

# Guide to the Gilbert Cannan Papers

GEN MSS 873



by Sandra Markham

2012

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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:** GEN MSS 873

**CREATOR:** Cannan, Gilbert, 1884-1955

**TITLE:** Gilbert Cannan papers

**DATES:** 1777-1925

**BULK DATES:** 1907-1925

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 4.6 linear feet (12 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection primarily consists of writings by Gilbert Cannan, containing autograph manuscripts of his novels, plays, poetry, and short stories, with some examples of his non-fiction writing, including the manuscript of his work Samuel Butler: a Critical Study. Series I holds the literary manuscripts, while Series II holds a law examination certificate and two photographs of Black Lake Cottage, in Farnham, Surrey, where Cannan lived for a time.

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

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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.cannan>.

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  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Bertram Rota on the George Henry Nettleton Fund, 2002.

April 2017 acquisition: Gift of Mrs. A. E. Rideout, 2017.

## Custodial History

Gilbert Cannan by bequest to his sister Margaret Rideout; by bequest to her son Edwin Rideout; to Bertram Rota, 2002; to Beinecke Library, 2002.

Edwin Rideout wrote in a letter to the Beinecke Library in 2002: "When Gilbert died my mother took over his papers. I believe there was a cabin trunk full and I know she destroyed a lot of material. When mother died the papers were shipped over to me, that is, what was left of them." Regarding the William Lee Antoine papers, he described them in his inventory of the collection as "A large envelope said to contain letters written in the start of the 19th century. May be nothing to do with GC but in his papers." On the envelope itself he later wrote "Folders full of letters written about 1800 to Mr. Lee Antoine. I think he may have been a Barrister or Lawyer. I just glanced through some of them. I can't think how or why they should be with GC's papers."

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Gilbert Cannan Papers 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

Gilbert Cannan Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## Processing Information

Former call number: Uncat MSS 368

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## Gilbert Cannan (1884-1955)

Gilbert Eric Cannan, a British author and translator, was born on June 25, 1884, in Manchester, England. He attended King's College, Cambridge, on scholarship, and afterward read for the law but decided instead on a career as a writer. During his lifetime Cannan produced more than twenty-five novels and non-fiction books and more than a dozen plays, in addition to critical reviews, poems, and translations of other authors' works. Some of his novels were based on the lives of family members and friends.

In 1909 Cannan was cited in the divorce suit between the author James M. Barrie and his wife; Gilbert Cannan and Mary Ansell Barrie were married in April 1910. The couple lived for a period of time in Hawridge Windmill, Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire, which they had converted into a residence, and which became the center of a lively literary and cultural group that included D. H. Lawrence, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Compton Mackenzie, Katherine Mansfield, Mark Gertler, and the South African painter Gwen Wilson, among others. Cannan's affair with Wilson caused the breakup of his marriage in 1918, after which time he began a descent into mental illness. He was certified insane in 1924 and became a patient in The Priory, Roehampton, London. In 1952 Cannan was moved to the Holloway Sanatorium in Surrey, and died there on June 30, 1955.

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## William Lee Antoine (1764-1815)

William Lee Antoine was born on February 24, 1764, the son of Sir William Lee (1726?-1778), chief justice of the King's Bench, and his wife Philadelphia Dyke, of Totteridge Park, Hertfordshire, England. As a young man, he acquired estates near Marlow, Buckinghamshire, and served as the borough's Whig representative in Parliament from 1790 to 1796. During the same time he lived primarily at Colworth House near Sharnbrook in Bedfordshire, which he had inherited from his distant cousin Richard Antoine. There he founded the Oakley Hunt with his neighbor Samuel Whitbread and served as its first master; he also represented Bedford in Parliament from 1802 to 1812. William Lee Antoine never married, and died on Sept. 11, 1815.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection primarily consists of literary manuscripts composed by the British author Gilbert Cannan prior to 1924. Included are autograph manuscripts for a few of his novels, both published and unpublished, and plays, poems, short stories, and critical essays.

Also present are sixteen folders of autograph manuscript letters and documents that William Lee Antoine, an estate owner and member of Parliament from Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, received from his colleagues and peers including the lords Ludlow, Preston, Sackville, and Southampton, and the Marquis of Tavistock. The letters discuss politics, elections, agriculture, local events, hunts and hounds, and a proposed monument to be erected in London to the memory of Charles James Fox. The letters are enclosed in paper folders annotated during a review of the contents made in the 1820s. The relationship of the material to Cannan, or to his papers, is unknown.

Many of the folders in the collection contain collations and other notes made by Cannan's nephew Edwin Rideout, as he reviewed the papers prior to their transfer to Bertram Rota.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Writings, 1908-1925. II. Personal Papers, 1907-1910. III. William Lee Antoine Papers, 1777-1815.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Writings, 1908-1925

4.4 linear feet (11 boxes)

The series contains manuscripts and two printed versions of Cannan's works.

Series I is organized into five subseries: Novels, Plays, Poetry, Short Stories, and Other Writings.

#### Novels

b. 1, f. 1	<i>The House of Prophecy</i>	circa 1924
b. 1, f. 2-6	<i>Little Brother</i>	circa 1912
b. 2, f. 7	<i>Lucy Evans</i> Published in <i>The English Review</i> in December 1909 and January 1910	1908
b. 2, f. 8-10	<i>Mendel: a Story of Youth</i>	circa 1916
b. 2, f. 11-12	<i>Mummary: a Tale of Three Idealists</i>	circa 1919
b. 3, f. 13-18	<i>Peter Homunculus: a Novel</i>	circa 1909
b. 4, f. 19-20	<i>Pink Roses</i>	circa 1919
b. 4, f. 21	<i>Pugs and Peacocks</i>	circa 1920
b. 4, f. 22-24	<i>Round the Corner: Being the Life and Death of Francis Christopher Folyat</i>	circa 1913
b. 5, f. 25	<i>Round the Corner: Being the Life and Death of Francis Christopher Folyat</i>	circa 1913
b. 5, f. 26-27	<i>Semba!</i>	circa 1922
b. 6, f. 28-32	<i>Three Pretty Men / Three Sons and a Mother</i>	circa 1915
b. 6, f. 33	<i>Time and Eternity: a Tale of Three Exiles</i>	1919
b. 7, f. 34-37	<i>Young Earnest: the Romance of a Bad Start in Life</i>	circa 1915
b. 7, f. 38-39	"Zachary Few"	undated
b. 8, f. 40-45	Unidentified novel First line: "While her brother James was closeted with her mother..."	undated

#### Plays

b. 9, f. 46	<i>Everybody's Husband</i> Accompanied by printed version	circa 1917
b. 9, f. 47	"Harlequin and Simonetta"	undated
b. 9, f. 48	"James and John"	circa 1910
b. 9, f. 49	"Snow White and Rose Red"	1922
b. 9, f. 50	"Two Sides of a Door"	undated

## Plays (continued)

b. 9, f. 51	"What We Are Coming To: a Comedy in One Act"	undated
b. 9, f. 52	Unidentified play "The scene is a dining room in a London house"	undated
b. 9, f. 53	Unidentified play Play in four acts, first act missing; scenes include Jacob Martin's cottage and Troutbeck Castle	undated
b. 9, f. 54	Pages and fragments from unidentified plays	undated
Poetry		
b. 9, f. 55	<i>Adventurous Love</i>	circa 1915
b. 9, f. 56	<i>Noel: an Epic in Ten Cantos - "Canto V"</i>	circa 1917
b. 10, f. 57	<i>Noel: an Epic in Ten Cantos - "Canto VIII"</i>	circa 1917
b. 10, f. 58	"Ode on the Death of Fancy" Printed proof, with autograph manuscript corrections	undated
b. 10, f. 59	Miscellaneous poems, in one volume	undated
Short Stories		
b. 10, f. 60	"The Bankrupt" Accompanied by a letter from A. M. Heath & Company, author's agent, to Cannan, dated October 17, 1922	circa 1922
b. 10, f. 61	"Daft Tommy"	undated
b. 10, f. 62	<a href="#">"Gynecologia"</a> Published in <i>Windmills: a Book of Fables</i>	circa 1913-1915
b. 10, f. 63	<a href="#">"Samways Island"</a> Published in <i>Windmills: a Book of Fables</i>	circa 1915
b. 10, f. 64	<a href="#">"Ultimus"</a> Published in <i>Windmills: a Book of Fables</i>	circa 1915
Other Writings		
b. 10, f. 65	"Of the Ideal," from <i>Freedom</i>	circa 1917
b. 10, f. 66	Pages torn from a bound notebook Contains notes on history of Greece and a partial diary of travels in the Greek Islands, with stop in Syria; notes are written in two different hands	1928?
b. 11, f. 67-68	<i>Samuel Butler: a Critical Study</i>	circa 1915
b. 11, f. 69	Notes made while living at The Priory	1924-1925
b. 11, f. 70	Unidentified essay on being a godfather First line: "Odd how a man is stripped of his illusions"	undated

Other Writings (continued)

b. 11, f. 71-74

Unidentified pages, chapter headings, blank sheets, etc.

undated

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**Series II: Personal Papers, 1907-1910***2 Folders*

b. 11, f. 75	Certificate from the Council of Legal Education awarded passing an examination	1907
b. 11, f. 76	Photographs (2) of Black Lake Cottage, Farnham, Surrey	1910
b. 11, f. 76a	Letter and family tree, manuscript, relating to Gilbert Cannan	undated

**Series III: William Lee Antoine Papers, 1777-1905***0.21 linear feet (1 box)*

The folders contain letters and documents addressed and sent to William Lee Antoine.

Series III is arranged alphabetically.

b. 12, f. 77	Bedford, Francis Russell, Duke of (Marquis of Tavistock)	1814-1815
b. 12, f. 78	Childe, W.	1800-1811
b. 12, f. 79	Gordon, R. U.	1811-1813
b. 12, f. 80	Halford, Henry	undated
b. 12, f. 81	Lambton, W. H.	1793-1815
b. 12, f. 82	Ludlow, Lord, and Lord Preston	1809-1815
b. 12, f. 83	Noailles, Charles de	1795-1806
b. 12, f. 84	Phipps, John	1791-1797
b. 12, f. 85	Ponsby, J.	1810, 1812
b. 12, f. 86	Sackville, George Germain, Lord	1801-1815
b. 12, f. 87	Small, Alex	1807-1808
b. 12, f. 88	Southampton, George Ferdinand Fitzroy, Lord	1798-1809
b. 12, f. 89	Trevor, John	1803-1812
b. 12, f. 90	Williams, T.	1791
b. 12, f. 91	Wiltshire, W.	1802 Oct 13
b. 12, f. 92	General correspondence Includes letters pertaining to a monument to be erected to the memory of Charles James Fox	1777-1814
b. 12, f. 93	Photograph of Gilbert Cannan	1905

## **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**

Authors, English -- 20th Century -- Archives  
English literature -- 20th Century

### **Geographic Names**

Bedfordshire (England) -- Social life and customs

### **Genres / Formats**

Photographs -- England -- 20th Century

### **Occupations**

Authors -- England -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Bedford, Francis Russell, Duke of, 1788-1861  
Butler, Samuel, 1835-1902  
Cannan, Gilbert, 1884-1955  
Fox, Charles James, 1749-1806  
Lee Antoine, William, 1764-1815  
Sackville-Germain, Charles, 1767-1843  
Southampton, George Ferdinand Fitzroy, Lord, 1761-1810

### **Contributors**

Cannan, Gilbert, 1884-1955  
Lee Antoine, William, 1764-1815