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
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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 (Townsman, 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.
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)
Ethel Ambler Hunter Papers
Wellesley Historical Society

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
Wellesley College Alumnae Association, Questionnaire (in Series III)
Wellesley News, October 5, 1910
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 4: Fiction: “Drafts.”
Folder 6: Fiction: “Children’s Stories.”
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 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 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.