

# Guide to the Estate of Sinclair Lewis Records

YCAL MSS 1463



by Beinecke staff, Brooke McManus

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 1463

**CREATOR:** Lewis, Sinclair, 1885-1951, author

**TITLE:** Estate of Sinclair Lewis records

**DATES:** 1841-1949

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.67 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** In English, with a small amount of material in German.

**SUMMARY:** The collection consists of correspondence, legal papers, financial papers, and personal papers relating to Sinclair Lewis, his wives Grace Hegger and Dorothy Thompson, and the Lewis family. Included are divorce decrees, custody and alimony agreements, wills, tax and real estate records, powers of attorney, and contracts pertaining to Lewis's novels *Ann Vickers*, *Dodsworth*, and *Elmer Gantry*. The collection also contains a few objects, such as metal keys and a visor, and a certificate of vaccinations against typhoid fever and smallpox for Sinclair, Grace, and Wells Lewis.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.slewis>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.slewis>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, Inc. on the Sinclair Lewis Fund, 2011.

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## Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Estate of Sinclair Lewis Records is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Estate of Sinclair Lewis Records. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951)

Sinclair Lewis is best known as a novelist and social critic, who also wrote plays, poetry, and short fiction. Lewis was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1926 and, in 1930, he was the first American author to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, legal papers, financial papers, and personal papers relating to Sinclair Lewis, his wives Grace Hegger and Dorothy Thompson, and the Lewis family. Included are divorce decrees, custody and alimony agreements, wills, tax and real estate records, powers of attorney, and contracts pertaining to Lewis's novels *Ann Vickers*, *Dodsworth*, and *Elmer Gantry*. The collection also contains a few objects, such as metal keys and a visor, and a certificate of vaccinations against typhoid fever and smallpox for Sinclair, Grace, and Wells Lewis.

## **Arrangement**

Organized into ten series: I. Agreements, 1914-1941. II. Ann Vickers, circa 1930-1933. III. Correspondence, 1916-1948. IV. Divorce, 1928-1946. V. Financial Papers, 1880-1942. VI. Personal Papers, 1921-1929. VII. Powers of Attorney, 1928-1937. VIII. Real Estate, 1841-1949. IX. Taxes, 1917-1932. X. Wills, 1924-1941.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Agreements, 1914-1941

15 Folders

This series contains publishing contracts, correspondence, and agreements to produce dramatizations of works by Sinclair Lewis, including *Dodsworth* and *Elmer Gantry*. Also included are trust, alimony, and custody agreements with Grace Hegger Lewis and Dorothy Thompson Lewis.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b.1	Sinclair Lewis and Grace Hegger Lewis <i>4 folders</i>	1914-1932
b.1	Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Thompson Lewis <i>2 folders</i>	1939, 1941
b.1	Sinclair Lewis and Paul H. De Kruif	1922 December 29
b.1	Sinclair Lewis and Lloyd Lewis	1933 October
b.1	Sinclair Lewis and John T. Wildberg	1940 November 8
b.1	Sinclair Lewis, Gilbert Mille, and Sidney Howard "Dodsworth"	1932 May 2
b.1	Sinclair Lewis, Lloyd Lewis, and Harry Hammond, Inc.	1934
b.1	Sinclair Lewis, Pat Kearney Elmer Gantry	1928 April 6
b.1	Sinclair Lewis, Sidney Phillips: Babbitt	1933 May 19
b.1	Dodsworth: contracts, agreements, correspondence	1932
b.1	Bethel Merriday	1940 April 1

**Series II: Ann Vickers, circa 1930-1933***4 Folders*

This series contains papers related to the development and publication of the novel *Ann Vickers*, including contracts, correspondence, cancelled checks, and an early sketch of the story and biography of the main character by Sinclair Lewis.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b.1	Checks	1932-1933
b.1	Contracts	1931-1932
b.1	Correspondence	1932
b.1	Plan	circa 1930-1932

**Series III: Correspondence, 1916-1948***11 Folders*

This series contains papers related to Sinclair Lewis's literary endeavors, including correspondence with his agent Ann Watkins and publishing and motion picture executives; legal correspondence and documents concerning Thorvale Farm, Lewis's property in Williamstown, Massachusetts; and trust indentures with his former wife Grace Hegger Lewis. Also included is a 1921 certificate of inoculation of Lewis family members against typhoid and smallpox, signed by a physician.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 2	Correspondence <i>5 folders</i>	1916-1948
b. 2	Envelopes <i>6 folders</i>	1928, undated



**Series IV: Divorce, 1928-1946***10 Folders*

This series includes legal papers related to Sinclair Lewis's divorces from Grace Hegger Lewis and Dorothy Thompson Lewis, as well as a custody agreement for Michael Lewis.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 3	Divorce decree Grace Hegger Lewis and Sinclair Lewis	1928 April 16
b. 3	Judgment Grace Hegger Lewis	1928 April 16
b. 3	Release of alimony Grace Hegger Lewis	1932 June
b. 3	General release Grace Hegger Lewis and Sinclair Lewis	1928 April 16
b. 3	Deed of trust Sinclair Lewis and Grace Lewis <i>2 folders</i>	1928 April 3
b. 3	Instrument altering and modifying indenture...Sinclair Lewis and Grace Hegger Lewis	1928 April 3
b. 3	Modification and alteration of trust indenture Sinclair Lewis and Grace Hegger Lewis	1946 January 17
b. 3	Guardianship Michael Lewis	1930 November 26
b. 3	Divorce decree Dorothy Thompson Lewis and Sinclair Lewis	1942 February 1

**Series V: Financial Papers, 1880-1942***7 Folders*

This series includes bills, receipts, bank records, and checkbooks, as well as several royalty statements from Harcourt Brace and Company to Sinclair Lewis.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 3	Bank slips	undated
b. 3	Bills	1928
b. 3	Checkbooks	1926-1928, undated
b. 3	Receipts	1880-1942
b. 3	Savings passbook Sinclair Lewis	1931-1933
b. 3	Savings passbook Dorothy Thompson Lewis	1932-1933
b. 3	Statements: Harcourt Brace and Company	1928

**Series VI: Personal Papers, 1921-1929***5 Folders*

This series includes several metal keys, a green eyeshade, a British license to drive issued to Sinclair Lewis, and a marriage certificate of Lewis and Dorothy Thompson.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 3	Affidavit: Edwin J. Lewis	1921 March 17
b. 3	Driver's license: Sinclair Lewis	1928-1929
b. 3	Keys	undated
b. 3	Marriage license: Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Thompson	1928 May 14
b. 3	Green eyeshade (visor)	undated

**Series VII: Powers of Attorney, 1928-1937***5 Folders*

This series consists of powers of attorney Sinclair Lewis granted to his manager Melville H. Cane, publisher Alfred Harcourt, and lawyer Bernard M. L. Lewis.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 3	Bernard M. L. Ernest	1930 April 16
b. 3	Melville H. Cane	1928 March 30
b. 3	Alfred Harcourt	1929 December 27
b. 3	Sinclair Lewis to Melville H. Cane and Bernard M. L. Ernest	1932
b. 3	Sinclair Lewis to Melville H. Cane	1937 May

## **Series VIII: Real Estate, 1841-1949**

*11 Folders*

This series contains deeds, correspondence, documentation of property value, and other records pertaining to Thorvale Farm.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 4

Real estate  
*11 folders*

1841-1949

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**Series IX: Taxes, 1917-1932**

*2 Folders*

This series consists of income tax returns of Sinclair Lewis and related documents and notes.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 4	Taxes: notes	1925-1932
b. 4	Tax returns	1917-1928

**Series X: Wills, 1924-1941***10 Folders*

This series consists of the wills of Sinclair Lewis, Grace Hegger Lewis, and Dorothy Thompson Lewis.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1924 October 6
b. 4	Grace Hegger Lewis: codicil	1924 October 6
b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1928 March 12
b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1928 May 18
b. 4	Dorothy Thompson Lewis	1929 January 26
b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1929 January 26
b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1929 December 31
b. 4	Dorothy Thompson Lewis	1932 August
b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1941 February 26
b. 4	Sinclair Lewis	1941 September 27

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

American literature -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century  
Divorce mediation  
Executors and administrators -- New York  
(State) -- New York  
Smallpox -- Vaccination  
Typhoid fever -- Vaccination

### **Occupations**

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Genres / Formats**

Contracts  
Deeds  
Financial records  
Keys (hardware)  
Powers of attorney  
Tax records  
Visors (costume components)  
Wills

### **Names**

Lewis, Grace Hegger  
Lewis, Sinclair, 1885-1951  
Thompson, Dorothy, 1893-1961