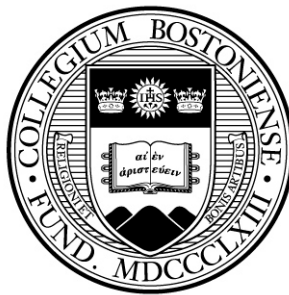


Edith Sitwell Collection

1937-1964

MS.1986.079

<http://hdl.handle.net/2345/1120>



Archives and Manuscripts Department

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Summary Information

Creator: Sitwell, Edith, 1887-1964

Title: Edith Sitwell collection

ID: MS.1986.079

Date [inclusive]: 1937-1964

Physical Description 0.25 Linear feet (1 box)

**Language of the
Material:** English and Italian

Abstract: This collection of papers regarding British poet and author, Dame Edith Sitwell, is comprised of correspondence, manuscript drafts of poems and other writings, as well as an obituary.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Edith Sitwell collection, MS.1986.079, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Processed by Erin Edwards, 2004; updated by Amy Braitsch, April 2007; and Ray Hartley in 2018. This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace.

Restrictions on access

Collection is open for research.

Provenance

Purchase (1983); and gift of Victoria Glendinning (prior to 1986) and Francis Sweeney, S.J. (1993).

Restrictions on use

These materials are made available for use in research, teaching and private study, pursuant to U.S. Copyright Law. The user must assume full responsibility for any use of the materials, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced materials. Any materials used for academic research or otherwise should be fully credited with the source. The original authors may retain copyright to the materials.

Related Materials

Related Materials

Grahame Greene papers, MS.1995.003, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Philip Caraman, S.J. papers, MS.1998.030, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Separated Materials

Published works associated with this collection have been transferred within the Burns Library and can be found in the Boston College Library catalog.

Biographical Note

Edith Louisa Sitwell was born in Scarborough, Yorkshire, England, 1887 September 7. She was the eldest child and only daughter of Sir George Reresby Sitwell, Fourth Baronet, and his wife Lady Ida Emily Augusta Denison Sitwell. Sitwell and her two brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, became known for their avant-garde literary work.

Sitwell was a poet, critic, and biographer. She published one of her earliest poems, "Drowned Suns," in *The Daily Mirror* (1913), and, two years later, her first volume of poetry, *The Mother and Other Poems* (1915). *Clown's Houses* (1918), *The Wooden Pegasus* (1920), *Façade* (1922), and *Bucolic Comedies* (1923) - all lyrical works - followed.

Sitwell gained wide recognition in 1923 following her controversial reading of *Façade*, which was the result of Sitwell's and composer William Walton's experimentation and collaboration. She continued to publish actively; among her best known works are *Bucolic Comedies* (1923), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1924), and *Troy Park* (1925). Sitwell wrote a biography of Alexander Pope in 1930. About this time, Sitwell began to receive acclaim for her work: in 1933, the Royal Society of Literature medal; 1947, an honorary degree from Leeds University; 1949, honorary associate of the American Academy of Arts and Letters; 1951, honorary degree of doctor of letters from Oxford; 1954, dame of the British empire; and, 1955, honorary degree from Sheffield University.

Sitwell converted to Catholicism in 1955. She continued to publish after her conversion, including a biography, *The Queen and the Hive* (1962), about Elizabeth of England and Mary of Scotland.

Dame Edith Louisa Sitwell died 1964 December 9, at the age of 77.

Sources:

Cevasco, G. A.. "Sitwell, Dame Edith Louisa (1887–1964)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman, May 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36113> (accessed April 9, 2007).

Scope and Contents

Manuscript versions of poems, notes, and other writings; and correspondence comprise the Edith Sitwell collection. Poems include "The Outcasts", "At the Cross-Roads", "The Queen of Scotland's Reply to a Reproof from John Knox", and drafts for many of the poems that would become *Street Songs* (1942).

Correspondence contains letters by Sitwell to friends, literary peers, and publishers. Of note is an extensive thread between Sitwell, D. O'Connell, SJ, and lawyer Ferdinando Bosi concerning Guido Masti, a caretaker of the Castle of Montegufoni, which Osbert Sitwell owned during World War II. The

Sitwells credited Masti with the safe return of art masterpieces which had been hidden at Montegufoni to museums following the war, and they hoped to gain state recognition for Masti's efforts.

Also included is Sitwell's obituary as it appeared in *The Observer Weekend Review* (1964) written by Stephen Spender.

Arrangement

Arranged in three series. I. Writings; II. D. Correspondence; and III. Obituary, *The Observer Weekend Review*.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Writings, 1941-1964

Subseries A: Poetry, 1941-1958

"Lo, this is she that was the world's desire", undated	box 1	folder 1
"The Outcasts" and "At the Cross-Roads" (on a single page), 1958 October 2	box 1	folder 2
"The Queen of Scotland's Reply to a Reproof from John Knox", undated	box 1	folder 3
"Ragged Serenade" (published as "Tattered Serenade"), before 1942	box 1	folder 4
"Song" ("We are the rootless flowers in the air...), before 1942	box 1	folder 5
"Street Song", before 1942	box 1	folder 6
"The Weeping Nymph", before 1942	box 1	folder 7
"The Youth with the Red-gold Hair", before 1942	box 1	folder 8

Subseries B: Prose, 1958-1964

Blurb for <i>The Other Face: Catholic Life Under Elizabeth I</i> , by Philip Caraman, SJ, probably 1960	box 1	folder 9
Notebook with insertion for <i>Taken Care Of: An Autobiography</i> , probably 1964	box 1	folder 10

Processing Information

This notebook was previously described as "New Poems", as this is written in Sitwell's hand in the inner cover.

However, the early pages of the notebook have been torn out and no poems remain.

"Notes", probably footnotes for an unidentified work, undated	box 1	folder 11
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Series II: Correspondence, 1937-1963

Arrangement

Alphabetical.

Capote, Truman, 1949 August 31	box 1	folder 12
Editor, <i>The Spectator</i> , 1937 July 21	box 1	folder 13
Millman, Rose, 1951-1962	box 1	folder 14-15

O'Connell, D., SJ (includes O'Connell correspondence with Ferdinando Bosi), 1955-1961	box 1	folder 16
Unidentified correspondent ("My dearest"), 1963 January 8	box 1	folder 17
Series III: Obituary, <i>The Observer Weekend Review</i>, 1964 December 13	box 1	folder 18