

Ethel Ambler Hunter Papers
Wellesley Historical Society

Repository Identifier

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Local Identifier

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Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society

229 Washington Street

Wellesley, MA 02481

(781) 235-6690

www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

Title

Ethel Ambler Hunter Papers

Date

1909-1973, bulk 1935-1950

Extent

1 linear foot, 2 boxes

Name of Creator

Hunter, Ethel Ambler, 1885-1973 (née Ambler, Ethel Elma)

Biographical Note

Ethel Elma Ambler Hunter was a Wellesley resident, local librarian, and published author of both fiction and non-fiction. She was born in Natick, Massachusetts on May 29, 1885 to Ida Smith Avery (Ambler) and Charles Elmer Ambler. She died on July 4, 1973.

She attended Wellesley College, graduating in June 1909. While at Wellesley College, she was a member of The Scribblers writers' group (*Townsmen*, April 24, 1908).

Ethel Ambler married Samuel Victor Hunter on June 27, 1910 at the Wellesley Congregational Church (*Wellesley News*, October 5, 1910). The couple initially lived in Holliston, but moved to Wellesley in 1911 when their daughter Margery (1911-1962) was born.

Hunter was appointed as Assistant Librarian at Wellesley College for the 1918-1919 academic year. After serving as an assistant, she was appointed as Reserved Books Librarian; she would continue to work in the Wellesley College Library until 1947. She also worked as a library assistant at the Wellesley Public Library for several years. Prior to being a librarian, she held several teaching positions, including one at the Fiske School in Wellesley, MA.

After moving to Wellesley in 1911, the Hunters resided at 18 Weston Road; by 1924 the couple was residing on Denton Road West; Hunter would live on Denton Road for the rest of her life.

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Articles in the *Townsmen* reveal that Hunter was very active in amateur theatre with the Wellesley Players in the 1920s and 1930s. She also led writer's workshops and reader's groups in the Wellesley area through the 1950s. She was also a congregant at the Village Church (Wellesley Congregational Church), and sang in the choir for many years. She was a member of the Wellesley Historical Society; Wellesley Hills Woman's Club and its Writer's Workshop; and the Manuscript Club of Boston.

Hunter gained some recognition as a fiction writer, with one of her stories being published in *The Christian Science Monitor* and *Reader's Digest* in 1942. She had success as an essayist as well, writing for the *New England Galaxy*, a publication of Old Sturbridge Village. Her work appeared in other periodicals and journals during her lifetime.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains handwritten and typescript writings by Ethel Ambler Hunter, as well as correspondence, personal papers, and research notes. Hunter wrote fiction and non-fiction; the collection contains manuscript drafts as well as drafts submitted to various magazines and periodicals, including *Reader's Digest* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Writings include short stories, essays, poetry, stories for children and young adults, and travelogues. She also wrote popular history, including some work for Old Sturbridge Village.

The correspondence is predominantly addressed to Hunter; there are some drafts of letters she wrote to others. Of note in this series is a folder of appreciative letters from readers regarding some of her writings. There is also business correspondence from various publishers.

Hunter was a librarian, and she organized her materials well. Her original order, and often original folder titles, have been maintained when feasible. There are several folders of unsorted manuscript material which has been left in the order they were received.

Library of Congress Index Terms

Authors—Wellesley (Mass.)
Essayists—Wellesley (Mass.)
Librarians—Wellesley (Mass.)
Librarians—Wellesley College
Litterateurs—Wellesley (Mass.)
Wellesley (Mass.)
Wellesley College
Wellesley College Library
Wellesley Congregational Church (Wellesley, Mass.)
Women authors—Wellesley (Mass.)

System of Arrangement

The collection is organized into six series, organized by genre or type.

I. Manuscripts, c.1935-1973 (bulk c.1935-1955)

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- II. Correspondence, 1938-1973 (bulk c.1950)
- III. Personal Papers
- IV. Photographic Materials
- V. Research Notes
- VI. Printed Materials

Conditions Governing Access

The Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.

info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

English

Immediate Source of Acquisition

n/a

Accruals

The Historical Society may add materials to this collection in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

Related Materials

n/a

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in May 2017 by Alden Ludlow. Processing of this collection was made possible through a grant from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee.

Conservation Note

Series III: Personal papers contains Hunter's diploma from Wellesley College; the diploma is parchment, creased and folded, and will need conservation treatment (flattening) in the future.

Bibliography

Register of the Wellesley College Alumni Association 1914-1915. Boston: Frank Wood Press

The Townsman. Obituary. July 12, 1973, p. 13

Wellesley College Alumnae Association, Questionnaire (in Series III)

Wellesley News, October 5, 1910

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Container List

Box 1

I. Manuscripts

This series contains draft typescripts of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry authored by Ethel Ambler Hunter. The material reflects her writing process, and contains unsorted drafts as well as drafts as they were submitted for publication. Hunter was a librarian, and her papers came to the Society well-organized; much of this series maintains her original order and often her own label titles (included here in quotation marks).

- Folder 1: Fiction. Draft typescript, "We Were Not Poor."
- Folder 2: Fiction. Draft typescripts, "The Simple Life" ("Our Lost Heritage of Simple Living").
- Folder 3: Fiction. Draft typescripts, "The Peach Trees."
- Folder 4: Fiction: "Drafts."
- Folder 5: Fiction: Draft typescript for publication submission, "Eleanora." With publisher letter.
- Folder 6: Fiction: "Children's Stories."
- Folder 7: Non-fiction: Draft typescript, "The Remarkable Dentons of Wellesley." With notes.
- Folder 8: Non-fiction: Papers for a course on R. W. Emerson and Walt Whitman.
- Folder 9: Non-fiction: Typescript drafts, "Miscellaneous Non-fiction"
- Folder 10: Non-fiction: Draft typescripts, "Travel Writings." Contains notes.
- Folder 11: Non-fiction: "The Tenfooters of New England." Draft typescript for publication submission. With publisher letter.
- Folder 12: Non-fiction: Drafts for "The Tenfooters of New England," including research notes.
- Folder 13: Drafts, "Poetry."
- Folder 14: Manuscript drafts, "Unsorted."
- Folder 15: Manuscript drafts, "Unsorted."

Box 2

II. Correspondence, 1938-1973 (bulk c.1950)

This series contains personal and business correspondence, addressed to Ethel Ambler Hunter. The business correspondence is mostly from various periodical publishers, and reflect the submission process of the era. The "fan letters" are predominantly from admirers of her work "Our Lost Heritage of Simple Living," also titled "We Were Not Poor" in some iterations. It was initially published in 1938 in *The American Mercury*, and was then picked up by *The Christian Science Monitor* (February 14, 1942) and condensed in *Reader's Digest* (March 1942); most of the responses address publication in *Reader's Digest*.

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- Folder 1: Correspondence: Personal letters, letters from publishers, postcards.
Folder 2: Correspondence: "Fan letters."

III. Personal papers

- Folder 3: Leather-covered booklet: "Wellesley College 1909, Commencement Week" program.
Folder 4: "1909's Grand 50th." Hunter's autobiographical reunion speech, June 23, 1959.
Folder 5: Personal papers, including genealogical research and an undated vacation journal.
Item 1: Wellesley College diploma, Ethel Ambler Hunter, 3 June 1909.

IV. Photographic materials

This series contains a few items which Hunter used to illustrate her article, "The Tenfooters of New England" (see Box 1, Folders 11 and 12).

- Folder 6: Photographic prints, photo negative, photo postcards.

V. Research Notes

This series includes typescript and handwritten research notes, as well as newspaper clippings, covering a variety of topics and related to Hunter's writings. Formats include typescripts, papers, index cards, and a composition book. Hunter's original order has been retained for these notes.

- Folder 7: Research Notes
Folder 8: Research Notes
Folder 9: Research Notes, newspaper clippings related to shoemaking for "Tenfooters" article.

VI. Printed Materials

- Folder 10: Periodicals; writing competition award criteria; church programs.