

**A. Edward Newton collection,
1808-1966 (bulk 1892-1941)
FLP.RBD.NEWTON**

Finding aid prepared by Caitlin Goodman

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Free Library of Philadelphia: Rare Book Department
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Philadelphia, PA, 19103

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Summary Information

Repository	Free Library of Philadelphia: Rare Book Department
Creator - Author	Newton, A. Edward (Alfred Edward), 1864-1940
Creator - Compiler	Newton, E. Swift (Edward Swift)
Title	A. Edward Newton collection
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1892-1941
Date [inclusive]	1808-1966
Extent	8.0 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>This collection consists of the personal and professional papers of Philadelphia book collector A. Edward Newton (1864-1940). The bulk of the materials are book manuscripts, correspondence, keepsakes, and newspaper clippings, with published volumes cataloged separately. The collection relates to his book collecting activities and was primarily compiled by his son, E. Swift Newton, with additional material given by various donors.</p>

Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], [Box and folder number], A. Edward Newton collection, 1808-1966, Free Library of Philadelphia, Rare Book Department.

Biographical/Historical note

Alfred Edward Newton, one of the most prominent book collectors in the Philadelphia region, was born in Philadelphia on August 26, 1864. His formal education was limited, but an interest in books inspired his first collecting efforts in the 1880s. His early working life was haphazard: he began working as a grocery stock boy when he was still in his early teens, spent a few years as a bookstore clerk unwilling to sell books, tried and disliked banking, and eventually joined the Cutter Electrical and Manufacturing Company in 1895. Five years later, he bought it and became president, and remained with the company until his retirement in 1932.

His interests, however, lay almost entirely in the realm of book collecting – he claimed nine-tenths of his energies were devoted to his library. He married Babette Edelman, daughter of fellow collector Carl Edelman, in 1890, and socially moved in a circle of fellow collectors, including Moncure Biddle, William Elkins, and Christopher Morley. His first book, *The Amenities of Book-Collecting*, was published by *The Atlantic* in 1918. It was an enormous success in the circle of bibliophiles throughout England and America, and led Newton to a successful writing and speaking career. Later books followed on similar themes, including 1921's *A Magnificent Farce* and 1928's *This Book-Collecting Game*. He primarily collected British literature, and was particularly drawn to Dickens, Trollope, and Samuel Johnson.

Newton and his family lived at their estate, "Oak Knoll," in Daylesford, Pennsylvania. Oak Knoll Books and Press, a printing and publishing company (founded in 1976 and located in Delaware) was named after Newton's estate, the company's founder being inspired to start the company by some of Newton's writings on book collecting. Although Newton is not connected to Oak Knoll Press, he did do some printing at home, producing Christmas keepsake pamphlets on a variety of subjects for a substantial list of friends and colleagues for thirty-three consecutive years. After a lingering illness, Newton died in 1940, described by the Library of Congress as "the most famous and influential of American book collectors." His remarkable collection of rare books was auctioned off by Parke-Bernet in 1941, with his personal papers and his published writings being donated to the Free Library by his son, E. Swift Newton, in 1954.

Bibliography

Free Library of Philadelphia. "Remarks Made by E. Swift Newton on the Occasion of His Presentation of the Personal Library of His Father A. Edward Newton to the Free Library of Philadelphia." Philadelphia: Free Library of Philadelphia, 1954.

ABAA. Interview with Bob Fleck, founder of Oak Knoll, 2010.

Library of Congress: Rare Book Division. *A Tribute to A. Edward Newton, Christmas, 1940*. US GPO, 1940.

Scope and Contents note

This collection primarily consists of the personal papers and published writings of Philadelphia book collector A. Edward Newton. Correspondence, book manuscripts and typescripts, keepsakes produced by Newton, and newspaper clippings make up the bulk of the collection; other types of materials include auction and dealer catalogs, bibliographies, bookplates, drawings, etchings, fine press keepsakes, invitations, photographs, programs, and a scrapbook.

The collection includes material from most of Newton's significant publications, with drafts, manuscripts, typescripts, and galley proofs of several of Newton's books. It also documents many of his more ephemeral writings, including speeches and unpublished articles. He maintained files related to his book collecting activities, most notably a scrapbook full of invitations and clippings, and a portfolio documenting his 1931 speaking tour of California.

Correspondence includes both letters to and from Newton, and has been accumulated from a variety of sources and donors. Particularly prominent in the correspondence series are Moncure Biddle, William Elkins, Charles Osgood, and Gabriel Wells, all close friends of Newton. The correspondence sheds light on Philadelphia bibliophilic society in the early twentieth-century, including the collectors' work on various library boards (including the Free Library) and professional societies and honors, particularly the Philadelphia Award.

Other items of interest in the collection include the full run of Newton's Christmas keepsakes (produced 1907-1939, with a posthumous tribute issued by the Library of Congress in 1940) and rare bibliographies of Newton's now-dispersed library. The Newton collection also includes several hundred published volumes, the bulk of which were written or partially written by Newton and include specially bound editions of his keepsakes for his private library. The published volumes have been cataloged and housed separately and can be found in the Library's public catalog.

Arrangement note

The collection is arranged in five series: I. Book collecting activities; II. Book manuscripts and other writings; III. Correspondence; IV. Personal records; and V. E. Swift Newton papers.

The first and second series are arranged alphabetically by title.

The third series, Correspondence, is arranged by source, beginning with Newton's general file of correspondence and historical family letters and then arranged alphabetically by source. Within each file, correspondence is arranged chronologically.

The fourth and fifth series are arranged alphabetically by title.

Several hundred published volumes donated as part of the A. Edward Newton collection have been cataloged individually and are findable in the Library's main catalog.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Free Library of Philadelphia: Rare Book Department November 2014

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open to researchers by appointment. Please contact the Rare Book Department at 215-686-5416 for access.

Conditions Governing Use note

The right of access to material does not imply the right of publication. Permission for reprinting, reproduction, or extensive quotation from the rare books, manuscripts, prints, or drawings must be obtained through written application, stating the use to be made of the material. The reader bears the responsibility for any possible infringement of copyright laws in the publication of such material. A reproduction fee may be charged depending on the use of the material.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

This collection was accumulated through various sources, with the bulk of the collection donated by E. Swift Newton in 1954.

Additional donors, particularly of correspondence, include A. Edward Newton himself, along with John Ashhurst, Owen and Peyton Biddle, William Elkins, Charles Osgood, Charles Sessler, and Mabel Zahn. A small number of items were purchased from dealers. For more information on specific acquisitions, please contact the Rare Book Department.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Arizona Historical Society: Newton collection, 1935-1938.

Library of Congress: A. Edward Newton collection, 1922-1964 (2002554270).

Newberry Library: A. Edward Newton letters, 1928-1937 (Midwest.MS.170).

University of California Berkeley, Bancroft Library: A. Edward Newton papers, 1927-1940 (BANC MSS 87/171 Z).

University of Denver: A. Edward Newton papers, 1919-1941.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Bernard Quaritch (Firm).
- Free Library of Philadelphia.

Genre(s)

- Auction catalogs
- Bibliographies
- Bookplates
- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Galley proofs
- Keepsakes (books)
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks

Personal Name(s)

- Ashhurst, John, 1865-1932
- Biddle, Moncure, 1882-
- Carson, Hampton L. (Hampton Lawrence), 1852-1929
- Chrystal, G. (George), 1851-1911
- Currie, Barton, 1877-1962
- Dudley, E. Lawrence (Edward Lawrence), 1879-

- Edelheim, Carl
- Elkins, William McIntire, 1882-1947
- Lewis, John Frederick, 1860-1932.
- Lucas, E. V. (Edward Verrall), 1868-1938
- Morley, Christopher, 1890-1957
- Newton, Babette
- Newton, E. Swift (Edward Swift)
- Osgood, Charles Grosvenor, 1871-1964
- Rosenbach, A. S. W. (Abraham Simon Wolf), 1876-1952
- Sargent, George H. (George Henry), 1867-1931
- Tregaskis, Eve
- Tregaskis, Hugh
- Tregaskis, James, 1850-1926
- Wells, Gabriel, 1862-1946

Subject(s)

- Bibliomania
- Bibliophilia
- Book collecting
- Exhibitions

Book collecting activities

Collection Inventory

Book collecting activities 1828-1940		
	Box	Folder
Bookplates undated	1	1-2
Catalogs 1876-1940 and undated	1	3-6
Clippings 1883-1937 and undated	4	1-6
Conditions Governing Use note		
Use copies have been made of fragile original newsclippings where possible.		
Invitations and programs 1893-1940 and undated	4	7-9
Johnsoniana 1892-1934 and undated	1	7-8
Keepsakes 1828-1939 and undated		
	Box	Folder
Text	4	10-13
		Box
Text		14

Book manuscripts and other writings**Separated Materials note**

Oversize and framed keepsakes are in box 14.

Box **Folder**

"Memories of California" 1931

4

14

Scope and Contents note

These materials have been removed from a damaged leather portfolio, originally assembled by A. Edward Newton to memorialize his spring 1931 book collecting visit to California. Items include clippings, invitations, and keepsakes.

Photographs of collected books undated

1

9

Box

Scrapbook 1911-1926

11

Scope and Contents note

Scrapbook includes catalog and newspaper clippings, invitations, and tear sheets.

Book manuscripts and other writings 1899-1940 and undated**Separated Materials note**

Five of the items in this series are cataloged and shelved with published volumes; their titles link directly to the Library's main catalog and their call number.

An account of "The Columbus Letter," manuscript 1935

Book manuscripts and other writings

Scope and Contents note

Newton's handwritten account of his acquisition of "The Columbus Letter," a probable forgery purchased by Newton. He does not mention its dubious provenance, but two letters from rare book dealers have been included in the file that discuss its inauthenticity.

Call-Number

The Amenities of Book-Collecting, proof sheets 1918

RBD AN
1 1918
N481a2

Box

A Busted Bibliophile, galley proofs 1928

12

Box**Folder**

Carl Edelheim obituary, manuscript draft and typescript 1899

4

15

Christmas keepsakes 1911-1940

	Box	Folder
Text	1	10-11
Text	2	1-8
Text	3	1

Separated Materials note

Additional keepsakes bound into decorative volumes by A. Edward Newton have been cataloged separately as published volumes, findable through the Library catalog.

Book manuscripts and other writings

Diary, manuscript 1884

Scope and Contents note

European diary of A. Edward Newton in two scrapbooks tied with ribbon, covering June 4-August 14.

Doctor Johnson: A Play, typescript pasted in bound volume

Scope and Contents note

Two additional bound typescripts have been cataloged as RBD AN 4 1922a and RBD AN 4 1922b and are housed separately.

"E. V. Lucas: The Passing of a Wit" 1938

	Box	Folder
Corrected typescript and clean copy 1938	4	16
<i>The Atlantic</i> 1938 November	4	17

Scope and Contents note

"E. V. Lucas: An Atlantic Portrait" ("The Passing of a Wit"'s published title) appears on pages 616-624.

	Box	Folder
Galley proofs 1938		12
"Eddie Lacks Concentration," corrected manuscript draft undated	4	18

Book manuscripts and other writings

"The Hen-Pecked Husbands' Club," typescript and bound pamphlets circa 1905-1930	5	1-2
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Introduction of Lionel Edie, typescript 1932	5	3
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Introduction to the Philadelphia Museum of Art's "William Blake 1757-1827: A Descriptive Catalogue of an Exhibition...," typescript 1938	5	4
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Scope and Contents note

Presentation copy given to Moncure Biddle.

Box

Introduction to Temple Scott's <i>Oliver Goldsmith</i> , galley proofs 1928		12
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Box**Folder**

Keepsakes 1927-1937	3	2-5
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"A Light Blue Stocking," typescript pasted into bound journal 1916	5	5
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General note

"A Light Blue Stocking" typescript is pasted to recto of pages only, verso pages are pasted with typescript carbon copies of transcribed Samuel Johnson letters.

"A Macaroni Parson," typescript 1918	5	6
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<i>A Magnificent Farce</i> , typescript pasted into notebook 1919	5	7
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Book manuscripts and other writings

<i>Newton on Blackstone</i> , typescript 1937	5	8
"On Living Behind the Times," manuscript draft undated	5	9
"Parson Weems's Washington Once More," reprints 1936	5	10
"The Pickwick Papers: A Word in Appreciation," typescript and carbon copy circa 1928	5	11
Prolegomenon to Anthony Trollope's <i>The American Senator</i> , typescript carbon copy 1940	5	12
Prolegomenon to <i>The One Thousandth Caxton Head Catalogue</i> , typescript carbon copy 1931	5	13
Prospectuses and promotional material for A. Edward Newton's publications 1918-1935	5	14
<i>The Queeney Letters</i> prospectus, typescript circa 1934	5	15
"Reflections on O.W.," manuscript with typescript additions in bound volume 1912		
Scope and Contents note		
Notes made in preparation for a speech on Oscar Wilde. Much of the material edited for use in Newton's 1912 Christmas Greeting, "Oscar Wilde."		
	Box	Folder
"Robert Bell," typescript undated	5	16

Book manuscripts and other writings

"Staffordshire," offprints 1935	5	17
"There Ought to Be a Law Against It," corrected manuscript draft 1933	5	18
<i>This Book-Collecting Game</i> 1928-1955		
	Box	Folder
Corrected typescript carbon copy 1928	5	19-21
		Box
Galley proofs 1928		12
	Box	Folder
Excerpts and correspondence related to "The Quaritch Incident" 1930-1954	5	22
Scope and Contents note		
<p>In A. Edward Newton's book <i>This Book-Collecting Game</i> he briefly discusses a type of unofficial auction-rigging called a "knock-out," using the example of British book dealer Bernard Quaritch, Ltd. The firm sued Newton and his publisher for libel, and an apology was published and the section revised. This file includes the excerpt at question and correspondence and clippings relating to the litigation.</p>		
	Box	Folder
<i>A Tourist in Spite of Himself</i> , typescript 1930	5	23
		Box

Correspondence

"The Trollope Society," galley proofs 1934		12
	Box	Folder
Untitled fragment about Prohibition, typescript circa 1929-1933	5	24
Untitled speech on bibliophilia, typescript carbon copy undated	5	25
"When My Ship Comes In," manuscript pasted in bound volume 1878		
	Box	Folder
"Who's Who and What's What: The Cutter Company," promotional brochures 1913	5	26
"A Word in Memory," from <i>A Doctor's Odyssey</i> , typescript carbon copy circa 1934	5	27

Correspondence 1808-1957 and undated**Scope and Contents note**

The correspondence series is arranged by provenance; letters in each file may be from A. Edward Newton, to him, or simply relating to Newton. Within each file, letters are arranged chronologically.

General 1878-1940 and undated

	Box	Folder
Text	5	28-29
	Box	Folder
Text	6	1-3

Correspondence

	Box	Folder
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Historical family letters 1808-1818	6	4
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Scope and Contents note

Includes letters from Sarah Thomas and a 1808 will executed by Charles Swift.

Biddle, Moncure 1926-1957	6	5-8
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Scope and Contents note

Includes correspondence between Newton and Biddle along with one folder of correspondence between Biddle and others relating to A. Edward Newton.

Currie, Barton 1925 to 1939 and undated

Scope and Contents note

Barton Currie was a book dealer who purchased bibliographer George H. Sargent's collection of A. Edward Newton correspondence in 1931. The Library acquired Currie's Newton files in 1963.

	Box	Folder
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Barton Currie letters 1931-1939 and undated	6	9
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Christopher Morley letters to George H. Sargent 1926	6	10
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George H. Sargent letters 1925-1929	6	11-12
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	Box	Folder
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Correspondence

Dudley, E. Lawrence 1936-1938	6	13
Elkins, William McIntire 1929-1940 and undated	6	14-15
Free Library of Philadelphia 1923-1930	6	16

Osgood, Charles G. 1908-1940

	Box	Folder
Text	6	17
	Box	Folder
Text	7	1-5

	Box	Folder
Ross, Gordon 1925	7	6
Scope and Contents note		
Letters from Ross have been pasted into a bound volume.		

Swift, S. Matilda 1896-1903

7 7-8

Scope and Contents note

This file includes letters from Newton's aunt, S. Matilda Swift, some pasted into a bound volume. The front pastedown of the bound volume also includes Newton's manuscript draft of a memorial for his father-in-law Carl Edelheim.

Tregaskis family 1912-1934	7	9-10
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Personal records

Scope and Contents note

Newton's letters to James, Eve, and Hugh Tregaskis.

Wells, Gabriel 1918-1940 and undated

7

11-14

Personal records 1911-1940 and undated

Art 1911-1933 and undated

	Box	Folder
Graphic materials	3	6-7
Graphic materials		Box 13-15

Scope and Contents note

This file includes art created for A. Edward Newton, including sketches for bookplates and caricatures, as well as art owned by Newton, including a palm-sized model of England's Coronation Chair, a life-size bust of Newton, and a caricature of Dickens and Thackeray. Framed and oversize items are in boxes 14 and 15.

Awards and certificates 1931-1940 and undated

	Box	Folder
Text	3	8-9
Text		Box 13-14

Separated Materials note

E. Swift Newton papers

Framed and oversize items are in box 14.

	Box	Folder
Biographical writings 1930-1938	8	1-2

Scope and Contents note

This file includes drafts and notes for Moncure Biddle's 1938 "A. Edward Newton: An Appreciation;" an honorary degree introduction by Felix Schling; a 1930 biographical sketch of Newton published in *Electrical Manufacturing*; and an undated illustrated manuscript (circa 1934) "The Diverting History of A. Edward" by "Glue and William" (Christopher Morley and William M. Elkins).

Photographs undated

	Box	Folder
Graphic materials	3	10
		Box
Graphic materials		9
		Box
Graphic materials		13
		Box
Graphic materials		15

E. Swift Newton papers 1940-1966 and undated**Scope and Contents note**

E. Swift Newton papers

This series includes materials A. Edward Newton's son, E. Swift Newton, collected or created. The bulk of the items relate to A. Edward Newton's book collecting and writings.

Box

Bibliographies, catalogs, and keepsakes 1940-1966 and undated

10

Box**Folder**

Clippings 1940-1942 and undated

8

3-7

Conditions Governing Access note

The first two folders in this file are use copies as many of the original clippings are fragile. The original clippings can be accessed with Departmental approval.

Correspondence 1940-1959

3

11-12

Scope and Contents note

This file is predominantly E. Swift Newton's correspondence relating to his father and his father's estate, it also includes copyright registrations for *This Book-Collecting Game*.

World War II Red Cross diary, typescript 1943-1944

3

13

Scope and Contents note

E. Swift Newton spent almost two years in the Red Cross stationed in England during World War II. After the war, he typed up the diary he kept to distribute more widely.