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Guide to the E. F. Benson Papers

GEN MSS 699



by Will Baker

2010

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 699

CREATOR: Benson, E. F. (Edward Frederic), 1867-1940

TITLE: E. F. Benson papers

DATES: 1894-1929

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.13 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The E. F. Benson Papers consist of writings, correspondence, and business and financial files, documenting Benson's fiction-writing career and spanning the years 1894 to 1929. Writings consist almost entirely of drafts, most corrected, of short stories by Benson, his novel Paul (1906), and an evidently unpublished and untitled novel written in 1906. Among the short stories are two of Benson's most celebrated "spook stories," "The Superannuation Department AD 1945" (1906) and "The Thing in the Hall" (1912). Other papers include correspondence, sales and royalty statements, contracts, bills, and receipts that document Benson's business dealings with his literary agency (the Authors' Syndicate, Ltd.) and various publishers.

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

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.benson>.

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

Purchased from David J. Holmes on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, the Starling W. Childs Library Fund, and the George Henry Nettleton Fund, 1991-1996, and from Julian Nangle on the George Henry Nettleton Fund, 1997.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The E. F. Benson 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

E. F. Benson Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

This collection includes materials previously identified by the following call numbers: Uncat.MS Vault.File, Uncat.MS Vault.632, Uncat.MS Vault.634, and Uncat.MS Vault.705.

E. F. Benson, 1867-1940

Edward Frederic Benson was a British author known most widely today for his comic "Mapp and Lucia" series and his short stories of the supernatural. E. F. Benson was the fifth child of Mary Sidgwick Benson and Edward White Benson, who served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1883 to 1896. Benson was educated at Marlborough College and King's College, Cambridge, where he completed his studies in 1892.

Benson's first novel, *Dodo*, was published in 1893 and enjoyed significant acclaim and commercial success. Benson went on to a prolific literary career, publishing nearly 100 works including novels, short stories, memoirs, biographies, and other works of non-fiction. Benson also worked as an archaeologist at excavations in Italy, Greece, and Egypt, represented England in international figure skating competitions, and served in the 1930s as the mayor of the town of Rye in East Sussex.

Scope and Contents

The E. F. Benson Papers consist of writings, correspondence, and business and financial files, documenting Benson's fiction-writing career and spanning the years 1894 to 1929. Writings consist almost entirely of drafts, most corrected, of short stories by Benson, his novel *Paul* (1906), and an evidently unpublished and untitled novel written in 1906. Among the short stories are two of Benson's most celebrated "spook stories," "The Superannuation Department AD 1945" (1906) and "The Thing in the Hall" (1912). Other papers include correspondence, sales and royalty statements, contracts, bills, and receipts that document Benson's business dealings with his literary agency (the Author's Syndicate, Ltd.) and various publishers.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Writings, 1894-1924. II. Correspondence, 1901-1929. III. Business and Financial Papers, 1902-1918.

Collection Contents

Series I: Writings, 1894-1924

1.26 linear feet (3 boxes)

This series consists chiefly of drafts of writings by E. F. Benson, including 41 short stories, the novel *Paul*, one untitled and evidently unpublished novel, and a review of "Jérusalem" by Pierre Loti. A large portion of the drafts are corrected in the hand of the author or others. Unless otherwise indicated, all materials are holograph or typescript drafts (original or carbon).

Arranged alphabetically by title, with some other material arranged at the end of the series.

b.1	"An Afrit in the Sea"	1895
b.1	"Arturo's Boat"	circa 1907
b.1	"Arturo's Boat" (clipping of published copy on newsprint)	1907
b.1	"Assunta's Sacrifice"	undated
b.1	"At Stanhope Gate"	undated
b.1	"The Athletic Ideal"	undated
b.1	"The Bachelors"	undated
b.1	"Big Things"	undated
b.1	"The Blackmailer of Park Lane"	circa 1920
b.1	"The Blotting-Book"	circa 1908
b.1	"Buntingford Ware"	undated
b.1	"Candlestick"	undated
b.1	"A Creed of Manners"	1894
b.1	"Dicky-Bird"	undated
b.1	"The Earthquake: A Dialogue"	undated
b.1	"The Eavesdropper"	undated
b.1	"The Fall of Augusta"	undated
b.1	"Fifteenth Prelude of Chopin"	1903
b.1	"The Flower-Garden"	undated
b.1	"Games"	undated
b.1	"Gare du Nord"	undated
b.1	"Guy's Candidate"	undated
b.1	"The Harmonious Blacksmith"	undated

b. 1	"The Heroic Georgie" (clipping of published copy on newsprint)	1924
b. 1	"An Hour in a Farmyard"	undated
b. 1	"Jean Marie"	undated
b. 1	"Jerusalem" (review of "Jérusalem" by Pierre Loti)	undated
b. 1	"Lady Arbuthnot's Sacrifice"	undated
b. 1	"Lilac"	undated
b. 1	"The Long Gallery" (fragment)	undated
b. 1	"Mount Street"	undated
b. 1	"Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal"	undated
b. 1	"Otter-catching"	undated
b. 2	<i>Paul</i> <i>23 Folders</i>	1905
b. 3	"The Peerage Cure" (galley proofs)	undated
b. 3	"Progress of Princess Waldeneck: A Reconciliation"	undated
b. 3	"The Simple Life"	undated
b. 3	"The Snowstone"	undated
b. 3	"A Study in Collective Emotion"	undated
b. 3	"The Superannuation Department, A.D. 1945" (carbon typescript and galley proofs)	circa 1906
b. 3	"The Thing in the Hall"	circa 1912
b. 3	"The Tragedy of Bertram Porter (A Warning to Faddists)"	undated
b. 3	"Two Generations"	undated
b. 3	Manuscript addition to an unknown story, with carbon typescript notes entitled, "Stories for the Screen"	undated
b. 3	Untitled novel <i>10 folders</i>	1906
b. 3	Opinion, evidently to a publisher, by Walter de la Mare on E. F. Benson's unpublished sequel to "Dodo" (presumably "Dodo's Daughter," published in 1913). In carbon of typescript signed in type.	1912

Series II: Correspondence, 1901-1929*1.26 linear feet (3 boxes)*

This series consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence of the literary agency, The Authors' Syndicate, Ltd., relating to the writings of E. F. Benson. Correspondents include E. F. Benson, William M. Colles, William Heinemann, and other agents, editors, and publishers. Correspondence consists of holograph and typescript letters (most signed), retained copies of letters in secretarial hands, carbon copies of letters, secretarial notes, and telegrams.

Arranged chronologically.

b. 4	1901-July 1907 <i>27 Folders</i>	1901-July 1907
b. 5	August 1907-1913 <i>28 Folders</i>	August 1907-1913
b. 6	1914-1929 <i>23 Folders</i>	1914-1929

Series III: Business and Financial Papers, 1902-1918*0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)*

The bulk of this series comprises British and American publishers' royalty statements, sales reports, and account records relating to E. F. Benson's works, consisting of printed forms completed in type or manuscript. Additional materials largely relate to the Authors' Syndicate literary agency and include bills (primarily for typing and copying services), contracts with publishers, receipts from publishers, and account statements.

Publishers' papers arranged alphabetically by publisher, followed by general papers arranged alphabetically by genre.

b. 7	Amalgamated Press	1909-1912
b. 7	Century Company	1914-1918
b. 7	D. Appleton and Company	1902-1907
b. 7	Dodd, Mead & Company	1916
b. 7	Doubleday, Page & Company	1908-1916
b. 7	Empire Trust Company	1907
b. 7	G. P. Putnam's Sons	1904-1910
b. 7	George Newnes, Limited	1913-1918
b. 7	Harper & Brothers	1904-1917
b. 7	Hurst & Blackett <i>3 Folders</i>	1903-1918
b. 7	J. P. Lippincott Company	1904-1917
b. 7	Methuen & Co.	1903-1917
b. 7	Ward, Lock, and Co.	1902-1918
b. 7	William Collins Sons and Co.	1915, 1917
b. 7	William Heinemann <i>9 Folders</i>	1902-1918
b. 8	Bills	1902-1908
b. 8	Contracts <i>2 Folders</i>	1902-1913
b. 8	Debit Slips	1902-1904
b. 8	Receipts	1903-1912
b. 8	Statements	1902-1917
b. 8	Miscellaneous lists, notes, records, and ephemera.	1907-1913
b. 8	Papers relating to the rental of Lamb House, the home of Henry James	1923-1924, 1986

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, English -- 19th century
Authors, English -- 20th Century
Ghost stories, English
Horror tales, English
Literary agents
Literary agents
Short stories, English -- 19th century
Short stories, English -- 20th Century

Occupations

Authors

Names

Benson, E. F. (Edward Frederic), 1867-1940

Corporate Body

Authors' Syndicate