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**


**Container List**

Folder 1

Folder 2
Holograph. Hearn to Baker. August, 19, 1885. [New Orleans, Louisiana]

Folder 3

Folder 4

Folder 5

Folder 6
Folder 7
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 8
(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
(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

Folder 22

Folder 23

Folder 24

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

Folder 28

Folder 29

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
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 36
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 37
Holograph. Hearn to Baker. May, 15 1896. [Kobe, Japan]

Folder 38
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 39
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 40
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 41
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 42
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 43
(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

Folder 48

Folder 49

Folder 50

Folder 51

Folder 52

Folder 53

Folder 54

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

Folder 59
Holograph. To a McClure. Undated.
(Not transcribed.)

Folder 60
Correspondence envelopes.

Folder 61

Folder 62
Typewritten manuscript. No author. Undated.

Folder 63
Typewritten, bound, transcripts of correspondence.