and sketchbook	1927 July, undated
b. 10, f. 77	Handbook for Air Raid Wardens	1941
b. 10, f. 77a	"I Learned What It Means to Be Blind" by Austin Strong. Typescript, corrected and printed version in <i>The Saturday Evening Post</i> , 1944 April 20 Also stored in: Box 12, folder 85a	1944
b. 10, f. 78	"All on a Winter's Night" typescript draft	1946
b. 10, f. 79	Red Cross Handbook and course catalog	undated
b. 10, f. 80	Reports by Strong on Grant Park, Washington Park, D.C. Byer residence, and Marshfield Cedarhurst These reports were written in Strong's capacity as a landscape architect.	undated

Oversize Material

1.2 linear feet (4 boxes)

b. 11, f. 81	Eleven drawings for <i>And What Happened Then?</i> , four drawings for <i>Microscopia</i> and four related watercolors for background and stage scenery	1908
b. 11, f. 82-83	Architectural and other drawings Includes some printed material	1903-1926, undated
b. 11, f. 84	<i>The Cobble</i> , newspaper from Nantucket, MA Contains a column written by Mary Strong	1919 September
b. 12, f. 85	Contains postcards and clippings from England residence; a Churchill broadside, and several original drawings	1903, undated
b. 12, f. 85a	"I Learned What It Means to Be Blind" by Austin Strong. Typescript, printed version in <i>The Saturday Evening Post</i>	1944 April 20
b. 12, f. 86	Contains 21 photographs, including some snapshots and larger images of stage figures/actors, Strong, Sidney Howard, and Stewart Edward White	undated
b. 13, f. 87	Sterner, Albert. Framed (double sided) original lithograph: "Dinner Given to Walter Hapden by Some of His Fellow Players" Signed on verso by 22 dinner companions, including Hampden, A. E. Thomas, Ernest Hunter, James Austin Wilder, Henry Stephenson, Arthur Goodrich, and Charles Hanson Towne.	1919 January 12
b. 13, f. 88	Sterner, Albert. Framed drawing inscribed "of and for his friend Harold Gould"	1923
b. 15, f. 89	Strong, Austin. Ink drawing of gargoyle eating a person	undated
b. 15, f. 90	Kessler. Drawing of a figure resembling Father Brown	undated
b. 15, f. 91	Photograph of several individuals, with signatures on mat	1919 July
b. 14, f. 92-96	Architectural and other drawings Includes some printed material	1903-1926, undated

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

Air raid wardens -- United States
Artists -- United States
Artists -- United States
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Dramatists, American -- 20th Century
Landscape architects -- United States
Set designers -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- United States

Genres / Formats

Architectural drawings (visual works)
Drawings (visual works)
Photograph albums
Photographs
Scrapbooks

Occupations

Air raid wardens -- United States
Authors -- United States -- 20th Century
Dramatists -- United States -- 20th Century
Landscape architects -- United States -- 20th Century
Set designers -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Strong, Austin, 1881-1952