

Hathaway House Bookshop Collection
Wellesley Historical Society

Repository Identifier

mawelhs

Local Identifier

2015.03

Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society

229 Washington Street

Wellesley, MA 02481

(781) 235-6690

www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

Title

Hathaway House Bookshop Collection

Date

1925-1979

Extent

1 linear foot, 2 document boxes; plus Archives Oversize Material

Name of Creator

Hathaway House Bookshop

Biographical/Historical Note

From its beginnings in the mid-1920s until its closing in 1979, the Hathaway House Bookshop was lauded as a “literary institution with more than a local reputation” (*Boston Globe*, August 1, 1979; p. 49). Located at 103 Central Street, the historic 1830 home was once the residence of Rebecca Morse Hathaway, who inherited the house in 1872. Wellesley College faculty members Julia Orris and R. Phillips Bradley purchased the property, and opened the bookshop in 1925. It was officially formed as a cooperative on May 27, 1927.

The Bookshop served as the *de facto* Wellesley College bookstore, but its mission was also to serve the wider Wellesley community and local residents. The Wellesley College campus bookstore closed in 1926 with the express understanding that Hathaway House Bookshop would serve their needs; in addition to expanding to accommodate the stocking of textbooks, the shop hired additional employees to oversee this aspect of the business. For a number of years the shop also maintained a small store on campus, in the Music Hall, which stocked stationary items (*Townsmen*, September 17, 1926; p. 1).

Fire nearly destroyed the building on Friday, June 16, 1944. Much of the stock of books was lost to fire, smoke, and water damage. Quick restoration was considered a priority, as the bookstore served not only Wellesley College students, but also the United States Naval Supply School located on the college campus (Box 1, Folder 10, letter). The store was able to reopen quickly,

Hathaway House Bookshop Collection Wellesley Historical Society

and much of the credit for the reopening can be given to the strong relationship between the shop, its reading clientele, and writers. Christopher Morley and Ogden Nash were just two notable writers who contributed to help the store rebuild in the aftermath of the fire.

The shop was a community mainstay until its closing on August 1, 1979. In an article about the closing, the *Townsmen* noted that what made the shop “unique” was that it belonged “not to a person, but to an ideal,” going on to note that “Hathaway House is a town landmark, an institution, and a friend. For some, this has been a lifelong friendship” (*Townsmen*, July 5, 1979; p. 1).

After the closing of the bookshop, the building housed Stuart Swan Furniture until 2017; it is currently being used as office space, once again under the name Hathaway House.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains business and other materials pertaining to the operations, business, and events of the Hathaway House Bookshop. The widest variety of materials can be found in Series 1, which includes newsletters, correspondence, and articles celebrating the events and activities which took place at the shop. Included are book publishing lists, and histories celebrating the history of the shop as well as the history of the building in which it was housed.

One of the highlights is the Guest Registers, which contain signatures, and often artwork, by visitors as well as celebrated authors from the 1920s into the 1970s, including Carl Sandburg (1936), Maurice Sendak (1966, with illustration), Christopher Morley (1944), Tasha Tudor (1968, with illustration), Thornton Wilder (1950), and Marjorie Flack Benét (with illustration), just to name a few.

Other materials in the collection include store merchandise, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, non-photographic images such as logos and a copperplate print used in the course of business, and photographs.

System of Arrangement

The collection is organized into four series, arranged by material type.

- I. Business Materials
- II. Merchandise
- III. Newspaper Clippings and Scrapbooks
- IV. Images and Photographs

Library of Congress Index Terms

Authors

Books

Booksellers and bookselling

Bookstores

College Stores

Independent bookstores

Hathaway House Bookshop Collection
Wellesley Historical Society

Reading
Wellesley (Mass.)
Wellesley College

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/Provenance

Gift from Penelope Post. Penelope Post was the daughter of Cynthia Dudley Post, who was serving as the chair of the Hathaway House Bookshop Committee when it closed in 1979. The materials in this collection were in the custody of Cynthia Dudley Post from 1979 until her death in 1995; at that time Penelope Post took custody of the materials until they were given as a gift to the Wellesley Historical Society in 2015.

Accruals

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

Related Materials

Photograph Collection: Businesses: Hathaway House

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in February 2019 by Taylor Kalloch and Alden Ludlow. Processing of this collection was made possible through a grant from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee.

Hathaway House Bookshop Collection
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Container List

I. Business Materials

Box 1

- Folder 1: 40th Anniversary; 1965
- Folder 2: 50th Anniversary; 1975
- Folder 3: Account Book; c. 1925
- Folder 4: Awards; 1970
- Folder 5: By-Laws; 1925
- Folder 6: Catalogs & Newsletters, General; 1939, 1940, 1944, 1949, 1951, 1952, & undated
- Folder 7: Catalogs & Newsletters, *Whatnot*; 1927 – 1935, 1940 – 1950, 1975 – 1978, & undated
- Folder 8: Correspondence; 1925, 1940 – 1980, & undated
- Folder 9: Door Welcome Notice; undated
- Folder 10: Fire; 1944
- Folder 11: Guest Books; 1925-1975, and 1970-1972

Box 2

- Folder 1: History & General Information about Hathaway House, Published; 1925 – 1979
- Folder 2: History & General Information about Hathaway House, Unpublished & Drafts; 1925 – 1979
- Folder 3: Invitations; bulk undated
- Folder 4: Membership Application/Form; undated
- Folder 5: Minutes & Reports; 1925 – 1927, 1926 – 1929, & 1931 – 1932
- Folder 6: Reports to Members; 1929, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1946, & 1949
- Folder 7: Welcome Cards/Offer; bulk undated

II. Merchandise

Box 2

- Folder 8: Bookmarks; undated
- Folder 9: Gift Certificate; undated
- Folder 10: Greeting Card Set; undated
- Folder 11: Notebooks (blank); undated

III. Newspaper Clippings & Scrapbooks

Box 2

- Folder 12: News Clippings; 1925 – 1980, & undated

Archives Oversize Box

- Item 1: Scrapbook; 1938 – 1952

Hathaway House Bookshop Collection
Wellesley Historical Society

Item 2: Scrapbook; 1925 – 1929

Archives Oversize Box 15

Item 1: Scrapbook; 1952 – 1958

IV. Images & Photographs

Box 2

Folder 13: Non-Photographic Images; undated

Folder 14: Photographs; bulk undated