



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Annie Nathan Meyer Papers
Manuscript Collection No. 7**



Collection Summary

Title	Annie Nathan Meyer Papers
Dates	1858-1951 (bulk 1885-1948)
Collection Number	MS-7
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Meyer, Annie Nathan, 1867-1951 Hurston, Zora Neale Johnson, James Weldon, 1871-1938
Extent	9.8 linear feet (22 Hollinger boxes and 1 oversize box)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Annie Nathan Meyer was born in New York City on February 19, 1867, the youngest daughter of Annie Florence Nathan (d. 1878) and Robert Weeks Nathan (d. 1888). She had one sister, Maud, and two brothers, Robert and Nathan (d. 1941). The Nathan family is of notable U.S. heritage, being descendants of Gershom Mendes Seixas, the minister of New York's Congregation Shearith Israel during the Revolutionary War. Benjamin N. Cardozo and Emma Lazarus, two of Meyer's contemporaries, were distant cousins.

Ms. Meyer spent her entire life in New York City except for a brief period in her childhood when, due to an 1875 stock market crash, the Nathan family moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin. They remained in the Midwest until Annie Florence Nathan's death in 1878, when they again took up permanent residence in New York. Meyer attended public schools in both the Midwest and New York. Upon her sister's marriage in 1881, however, she left school before graduation in order to assume the management of the Nathan household.

In 1885, upon passing the entrance examinations, Ms. Meyer entered the Collegiate Course for Women at Columbia University. She soon discovered that the standard education for men was not to be gleaned from this "collegiate course." Upon her marriage to Dr. Alfred Meyer on February 15, 1887, she left the university to continue independently her education and the development of her literary talents. By the end of that year, she decided to rectify the situation and, with the support of Melvil Dewey, she resolved to create an entire college for women in New York City.

The campaign for the establishment of New York's first women's college officially began with an article by Annie Nathan Meyer in the January 28, 1888 issue of *Nation*. Throughout the rest of that year, Ms. Meyer devoted herself to personally obtaining the approval and funding for the school. A memorial resolution to the Columbia Board of Trustees, written by Melvil Dewey, Mary Mapes Dodge and Annie Nathan Meyer, containing fifty signatures, gained sanction for the founding of a women's affiliate college to Columbia University. Donations from Alfred Meyer, John D. Rockefeller and others provided the funds to establish the school. On October 7, 1889, Barnard College, named in honor of the Columbia University president who had struggled for the higher education of women, formally opened its doors with an enrollment of seven.

Ms. Meyer remained in close contact with Barnard College throughout the rest of her life. She was a member of its Board of Trustees from 1893 through 1942. Her daughter, Margaret, graduated from Barnard in 1915. The Annie Nathan Meyer Drama Library was established in honor of her 70th birthday in 1937 and special tribute was given to her at the college's 50th anniversary celebration in 1939. In 1941 and 1942, Meyer organized two art exhibits, the Cape Cod Portrait Exhibit and the Parade of Patriots Art Exhibit, to provide funds for Barnard College scholarships.

Beyond her association with Barnard, Meyer also participated in many other contemporary causes. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, she was active in the American anti-suffrage movement to the extent that she was regarded by some as the vice-president of the U.S. anti-suffragettes. This seeming contradiction, in light of her fight for women's education, her chairing of the literary committee of the World's Fair Women's Congress in 1893, and her participation in the National Council of Women in the United States in 1889, is explained in her numerous writings during that period (i.e. "Woman's Assumption of Sex Superiority," "Women Not Fitted for Politics," and "The Dominant Sex"). Basically, Ms. Meyer was alienated by the claim that in giving women the vote, all violence and social wrongs would be ended. And she saw no reason for women to infiltrate the male sphere of things and vice-versa. It should be noted, though, that once the 19th Amendment was passed, Meyer accepted her

new responsibilities and worked with the League of Women Voters to encourage educated voting.

In 1916, Ms. Meyer became active in the Emergency Committee of the American Home Economics Association, which was formed in response to World War I and the shortages that war would force upon the American household. Ms. Meyer became chair of the Committee in July 1917 and continued until the Committee's demise in 1918. In this capacity, she supervised the making of the film, *Cheating the Garbage Pail*, which attempted to eradicate the waste in contemporary American kitchens, and also aided with the promotion of Herbert Hoover's post-war food savings program.

Ms. Meyer's other activities included her 1906 article "What American Museums are Doing for American Art," which showed the lack of native art in most American institutions and a 1938 update survey; her help with the presentation of Ernest Bloch's "Sacred Music" in New York in 1934; her persuasion of Thomas Addis Emmet to sell his notable historical library intact to the New York Public Library; her participation in the National Conference of Christians and Jews; and her success in 1933 in securing the Javis portrait of Isaac Moses for the Museum of the City of New York. Throughout her life, Ms. Meyer was also an active contributor to "letters to the editor" columns, where she expressed her opinion on a variety of issues.

Since childhood Annie Nathan Meyer was interested in a literary career. Despite her many interests, she was able to fulfill this desire through numerous published articles, short stories, novels and plays. As early as 1888, her articles were published in *Nation* and *Woman*. In 1893, her first novel, *Helen Brent M.D.*, was published anonymously by Cassell. In 1911, she copyrighted her first play, *The Advertising of Kate*. As a writer, Meyer was a member of many literary and drama organizations such as the Dramatist's Guild of the Author's League of America, Inc., the New York Auxiliary of the League of American Pen Women, and the Playwright Committee of the Manhattan Little Theatre. She was also able to help her nephew, Robert Nathan, establish a literary career of his own. (A selective list of Ms. Meyer's works may be seen in the appendices of this inventory).

Annie Nathan Meyer died on September 23, 1951 in New York City, the last survivor of the Alfred Meyer family. Her daughter, Margaret Meyer Cohen, preceded her in death on September 13, 1923 as did her husband, Alfred Meyer, on July 14, 1950.

Scope and Content

The Annie Nathan Meyer Papers include correspondence, manuscripts, photographs, clippings, reports, addresses and miscellaneous items, which record the major activities of Ms. Meyer's life.

Arrangement

Organized into five (5) series: A. Correspondence, 1880-1950; B. Manuscripts, 1895-1948; C. Notes, 1885-1945; D. Personal Material, 1858-1959; E. Nearprint, 1885-1948.

Terms of Access

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Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Annie Nathan Meyer Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Annie Nathan Meyer Papers, MS-7, Box [#], Folder [#]. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received through attorney Joseph Solomon of the firm Lehman, Goldmark, and Röhrlich, attorneys-at-law, New York, N.Y., 1951.

Processing Information

Processed by M. Carolyn Dellenbach, November 1976.

Index Terms

Subjects

American fiction / Jewish authors / Jewish women / Jews -- New York (State) -- New York / Women authors, American

Personal Names Meyer, Annie Nathan, 1867-1951
Corporate Names Barnard College
Media Photographs / Rare Documents / Scrapbooks

Series A. Correspondence, 1880-1950

Extent 2.8 linear feet (7 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of the general and topical files of Ms. Meyer. The general files contain Ms. Meyer's correspondence regarding her literary career and her participation in various social movements. Ms. Meyer's correspondence with significant American literary figures along with her numerous "letters to the editor" are contained in these files.

The topical correspondence files represent the correspondents and subjects which Meyer considered to be of major importance. Thus, for example, her correspondence with Benjamin N. Cardozo is found in these files.

Arrangement General files are arranged chronologically. Topical correspondence is arranged alphabetically, then chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1880-1894
Box 1. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1895-1906
Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1907-1919
Box 1. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1920-1921
Box 1. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1922
Box 1. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1923-1924
Box 1. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1925-1926
Box 2. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1927-1928
Box 2. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1929-1930
Box 2. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1931-1932
Box 2. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1933
Box 2. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1934 January-June
Box 2. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1934 August-1935 May
Box 2. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1935 June-1936
Box 2. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1937-1938 November
Box 3. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1938 December
Box 3. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1939
Box 3. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1940-1941
Box 3. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1942-1943
Box 3. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1944-1945
Box 3. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1946-1949
Box 3. Folder 7-8. Correspondence, undated
Box 4. Folder 1-2. Correspondence, undated
Box 4. Folder 3. Fragments, undated

Box 4. Folder 4. American Home Economics Association, 1916-1917 July

Box 4. Folder 5. American Home Economics Association, 1917 August-1918, undated

Box 4. Folder 6. Barnard Beginnings, 1934-1935 November

Box 4. Folder 7. Barnard Beginnings, 1935 December-1948

Box 4. Folder 8-10. Barnard College [correspondence, resolutions, addresses], 1923-1942

Box 5. Folder 1-2. Barnard College [correspondence, resolutions, addresses], 1943-1950, undated

Box 5. Folder 3-6. Barnard College. Board of Trustees [correspondence, minutes, reports], 1894, 1936-1950, undated

Box 5. Folder 6. Barnard College. Yearbook, 1936

Box 6. Folder 1. Black Souls, 1924-1932 August

Box 6. Folder 2. Black Souls, 1932 September-1948, undated

Box 6. Folder 3-6. Cape Cod Portrait exhibit, 1940-1941, undated

Box 6. Folder 7. Cardozo, Benjamin Nathan, 1920-1937

Box 6. Folder 8. Columbia University. Committee on Jewish Students [correspondence, reports], 1933 1949

Box 7. Folder 1-2. Gildersleeve, Virginia C., 1908-1946, undated

Box 7. Folder 3. Hurston, Zora, 1923-1941, undated

Box 7. Folder 4. The New Way, 1923-1928, undated

Box 7. Folder 5-8. Parade of Patriots Exhibit, 1941-1942, undated

Series B. Manuscripts, 1895-1951

Extent 1.8 linear feet (4.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains the hand-written and typescript copies of many of Ms. Meyer's published and unpublished works.

Arrangement Arranged into three (3) subseries: Subseries 1. Monographs, Subseries 2. Plays, and Subseries 3. Short Stories, Sketches, Essays, and Addresses.

Subseries 1. Monographs, 1895-1951

Extent 0.6 linear feet 1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 8. Folder 1-2. At the Sign of the Crown and Ship; A Tale of the New York Province, circa 1895

Box 8. Folder 3. At the Sign of the Crown and Ship; A Tale of the New York Province. "Ethan Orwell Notes", circa 1895

Box 8. Folder 4. The Gallery-Goer's Book, circa 1943

Box 8. Folder 5-6. It's Been Fun, 1951

Box 9. Folder 1. Moments, circa 1931

Box 9. Folder 2. Moments. "Index", circa 1931

Box 9. Folder 3. Nature's Way, 1925

Subseries 2. Plays, 1908-1945, undated

Extent 0.6 linear foot (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 4. The Advertising of Kate, 1911 [copyright date]

Box 9. Folder 5. Barchester Towers, undated

Box 9. Folder 6. Black Souls, 1925

Box 9. Folder 7. Cousin Fritz, 1942?

Box 9. Folder 8. A Dinner of Herbs [title changed to The Dreamer, circa 1912], 1908

Box 9. Folder 9. The District Attorney, circa 1920

Box 9. Folder 10. Due Unto Others, undated

Box 9. Folder 11. Fifth Avenue, 1930 [copyright date]

Box 10. Folder 1. Full Circle [title changed to Genesis I. 27 in 1945], circa 1934

Box 10. Folder 2. Furlough, circa 1944

Box 10. Folder 3. Genesis I. 27 [title changed from Full Circle in 1945], 1945

Box 10. Folder 4. Get Her Married by Shirley Dare [pseudonym], undated

Box 10. Folder 5. The Giftie, undated

Box 10. Folder 6. Mrs. Doctor, undated

Box 10. Folder 7. Paula, undated

Box 10. Folder 8. Puppets, 1923

Box 10. Folder 9. The Right to Dream, circa 1922

Box 10. Folder 10. Soundings, circa 1937

Box 10. Folder 11. The Span, circa 1922

Box 10. Folder 12. The Spur, undated

Box 10. Folder 13. Windfall, 1943

Box 11. Folder 1. Women's Wiles, 1944

Box 11. Folder 2. Synopses of plays to be written, undated

Subseries 3. Short Stories, Sketches, Essays and Addresses, 1913, 1940, undated

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 11. Folder 3. Again Spreadhenism through "Atlanta".

Box 11. Folder 4. A Bid from the Blue through "Do We Need Emerson Today?".

Box 11. Folder 5. George Eliot through "How to Read a Play".

Box 11. Folder 6. Law and Order through "My Refugee Cousin".

Box 11. Folder 7. The New Puritan through "A Paradox for Playgoers".

Box 11. Folder 8. The Pecan-man and Other Vendors through "The Returned Job".

Box 12. Folder 1. The Scalpel through "Swinging Too Far".

Box 12. Folder 2. Then and Now through "Yetta".

Box 12. Folder 3. Untitled, 1913, undated

Box 12. Folder 4. Fragments, 1940, undated

Series C. Notes, 1880-1945

Extent 1.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of Ms. Meyer's bound notebooks, journals, and loose notes concerning her research on various topics, her impressions of some of her readings and activities, and her day-to-day thoughts. Many of the bindings were in poor condition. When processed, they were taken apart and any empty pages removed.

Arrangement The general notes are arranged chronologically, and are followed by the subject notes which are alphabetically arranged.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 12. Folder 5. Notes, 1885-1895

Box 12. Folder 6. Notes, 1902-1921

Box 13. Folder 1. Notes, 1923, 1931

Box 13. Folder 2. Notes, 1933

Box 13. Folder 3. Notes, 1943, 1945

Box 13. Folder 4-5. Notes, undated

Box 14. Folder 1-2. Notes, undated

Box 14. Folder 3. Art and sculpture, undated

Box 14. Folder 4. By the Way notebooks, 1921-1933

Box 14. Folder 5. Music, undated

Box 14. Folder 6. On Margaret Fuller, circa 1926

Box 15. Folder 1. Painting, undated

Box 15. Folder 2. Playbooks, 1912-1918

Box 15. Folder 3. Playbooks, 1933, undated

Box 15. Folder 4. Wilmot Willard, 1880, 1886

Box 15. Folder 5. Wilmot Willard, 1901, undated

Series D. Personal Material, 1858-1949

Extent 1.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

Arranged in two (2) subseries: 1. Correspondence and 2. Iconographic Material.

Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1858-1949

Extent 1 linear foot (2.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement The subseries is alphabetically arranged.

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 16. Folder 1. Cohen, Ira [son-in-law], 1923 1944, undated
- Box 16. Folder 2. Cohen, Margaret Meyer [daughter] [baby book], 1894-1898
- Box 16. Folder 3. Cohen, Margaret Meyer [daughter], 1900-1924
- Box 16. Folder 4. Meyer, Alfred [husband]. Letters from Annie Nathan Meyer, 1887-1940
- Box 16. Folder 5. Meyer, Alfred [husband]. Letters from Annie Nathan Meyer, undated
- Box 16. Folder 6. Meyer, Alfred [husband]. Letters to Annie Nathan Meyer, 1890-1940, undated
- Box 16. Folder 7. Nathan Family, 1858-1939, undated
- Box 16. Folder 8. Nathan, Harold and Sally [brother and sister-in-law], 1890-1944, undated
- Box 17. Folder 1. Nathan, Lucy, Nancy and Janet [Robert's three wives], 1930-1947, undated
- Box 17. Folder 2. Nathan, Maud Nathan [sister], 1890 1942, undated
- Box 17. Folder 3. Nathan, Robert [nephew], 1910-1949
- Box 17. Folder 4-5. Nathan, Robert [nephew], undated
- Box 17. Folder 6. Unidentified, 1886-1898, 1936, undated
- Box 17. Folder 7-8. Wedding anniversary, 50th, 1937
- Box 18. Folder 1. Wedding anniversary, 60th, 1947

Subseries 2. Iconographic Material, 1876-1949

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Contains photographs, postcards, and one folder of miscellaneous items. The photographs, which are arranged by size, are of the Nathan-Meyer family, their friends and the various places they lived or visited. The postcards, which Meyer apparently collected, are from both America and abroad.

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 18. Folder 2-5. Photographs, 1876-circa 1949
- Box 18. Folder 6. Postcard collection, 1920-1939
- Box 19. Folder 1. Postcard collection, 1920-1939
- Box 19. Folder 2. Miscellaneous.

Series E. Nearprint, 1885-1948

Extent 2.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes and 1 oversize box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of loose clippings and scrapbooks of clippings, articles and programs pertinent to Ms. Meyer's family and interests. Although many of the scrapbook bindings were removed because of their deterioration, their original continuity has been kept intact.

Arrangement Arranged in two (2) subseries: 1. Scrapbooks and 2. Clippings.

Subseries 1. Scrapbooks, 1885-1948

Extent 2 linear feet (2.5 Hollinger boxes and 1 oversize box)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 19. Folder 3. Scrapbooks, 1885-1889
Box 19. Folder 4. Scrapbooks, 1888-1904
Box 19. Folder 5. Scrapbooks, 1889-1899
Box 20. Folder 1. Scrapbooks, 1913-1918
Box 20. Folder 2. Scrapbooks, 1920-1922
Box 20. Folder 3. Scrapbooks [with index], 1921-1928
Box 21. Folder 1. Scrapbooks [family], 1936-1941
Box 21. Folder 2. Scrapbooks, 1938-1943
Box 21. Folder 3. Scrapbooks [plays and playwrights], undated
Box X-15. Folder 1. Scrapbooks, 1909-1912
Box X-15. Folder 2. Scrapbooks, 1931-1934
Box X-15. Folder 3. Scrapbooks, 1934-1937
Box X-15. Folder 4. Scrapbooks, 1947-1948

Subseries 2. Clippings, 1901-1944

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 22. Box Clippings, 1901-1944



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Appendix A: Complete List of Monographs and Plays

Starred items indicate that there is a manuscript of the work in the collection

Monographs:

*At the Sign of the Crown and Ship, A Tale of the New York Province. [ca. 1895].

Barnard Beginnings. 1935. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co.).

*The Gallery-Goer's Book. [ca. 1943].

Helen Brent, M.D. 1893. (Cassell).

*It's Been Fun. 1951. (Henry Schuman, New York).

*Moments [autobiography]. [ca. 1931].

My Park Book. 1898.

*Nature's Way. 1925.

Problems [?]. 1892.

Robert Annys, Poor Priest. 1901. (MacMillan).

Woman's Work in America. 1891. (Holt).

Plays:

The Adventurers. undated [ca. 1923. changed to The New Way].

*The Advertising of Kate. 1911.

*Barchester Towers. undated

*Black Souls. 1925.



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Appendix A: Complete List of Monographs and Plays

*Cousin Fritz. [1942 ?].

Creation. undated

*A Dinner of Herbs. 1908. [ca. 1928 changed to The Dreamer].

*The District Attorney. 1920. [ca. 1928 changed to Her Honor, The District Attorney].

The Dominant Sex. 1904.

The Dreamer. 1912. [Originally titled A Dinner of Herbs. 1908].

*Due Unto Others. undated

*Fifth Avenue. 1927. [copyright 1930].

*Full Circle. [ca. 1934]. [In 1945 changed to Genesis I. 27].

*Furlough. 1944.

*Genesis I. 27. 1945. [Originally titled Full Circle, ca. 1934].

*Get Her Married by Shirley Dare [pseudonym]. undated

*The Giftie. undated

Her Honor, the District Attorney. 1928. [Originally titled The District Attorney. 1920].

*Mrs. Doctor. undated

The New Way. 1923. [Originally titled The Adventurers. undated].

P's and Q's. [ca. 1920].

*Paula. undated

*Puppets. 1923.

*The Right to Dream. [ca. 1922].

The Snob. undated



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Appendix A: Complete List of Monographs and Plays

*Soundings. [ca. 1937].

*The Span. [ca. 1920].

*The Spur. undated

*Windfall. 1943.

Woman's Wiles. 1944.



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**Appendix B: Complete List of Short Stories, Sketches, Essays, and
Addresses**

"Again Spreadhenism". undated

"All This Frankness and Honesty." undated

"Armgart and Aurora." undated

"Art and the Gift of Gab." undated

"At Grips with Grief." ca. 1923.

"Atlanta." undated

"A Bid from the Blue." undated

"Bingham's Revenge." undated

"The Candidate with the Golden Voice." undated

"Compensation." undated

"Concours." published January 1907.

"Corot: Figure Painter." 1930.

"The Dollar Bill." undated

"Do We Need Emerson Today?" Address before the Emerson Circle of Concord, Mass., June 5, 1938.

"George Eliot." undated



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**Appendix B: Complete List of Short Stories, Sketches, Essays, and
Addresses**

"Going Out of the Woods." undated

"The Growing Formlessness of Art Expression." undated

"Her Gift." undated

"How Ardley Made Broadway." undated

"How to Read a Play." Bundu's Magazine, May 1911 [Reprint].

"Law and Order." undated

"A Little Hitler in the New York Zoological Garden." May 1933.

"Little Keats." undated

"The Masterpiece." undated

"Me and Mine." undated

"The Message of the Mountains." undated

"Mrs. Caraberry Gives Up Her Car." undated

"Mr. Pulsifer's Plans." undated

"Music." undated

"My Refugee Cousin." undated

"The New Puritan." undated



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**Appendix B: Complete List of Short Stories, Sketches, Essays, and
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"The Northern Woods: A Further Suggestion." undated

"On Adapting Foreign Plays." undated

"On Having Shot One's Bolt." undated

"On Rounding the Corner." undated

"One Act Sketch." undated

"Pacifism in a Pinch." undated

"A Paradox for Playgoer's." undated

"The Pecan-man and Other Vendors." undated

"The Penitent." undated

"Post-Christmas Reflections of a Creature of Habit." undated

"The Power of the Spirit." undated

"The Premier's Revenge; An Incident of the Sacred College." undated

"Reflections of a Cape Cod Theatre-Goer, Summer of 1934."

"Renunciation." undated

"The Returned Job." undated

"The Scalpel." undated

"The Shoe Pinches Mr. Samuels." 1934.



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Addresses**

"The Siege of Troy." undated

"Silence." undated

"Some Reflections on the Integrity of Art." undated

"The Story of Menace." undated

"The Story of Therese." undated

"Stray Notes on the Courbet Exhibition." undated

"Swinging Too Far." undated

"Then and Now." undated

"Today's Shakespeare." undated

"Transcendentalism." undated

"Traveling." undated

"Vorbei." Harper's New Monthly Magazine, November 1893.

"What Youth Wants." [ca. 1939].

"Whistler's Butterflies." The Critic, September 1903.

"Woman's Assumption of Sex Superiority." North American Review, January 1904.

"Yetta." undated