



Walter Havighurst Special Collections Miami University Libraries

Percy MacKaye Collection 1920-1953

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title:	Percy MacKaye Collection
Dates:	1920-1953
Media:	Manuscripts, printed material and photographs
Quantity:	0.33 cubic feet
Location:	Closed stacks

COLLECTION SUMMARY

The Percy MacKaye Collection includes correspondence of or about Percy MacKaye from 1920 to 1953; a typescript by MacKaye titled "Edison: The Planetary American," and a typescript address given by Miami University President Raymond Hughes to the National Association of State Universities about university fellowships in creative art. The collection also includes several items of printed material by or about Percy MacKaye and his wife, Marion Morse MacKaye. Photographs of Percy MacKaye complete the collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Percy Wallace MacKaye was born on March 16, 1875 in New York City. His father, Steele MacKaye, was a prominent dramatist and actor, while his mother, Mary Keith Medbery, wrote a popular dramatic adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

While attending Harvard University, MacKaye privately printed *Johnny Crimson*, a narrative poem about Harvard life, in 1895. At his 1897 commencement, MacKaye delivered an address titled "The Need of Imagination in the Drama of Today."

MacKaye's early plays had romantic, hopeful themes. They were critically acclaimed for their writing, but either never reached the stage or had limited success there. *Jeanne D'Arc* was his first play to receive a professional production in 1907.

MacKaye was the first writer to hold a residency at an American university. From 1920 to 1924, he lived and worked at Miami University, the first institution in the United States to offer a fellowship in creative art. While at Miami, MacKaye wrote "American Untamed" and "This Fine, Pretty World."

MacKaye became a spokesman for this experimental appointment. In his essay, "University Fellowships in Creative Art" (*The Forum*, June 1921), MacKaye asked, "If it be worth while for a university to provide opportunity to study a living author's work, may it not be equally worth while to provide opportunity for the author to create it?" As a result, the University of Michigan invited poet Robert Frost to reside for one year at Ann Arbor and receive a stipend of \$5,000. As with MacKaye, no teaching or formal duties were expected of Frost, but it was hoped that he would come into close contact with students.

MacKaye also wrote narrative poetry to complement his plays. *Dogtown Common* (1921) and *The Skippers of Nancy Gloucester* (1924) are examples of his poetic work. His *Tall Tales of the Kentucky Mountains* (1926) reflects his regular trips into Kentucky to record and reflect on Appalachian life.

MacKaye married Marion Homer Morse at Shirley Center, Massachusetts on October 8, 1898. Marion was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on February 24, 1872. She died suddenly while visiting friends at St. Germain-en-Laye, France on June 1, 1939. After his wife's death, MacKaye was not as prolific. Many of MacKaye's later poems were memorial verses for her.

MacKaye died on August 31, 1956. The MacKayes had three children: Robert, Arvia, and Christy, also poets and artists.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The collection begins with correspondence of or about Percy MacKaye from 1920 to 1953. These letters primarily record details of MacKaye's residency at Miami University. Writing to President Raymond Hughes on December 25, 1920, MacKaye reveals "how happy I find myself in this fellowship at Miami, which came to me at your invitation, and how pleased I am of your comradeship and counsel."

Several items in the collection address Miami's pioneering fellowship in creative art. In copies of Raymond Hughes' 1920 address to the National Association of State Universities, Hughes suggests that universities establish fellowships in art that would be open to "creative artists of established reputation." Recognizing that the United States has reached the "Golden Age of her Prosperity," Hughes believes that it was the responsibility of colleges and universities to support and foster art in America.

The collection includes letters to Raymond Hughes from the National Federation of Musical Clubs about Miami University's fellowship for creative art and the address mentioned above. "We can think of nothing finer that can be done to assist struggling authors and composers than this very same plan, knowing what quiet opportunity for contemplation, freedom from the necessity of working for a living and congenial surroundings can mean to a sensitive soul," writes Gertrude F. Seiberling, president of the National Federation of Music Clubs, on December 14, 1920. "We feel sure that the fellowship given by yourself and the trustees of Miami University to Mr. MacKaye will act as an inspiration to many other universities to emulate your example."

A copy of a letter sent by University of Michigan President Burton to Chancellor Avery of the University of Nebraska concerns the possibility of establishing a fellowship in creative art at the University of Nebraska. Burton shares that his university has arranged for Robert Frost to come to Ann Arbor for the academic year under the plan as originally outlined by Miami University President Raymond Hughes. "I have a strong impression that American Universities should be real patrons of Art and Literature and relative fields," Burton wrote. "It is our thought that Mr. Frost will not assume a professorship nor be responsible for classes or any of the regular duties of one connected with the Staff. The chief point is to bring a man of creative genius to the campus and permit him to use the year as he sees fit, coming in contact with the Faculty and students in ways which will be normal and natural." In his cover letter to Hughes enclosing this letter, Burton writes, "By a little missionary work in connection with this enterprise, we shall be able, I believe, to render a real service both to American education and American art."

In "University Fellowships in Creative Art," from the June 1921 issue of *The Forum*, MacKaye describes what it is like to hold such a fellowship. "Secluded in the quiet of a great grove, my studio is an admirable place of work, and has already afforded opportunity, during some months, for a kind of uninterrupted thought and creative experiment which the overcrowded hours of many former winters have precluded," MacKaye wrote. "But it has also provided occasion for a kind of informal interchange of ideas and friendship with both faculty and students, very stimulating and delightful in itself and conducive toward enlarged horizons for the social as well as the art meanings of my "fellowship" privileges."

The collection includes products of MacKaye's fellowship at Miami, such as "Ourselves in the Hour of Opportunity," a poem of MacKaye's that he read at the 145th anniversary meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa Society at the University of Pennsylvania on December 5, 1921 and originally published in the December 17, 1921 issue of *The Independent and The Weekly Review*. In "The Theatre of Ten Thousand," an article from the April 1923 issue of *Theatre Arts Magazine*, MacKaye describes the spectatorium, a playhouse designed by his father, playwright and director Steele MacKaye.

Correspondence also reveals details about the MacKayes and their interactions with others. For example, a letter from Indiana University asks President Hughes's "confidential opinion as to [MacKaye's] ability to hold and interest a large group of University students" in giving

readings from his works at a university convocation. Letters from Marion MacKaye discuss housing arrangements for the family's return to Oxford after their stay in Pine Mountain, Kentucky.

The collection includes a typescript copy of MacKaye's "Edison: The Planetary American," together with an announcement of a dramatic reading on the Miami University campus given by MacKaye from his play, "George Washington."

A brochure describes the Pine Mountain Settlement School in Harlan County, Kentucky, which the MacKayes visited during the summer of 1921. Founded in 1913 as a boarding school and community social center, the school was founded by William Creech, Sr. As a result of his time in Pine Mountain, MacKaye wrote a cycle of five plays about Kentucky mountain life, beginning with "This Fine Pretty World." Printed material titled "The Kentucky Mountains in Plays, Tales, & Poems by Percy MacKaye" collects commentary on MacKaye's works by fifty writers and artists. Among those quoted are Hamlin Garland, Booth Tarkington, Ridgely Torrence and Ida Tarbell.

"Mephisto's Musings," an article from the June 26, 1920 issue of Musical America, describes the arts fellowships occurring at Western College for Women and Miami University. "It is certainly significant and also interesting, that the State of Ohio, which has given us so many statesmen, inventors, great industrial leavers, should be the first to do something practical to encourage the creative ability in music and literature in this country, and which when it gets encouragement and opportunity will be found to be fully the equal, if not perhaps the superior, of anything the Old World has to-day."

Advertising pamphlets included in the collection further describe MacKaye's work. "The Pilgrim and the Book" is described in an advertising pamphlet for "Mayflower Universal Bible Sunday." MacKaye wrote this service to be used in churches for commemorating the Pilgrim tercentenary about Thanksgiving. "The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark, or What We Will" is a tetralogy with prelude and postlude by MacKaye. The pamphlet states that both Percy and Marion MacKaye worked on this work for more than 40 years. Henry W. Wells is quoted in the piece as saying, "As one who has written more than one book on Elizabethan playwrights and taught in this field for some twenty-five years at Columbia University, I wish to say that Mr. MacKaye's work appears to me one of the most brilliant flowers to spring in recent years from the deathless root of Elizabethan thought. I know of no performance on the stage, no poem, novel, critical work, or work of scholarship, springing directly or indirectly from this root with so much vitality for our own times."

A pamphlet describing the University of Iowa's 1921-1922 season repertoire includes a performance of MacKaye's "Mater" on October 27, 1921. The pamphlet notes that MacKaye would be present as guest artists at this opening production, attending final rehearsals and giving a public reading from his latest works. MacKaye's "A Thousand Years Ago" was also performed by the class in dramatic production on April 10, 1922.

Works by Marion MacKaye are also included in the collection. Printed material about Mrs. MacKaye's dramatization of Jane Austen's *Emma*, together with excerpts from her August 9, 1917 and June 14, 1924 journal entries titled "Facing Infinitude" and "The Goodly Company" respectively, can be found in the collection. A Christmas leaflet printed in 1939 for Mrs. MacKaye's friends includes not only the last words she wrote in her journal and a signed photographic portrait of her, but also words spoken by Albert Steffen, the Swiss poet/dramatist, at her service of remembrance on July 7, 1939. "The qualities of compassion and conscience are immensely spiritualized and intensified by such a personality as Marion MacKaye," Steffen said. "Wife and mate of the poet, she is herself poet. Her whole life-experience spoke forth from her clear, noble face, through its beautifully large lineaments, lines formed by great thoughts, by great destiny, and also by great sorrows – a face which, however, had something so beamingly gay, often so almost overflowing with courageous joy, expressing such true comradeship, that she fairly glowed as she stood beside him, with whom she had shared her whole life and her poetic faculty."

News paper clippings reveal details about MacKaye's fellowship at Miami University. An August 7, 1920 Toledo Daily Blade article reports that MacKaye stipulated only one condition regarding his studio at Miami: that it must have an open fire, about which faculty members, students and friends may gather. During the summer, MacKaye was to work on plays and pageants in his studio.

A photographic portrait of Percy MacKaye, together with photographs of MacKaye with Raymond Hughes and with John Cunningham, president of the National Sculptor's Society, and Bond Wheelwright, publisher, complete the collection.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

Series I: Correspondence

Sub-Series I: Correspondence from Percy MacKaye

Sub-Series II: Correspondence to Percy MacKaye

Sub-Series III: Correspondence about Percy MacKaye

Sub-Series IV: Correspondence from Marion MacKaye

Series II: Manuscripts

Series III: Printed Material

Sub-Series I: Printed Material by Percy MacKaye

Sub-Series II: Printed Material Related to Percy MacKaye

Sub-Series III: Printed Material by or about Marion MacKaye

Sub-Series IV: Newspaper Articles Related to Percy MacKaye

Series IV: Photographs

RELATED MATERIALS

Many of MacKaye's poetic and dramatic works can be found in the Walter Havighurst Special Collections.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University Libraries.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to cite the Percy MacKaye Collection and The Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University Libraries in all footnote and bibliographic references.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the box and folder numbers shown below.

Series I: Correspondence

Sub-Series I: Correspondence from Percy MacKaye

Box	Folder	Recipient	Date	Subject
1	1	Raymond Hughes	May 27, 1920	MacKaye coming to work in Oxford
	2	Raymond Hughes	June 14, 1920	Plans to arrive in Oxford
	3	Raymond Hughes	June 21, 1920	Final plans to arrive in Oxford
	4	Raymond Hughes	June 26, 1920	Plans to come to Miami mentioned in interview
	5	Raymond Hughes	June 29, 1920	Thanks for telegram informing him of the action taken by Miami's trustees

Box	Folder	Recipient	Date	Subject
	6	Raymond Hughes	August 23, 1920	Plans for arriving at Miami, especially about how it impacts his daughters' studies
	7	Miss Marshall	August 31, 1920	Requests for finishing Oxford studio
	8	Raymond Hughes	September 25, 1920	Plans for wife, daughters and himself to arrive in Oxford
	9	Mary MacMillan	October 26, 1920	Reading something from his work at the Poetry Society meeting on November 19, 1920
	10	Mary MacMillan	October 31, 1920	Enclosing photograph and circulars about works to prepare for public reading in Cincinnati
	11	Raymond Hughes	December 25, 1920	Christmas greeting and expression of his happiness in his fellowship at Miami
	12	Marian MacMillan	March 30, 1921	Thanks for sending her reaction to "the mechanistic hypothesis"
	13	Raymond Hughes	March 11, 1921	Thanks for arranging for stenographic work
	14	Raymond Hughes	March 31, 1921	Sending Harvard Alumni Bulletin editorial to Pres. Burton
	15	Raymond Hughes	March 30, 1921	Telegram requesting meeting
	16	Marian MacMillan	June 26, 1921	Thanks for her impression of the reading and the studio; thoughts about her article about William James
	17	Raymond Hughes	July 14, 1921	Sending copy of "Dogtown Common"; time at Pine Mountain, Kentucky and plans to return to Oxford
	18	Wallace Roudebush	September 1, 1921	Plans to return to Oxford
	19	Wallace Roudebush	September 2, 1921	Plans to stay with Prof. Clark until new quarters are

Box	Folder	Recipient	Date	Subject
				ready
	20	Raymond Hughes	November 21, 1921	Poem by Katrina Trask
	21	Raymond Hughes	May 13, 1922	Family illnesses delaying return to Oxford
	22	Raymond Hughes	October 19, 1922	Suggestion for choice for the philosophical department
	23	Raymond Hughes	June 8, 1926	Latest work on Kentucky mountains
	24	Edgar W. King	December 14, 1942	Enclosing pamphlets
	25	Edgar W. King	July 9, 1953	Inquiring whether Miami University library has several books by MacKaye and his family
	26	Edgar W. King	September 7, 1953	Thanks for list of works by the MacKaye family; sending copies of other MacKaye works
	27	Louis	Undated	Travel plans and Monday dinner
	28	Raymond Hughes	Undated	Preferring to come in June

Series I: Correspondence**Sub-Series II: Correspondence to Percy MacKaye**

Box	Folder	Author	Date	Subject
1	29	Robert Frost	January 17, 1921	Recent lecture tour experiences; thoughts about MacKaye's plan
	30	George Henry Payne, The Forum	May 5, 1921	Plans for publishing MacKaye's article, "University Fellowships in Creative Art"
	31	Helen Walker, The Forum	May 16, 1921	Price for reprints of MacKaye's article, "University Fellowships in Creative Art"
	32	Robert Frost	June 25, 1921	Telegram text advising MacKaye to accept

Box	Folder	Author	Date	Subject
	33	Edward R. Ames	November 9, 1921	President Burton's offer Circulating copies of a poem by Katrina Trask titled "The Conquering Army"
	34	[Raymond Hughes]	Undated	Unable to have house available for occupancy before September 29

Series I: Correspondence

Sub-Series III: Correspondence about Percy MacKaye

Box	Folder	Author	Recipient	Date	Subject
1	35	Frances Elliott Clark, National Federation of Musical Clubs	Raymond Hughes	November 30, 1920	Address delivered by Hughes at meeting of university presidents about fellowship for creative art
	36	Gertrude F. Seiberling, National Federation of Music Clubs	Raymond Hughes	December 14, 1920	Conferring fellowship for creative art on Percy MacKaye and address to university presidents about same
	37	Laura E. Robinson	Raymond Hughes	March 23, 1921	Sending 12 copies of the March 3, 1921 Harvard Alumni Bulletin containing editorial on fellowships in creative arts
	38	President Burton, University of Michigan	Raymond Hughes	April 4, 1921	Thanks for copy of Harvard Alumni Bulletin editorial on fellowships in creative arts and his interest in same
	39	Elizabeth Holt	Raymond Hughes	May 10, 1921	Sending photographs of Percy MacKaye
	40	MacMillan Company	Raymond Hughes	May 18, 1921	Publication of MacKaye's "Dogtown Common"
	41	MacMillan Company	Raymond Hughes	May 23, 1921	Obtaining copies of "Dogtown Common" for the Miami Co-Op store before June 10

Box	Folder	Author	Recipient	Date	Subject
	42	Helen Walker, The Forum	Raymond Hughes	May 31, 1921	Reprints of MacKaye's article in The Forum
	43	M.L. Burton, University of Michigan	Chancellor Avery, University of Nebraska	July 18, 1921	Possibility of establishing a fellowship in creative art at the University of Nebraska
	44	M.L. Burton, University of Michigan	Raymond Hughes	July 18, 1921	Cover letter enclosing copy of letter described above
	45	Arvia MacKaye	Raymond Hughes	August 16, 1921	Thanks for check for casting bust of her father; her recovery from appendicitis
	46	H.G. Childs, Indiana University	Raymond Hughes	October 5, 1921	MacKaye giving readings from his works at Indiana University convocation
	47	M. L. Burton, University of Michigan	Raymond Hughes	1921	Minimum amount of money necessary to fund a fellowship in creative art

Series I: Correspondence

Sub-Series IV: Correspondence from Marion MacKaye

Box	Folder	Recipient	Date	Subject
1	48	Raymond Hughes	July 22, 1921	Experiences at Pine Mountain, Kentucky; plans to return to Oxford
	49	Raymond Hughes	January 22, 1926	Sending copy of the words used in giving Percy MacKaye his degree at Miami
	50	Raymond Hughes	February 6, 1926	Thanks for sending Miami address; daughter Arvia's work running a printing press

Series II: Manuscripts

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	51	"Edison: The Planetary American," by Percy MacKaye	undated
	52	"Percy MacKaye to Give Dramatic Reading"	undated
	53	Address given by Raymond Hughes to the National Association of State Universities	ca. 1920

Series III: Printed Material

Sub-Series I: Printed Material by Percy MacKaye

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	54	"Fellowships in Art," <i>The Forum</i>	June 1921
	55	Reprint, "University Fellowships in Creative Art," <i>The Forum</i>	June 1921
	56	"Ourselves in the Hour of Opportunity"	December 1921- February 1922
	57	"The Theatre of Ten Thousand," (inscribed by MacKaye to the library of Miami University)	April 1923
	58	"Shopping in Heaven," a poem in remembrance of Marion Morse MacKaye	June 1, 1939
	59	"The Ride to Reims"	June 23, 1939
	60	"For Marion"	June 25, 1939
	61	"Immortality: Seven Poems by Three Poets," inscribed by MacKaye to Edgar King, Miami University Library	1942
	62	"The Meadow Lark & Two Sonnets"	February 24, 1942

Series III: Printed Material

Sub-Series II: Printed Material Related to Percy MacKaye

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	63	"The Conquering Army," by Katrina Trask	1915
	64	Pine Mountain Settlement School	ca. 1918
	65	Reprint, "Fellowships in Creative Art in the Colleges and Universities of America," address by Raymond Hughes, National Association of State Universities	ca. 1920
	66	"Mephisto's Musings," <i>Musical America</i>	June 26, 1920
	67	Advertising pamphlet: "Mayflower Universal Bible Sunday"	November 28, 1920
	68	"Fellowships in Creative Art," <i>Harvard Alumni Bulletin</i>	March 3, 1921

Box	Folder	Title	Date
	69	"The Poet in the University," <i>School in Society</i>	March 26, 1921
	70	Season repertoire, The University Theatre, University of Iowa	1921-1922
	71	"Fellowships for Creators," Harvard Alumni Bulletin (photocopy)	January 5, 1922
	72	National Institute of Arts and Letters Constitution and List of Members	1923
	73	The Kentucky Mountains in Plays, Tales, & Poems by Percy MacKaye, inscribed by MacKaye to Raymond Hughes	1924
	74	An Informal List of Books on Latin America for the General Reader and a Directory of Latin American Collections in New England Libraries, The New England Institute of Inter-American Affairs	March 1943
	75	The Albert I. Spanton Collection of English and American Literature: Bibliography and List of Donors, Bierce Library, University of Akron	1943
	76	The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark, or What We Will	1949
	77	Program for "Jeanne D'Arc"	undated

Series III: Printed Material

Sub-Series III: Printed Material by or about Marion MacKaye

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	78	"For Her Friends"	1939
	79	"Emma-A Play"	1941
	80	"The Goodly Company," inscribed by Percy MacKaye	1941-1942
	81	"Facing Infinitude," inscribed by Percy MacKaye	1942-1943

Series III: Printed Material

Sub-Series IV: Newspaper Articles Related to Percy MacKaye

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	82	"Books and Other Things," <i>The World</i>	July 7, 1920
	83	"Meet This Poet Face to Face," <i>The Daily News</i>	July 28, 1920
	84	"Ohio College Endows Poet to Write for World," <i>Toledo Daily Blade</i>	August 7, 1920
	85	"Socrates Will Be Pleased," <i>The Post-Intelligencer</i>	August 22, 1920

Box	Folder	Title	Date
	86	"Colleges and Poets," <i>Cornell Daily Sun</i>	March 3, 1921
	87	"Percy MacKaye Returns to Oxford Haunts After Long Absence"	March 14, 1924
	88	"Tall Tales of the Kentucky Mountains," <i>New York Herald Tribune Books</i> and <i>The New York Times Book Review</i>	May 23-30, 1926
	89	"Percy MacKaye a Genuine New Englander," <i>Boston Evening Transcript</i>	October 8, 1927
	90	"Percy MacKaye, Noted Poet, Dramatist to Memorialize Late Wife, Descendant of Early Founders of Town, Here Today," <i>Belmont Herald</i>	February 20, 1942
	91	"Percy MacKaye Reads"	undated
	92	"MacKaye Will Not Return Next Year"	undated
	93	"MacKaye's Poems in Two Languages"	undated
	94	"Nine 'Rahs for the Muses"	undated

Series IV: Photographs

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	95	Photographs of Percy MacKaye by Arnold Genthe	ca. 1920-1929
	96	Photograph of Percy MacKaye and Raymond Hughes	undated
	97	Photograph of Percy MacKaye with John Cunningham, president of the National Sculptor's Society, and Bond Wheelwright, publisher	ca. 1949