

Lafcadio Hearn Correspondence

1 box, .5 linear feet

**Special Collections & Archives
J. Edgar & Louise S. Monroe Library
Loyola University New Orleans**

Collection 5

Lafcadio Hearn Correspondence

Reference Code

Collection 5

Name and Location of Repository

Special Collections and Archives, J. Edgar & Louise S. Monroe Library, Loyola University New Orleans

Title

Lafcadio Hearn Correspondence

Date

1884-1936, bulk 1885-1897

Extent

1 box, .5 linear feet

Name of Creators

Hearn, Lafcadio
Baker, Page M. (Page Mercer)
McClure, S. S. (Samuel Sidney)
Finley, Robert
Barber, Joseph

Administrative/Biographical History

Lafcadio Hearn was a writer during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth. His writings--fiction and nonfiction alike--typically drew on his firsthand observations of life in what were then considered exotic places: New Orleans, the West Indies, and Japan.

Hearn was born on June 27, 1850 on the Greek island of Leucadia. His father, an Irishman, was a surgeon in the British army; his mother was Greek. In 1852 Hearn was taken to Ireland to live with his father's family. When his parents divorced several years later, he remained in Ireland under the care of a great-aunt. He was educated at Catholic boarding schools in France and England.

In 1869 at the age of nineteen, Hearn moved to the United States. He eventually settled in Cincinnati, where he worked as a journalist, first for the *Enquirer* and then for the *Commercial*. In 1877 he moved to New Orleans where he continued working for newspapers-- first joining the staff of the *Item* and then in 1881 becoming literary editor of the *Times-Democrat*. As a journalist and as author of several books--notably, *Gombo Zhebes*, *La Cuisine Creole*, and *Chita*--Hearn wrote perceptively and with flair about the Creole culture of New Orleans and southern Louisiana.

In 1887 Hearn left the Crescent City, but his desire to live in and write about exotic places endured for the rest of his life. After a brief stay in New York, he traveled to the West Indies and took up residence in Martinique. His observations of the local Creole culture found expression in journalism and in two books, *Youma* and *Two Years in the French West Indies*. In 1889 he left the Caribbean and returned to the northeastern United States. Roughly a year later, in the spring of 1890, he departed for Japan. There he immersed himself in Japanese culture--marrying a Japanese woman, taking Japanese citizenship, and teaching at a Japanese university. And there he enjoyed his most prolific literary period. Spurred on by his keen interest in his adopted country, he wrote numerous books and articles. This output established his reputation as a major interpreter of Japan to the West. Hearn died in Japan on September 26, 1904.

Scope and Content

This collection consists almost entirely of fifty-nine letters. Most of these are intact, but several are missing one or more pages. In addition, roughly half the letters are either undated or have only approximate dates; it seems likely, however, that with one or two exceptions they were all written between 1884 and 1905.

Of the fifty-nine letters, forty-five were written by Hearn to Page Baker. Baker was the editor of the *Times-Democrat* when Hearn worked for that newspaper; he was also a steadfast champion of Hearn's literary ambitions. Hearn wrote Baker from various places--New Orleans, Grand Isle in Louisiana, New York, the West Indies, and Japan. In these letters, which ranged from one paragraph to ten pages, Hearn touched on many subjects. Perhaps the most revealing passages concerned his work at the *Times-Democrat*, his literary efforts, his travels, and in several letters from Grand Isle, his dislike for Jews. Nine of the remaining letters or telegrams constitute correspondence between Baker and S. S. McClure of *McClure's Magazine*; written in 1895 and 1896, this correspondence discussed publication and syndication of pieces written by Hearn about Japan. Also of note, there is an apparent draft of a letter in which Baker related to Elizabeth Bisland-Wetmore--an early biographer of Hearn--his thoughts about Hearn.

The final four folders of this collection contain various types of material. One folder contains twenty-five envelopes, most of which were addressed to Baker by Hearn.

Another contains a poem written in Hearn's hand. Another contains a five-page typed reminiscence about Hearn that is undated and unsigned. And the final folder contains two typescript duplicates of Hearn's letters to Baker.

System of Arrangement

Letters are arranged chronologically by date when date is available.

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research. No known restrictions.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Physical rights are retained by the J. Edgar and Louis S. Monroe Library, Loyola University New Orleans. Copyright is retained in accordance with U.S. Copyright Laws.

Language and Scripts of the Material

Collection is in English

Processing Information

Finding aid written by Art Carpenter, 1992. Revised by Kure D. Croker, 2014.

Container List

Folder 1

Holograph. Lafcadio Hearn to Page Baker. July 6, 1884.

Folder 2

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. August, 19, 1885. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

Folder 3

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. August, 20, 1885. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

Folder 4

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. September 5, 1885.

Folder 5

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1885 September – November.

Folder 6

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. November 21, 1885.

(Not transcribed.)

Folder 7

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. November 21, 1885.

(Not transcribed.)

Folder 8

Holograph. Baker to Edward A. Burke. November 21, 1885.

(Not transcribed.)

Folder 9

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 10

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 11

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 12

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 13

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

(6-page letter. Page 5 of the letter is missing. Transcript in Folder 63 of this letter is edited and omits some of the text from the original.)

Folder 14

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 15

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 16

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1886 June-August. [Grand Isle, Louisiana]

Folder 17

Holograph. Baker to Hearn. December 14, 1886. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

(Not transcribed.)

Folder 18

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. May 28, 1887

(5-page letter missing page 3. Text is available in transcription in Folder 63.)

Folder 19

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. May, 1887

Folder 20

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. May, 1887

Folder 21

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1887 June-July. [New York City, New York]

Folder 22

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1887 June-July. [New York City, New York]

Folder 23

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1887 June-July. [New York City, New York]

Folder 24

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1887 June-July. [New York City, New York]

Folder 25

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1887 July-August. [Port of Spain, Trinidad]

Folder 26

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. 1887. [St. Pierre, Martinique]

(End of letter in transcript in Folder 63 not found in original.)

Folder 27

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. May 15, 1888. [St. Pierre, Martinique]

Folder 28

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1889 April-May. [St. Pierre, Martinique]

Folder 29

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. October 28, 1889. [New York City, New York]

Folder 30

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. June 14, 1891. [Matsue, Izumo, Shimane Ken, Japan]

Folder 31

Telegraph. Samuel Sidney McClure to Baker. 1895 June.

(Not transcribed.)

Folder 32

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. October 3, 1895. [Kobe, Japan]

Folder 33

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. October 2, 1895. [Kobe, Japan]

Folder 34

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1895. [Kobe, Japan]

Folder 35

Holograph. McClure to Baker. November 19, 1895.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 36

Typewritten letter. McClure to Baker. February 28, 1896.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 37

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. May, 15 1896. [Kobe, Japan]

Folder 38

Typewritten letter. Baker to McClure. June 11, 1896.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 39

Telegram. McClure to Baker. June 12, 1896.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 40

Holograph telegram. Baker to McClure. June 12, 1886.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 41

Typewritten letter. McClure to Baker. June 13, 1896.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 42

Telegram. McClure Co. to Baker. June 30, 1896.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 43

Typewritten letter. Robert Finley to Baker. June 30, 1896.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 44

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. January 6, 1897. [Tokyo, Japan]
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 45

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. March 15, 1897. [Tokyo, Japan]
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 46

Typewritten letter. Baker to Elizabeth (Bisland) Wetmore. Circa 1905.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 47

Typewritten letter. Joseph Barber to George T. Bye. November 16, 1936.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 48

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1884.

Folder 49

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Undated.

Folder 50

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1884. [New Orleans, Louisiana]
(Additional postscript not transcribed in Folder 63.)

Folder 51

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1884. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

Folder 52

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1884. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

Folder 53

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1885. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

Folder 54

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Undated.

Folder 55

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Undated.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 56

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Undated.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 57

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Undated.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 58

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1887. [New York City, New York]

Folder 59

Holograph. To a McClure. Undated.

(Not transcribed.)

Folder 60

Correspondence envelopes.

Folder 61

Holograph. Hearn to Baker. Circa 1885.

Folder 62

Typewritten manuscript. No author. Undated.

Folder 63

Typewritten, bound, transcripts of correspondence.