

Pearl Craigie Collection

MS 2133A

The collection consists mainly of a large amount of correspondence between Pearl Craigie and Revd. Mgr. W. F. Brown, 1898-1906, together with a few letters from other correspondents including John Craigie, Pearl's son [2 letters to Pearl, 1 letter to Father Brown], Lord Curzon [1 letter to Pearl] and John Richards, Pearl's father [8 letters to Father Brown written after Pearl's death]. The news cuttings in one album relate to Pearl's lecture tour of America in 1905-6 and in the other to her death and funeral. There are also TS transcriptions of some letters and a copy of a pamphlet by Margaret Maison, John Oliver Hobbes, her life and work, 1976.

The Collection covers the year's 1898-1906.

The physical extent of the collection is 6 boxes and 2 volumes.

Introduction

Pearl Craigie was born on 3 November 1867 in Chelsea, Massachusetts, eldest of the five children of John Morgan Richards, a prosperous merchant, and his wife Laura. Immediately after her birth Pearl's father moved to England and settled his family in London where he carried on a business selling patent medicines and American cigarettes which eventually made him a millionaire. Summers were spent on the Isle of Wight and the family travelled extensively in Britain, Europe and the United States but Pearl never had a home in America.

Pearl was educated mainly at home, reading voraciously and writing stories and plays from an early age. Growing up in some luxury Pearl studied music and French and dressed fashionably and expensively but although she was presented at court she was aware that she would never be fully accepted by society because her American nonconformist father had made his money in trade. Pearl was very close to her father but found her mother's religious enthusiasms and erratic behaviour difficult to live with.

In 1887 at the age of nineteen Pearl married Reginald Walpole Craigie, a handsome man about seven years her senior, but the marriage was a disaster from the start. Craigie drank and womanised and Pearl retreated into studying classics at University College London and writing. In 1890 Pearl gave birth to a son, John Churchill Craigie, in a house near her parent's home on the Isle of Wight. In May 1891, determined to protect her child, she left her husband

and moved back in with her parents permanently, although she did not obtain a divorce until 1895. Also in 1891 she published her first novel under the name of John Oliver Hobbes and in 1892 she shocked her family by becoming a Roman Catholic and adopting the name Mary-Teresa.

Pearl's brilliant mercurial personality, together with her literary success and her wealth made her a celebrity and much in demand as both hostess and guest. She conducted close platonic relationships with several men but could never be persuaded to greater intimacy, much to the chagrin of some, including Lord Curzon. One of her deepest friendships was with the Revd Mgr William Brown.

Pearl wrote more novels and plays with considerable success and lectured on a variety of subjects, undertaking a gruelling lecture tour of America from November 1905 to February 1906. Her hectic lifestyle and anxiety about her family and friends took their toll on her always fragile health and she died suddenly of heart failure in her sleep on 13 August 1906 at the age of thirty eight.

William Francis Brown [1862-1951] was born in Scotland and always retained his accent. His parents were Episcopalians but in 1873 his mother became a Roman Catholic and gradually influenced her whole family in that direction. Brown was received into the church in 1880 and decided to become a priest. He was ordained in 1886 and worked in London, first in Camberwell and then moving to a new parish later known as St Ann's, Vauxhall, where he remained for the rest of his life, eventually becoming a bishop. Brown was deeply involved with his parishioners and worked tirelessly to promote their social as well as spiritual welfare. He was particularly concerned with the education of children.

Brown first encountered Pearl Craigie when he wrote to her in 1898 to tell her of his high opinion of her book *The School for Saints* and she invited him to lunch. Thereafter they maintained a close friendship in which she supported his parish work and poured out her problems to him and he dispensed good advice and enjoyed her company and literary connections. At her funeral he preached a sermon highlighting her good works and the qualities of her mind which 'was so prehensile and active that it wore out her body.'

- MS 2133A/1** Correspondence
1898-1906
Includes correspondence between Pearl Craigie and Father W F Brown and between both Pearl Craigie and Father Brown and others.
- 3 boxes
- MS 2133A/1/1** Correspondence from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1898-1906
- MS 2133A/1/1/1** Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1898
Letters include discussion of Lord and Lady Curzon, Viceroyal and Vicereign of India, Craigie's son John Craigie and George Alexander.
- 2 letters
- MS 2133A/1/1/10** Folder of undated letters from Pearl Craigie
Undated [1898-1906]
Letters include discussion about religion, Craigie's friendships, her son and family, George and Mary Curzon, her work including lecturing in Edinburgh.
- 1 folder
- MS 2133A/1/1/2** Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1899
Letters include discussion of Craigie's son John Craigie and her parents, her plays 'Osbern and Ursyne' and 'A Repentance' and 'The Ambassador' and reviews of her work, social engagements, including meals with various literary and aristocratic people, discussion about Craigie's divorce, her religion and attendance at church services, Brown's work, travels in Ireland, visits from friends and acquaintances, Curzon, her health and Brown's health. Letters marked 'copied by IB' indicate that there may be a typescript copy.

MS
2133A/1/1/3 Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown 1900
Letters include discussion of theatre performances and the reviews in periodicals, public lectures, social engagements including meals with other literary and arts figures such as J M Barrie, and aristocracy such as Lady Beresford. Includes letters discussing Brown's work. Includes letters regarding Curzon, W S [Walter Spindler?]. Includes a letter regarding the building of a church. Includes letters discussing her allowance and making a living from her work. Includes letters discussing her own health and that of Brown, letters discussing Craigie's family, her travels to Scotland, the rehearsal and opening of her play, the comedy [The Wisdom of the Wise] as well as discussion of the reviews for her previous plays. The election of Father Brown. An article she wrote on George Eliot for the Times [newspaper].

138 letters over 3 folders

MS
2133A/1/1/4 Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown 1901
Letters include discussion of the theatre, literature, social activities and engagements including lunch with figures such as Jennie West [Jennie Spencer-Churchill], Craigie's health, Craigie's work including the writing of a new play to be produced anonymously, contemporary events such as the death of Queen Victoria, the Boer War, Craigie's family including her son [Moodoo?], correspondence with the Curzons.

MS
2133A/1/1/5 Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown 1902
Letters include a Christmas card send by Craigie to Brown used to label the year of the bundle of letters. Includes a letter on headed paper from 'Government House, Calcutta', a letter on headed paper from 'Viceroy's Camp, Delhi' and one from onboard the ship the 'S/S Arabia'[sic?] off Crete. Includes letters which discuss Brown's health and Craigie's health, visits to the theatre, Craigie's son[?] and his schooling, Craigie's work, a new play called 'The Vineyard' and a reaction to 'The Serious Wooing', Walter [Walter Spindler], social engagements, rights to her work, and her parents.

34 letters

MS
2133A/1/1/6

Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1903

Letters include discussion of George and Mary Curzon during a visit by Craigie to India and in other letters, other locations Craigie visited during the same trip such as Marseilles, her son, her father's business, family relationships, social engagements, her work, including a new play and translations of her work, her health, religious services, a trip through France and Spain by car, financial affairs, Brown's work and health, trips to Scotland, political figures such as Chamberlain, Kitchener and Disraeli, social etiquette.

4 envelopes

MS
2133A/1/1/7

Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1904

Letters include discussion of her family relationships and friendships, social engagements and going to theatres mainly in London, Mary and George Curzon, including Mary Curzon's illness, her work including writing for the Daily Mail and her plays, discussions about literary and theatrical people including Miss Nethersole [Olga Nethersole?], Marie Tempest, Mary Moore and others, her health, her family including her son's schooling and illness, religion, Catholicism and religious views including about the Pope, religious services, Brown's work.

5 folders

MS
2133A/1/1/8

Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1905

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, the lecture tour of America, her son and her family, the publishing of 'The Grand' magazine by Newnes, social engagements and going to theatres mainly in London, Mary and George Curzon, her work including her plays, her friendships with prominent society and theatre people, her views on the roles of men and women, religion, Catholicism, theology, friendships with other religious people and attending religious services, Brown's health.

4 folders

**MS
2133A/1/1/9** Folder of letters from Pearl Craigie to Father William F Brown
1906
Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, the lecture tour of America, her son and her family, social engagements and going to theatres, Mary and George Curzon including Mary Curzon's death, her work including a new novel, her friendships with prominent society and theatre people, her views on the roles of men and women, religion, Catholicism, theology, attending religious services, Brown's work and health.

2 folders

**MS
2133A/1/2** Correspondence from W F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1898-1906

**MS
2133A/1/2/1** Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1898
Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family and work and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements as well as Craigie's financial funding of work by Brown and the Catholic Church. Brown's home and work in the community including with The Catholic League, The School Board for London, possibly as Chairman, the Sick Clergy Fund and the building of a new church.

1 folder

**MS
2133A/1/2/2** Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1899
Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family and work and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Brown's work in the community including the building of a new church. Discussion of the role of women.

1 folder

**MS
2133A/1/2/3** Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1900
Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family and work and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements.

Discussion of Brown's work including the building of a church[?], his family and his social activities.

1 folder

MS
2133A/1/2/4

Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1901

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family and work and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Discussion of Brown's work and his social activities.

1 folder

MS
2133A/1/2/5

Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1902

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family, including her son, and her work, including a new play, and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Discussion of Brown's work and religion, including the building of a new church and his work for the London School Board[?], his family and his social activities. Includes discussion of Brown and Craigie's friendship. Includes an enclosed letter.

1 envelope

MS
2133A/1/2/6

Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1903

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family, including her son, and her work, including 'The Vineyard' and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Discussion of Brown's work, including the building of a new church, religion his family, his health and his social activities. Includes discussion of Brown and Craigie's friendship. Includes an enclosed newspaper cutting.

1 folder

MS
2133A/1/2/7

Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie
1904

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family, and her work, and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Discussion of Brown's work, including the building of a new church and a promotion, his health and his

social activities. Includes discussion of Brown and Craigie's friendship.

1 folder

MS
2133A/1/2/8

Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie 1905

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family, including her son, and her work, including the the American lecture tour, and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Discussion of Brown's work, including the building of a new church and trips to Scotland, his health and his social activities. Includes discussion of Brown and Craigie's friendship.

1 folder

MS
2133A/1/2/9

Folder of letters from Father William F Brown to Pearl Craigie 1906

Letters include discussion of Craigie's health, family, including her son, and her work, including the American lecture tour, and responding to Craigie's news and their social engagements. Discussion of Brown's work, his health, his family, and his social activities. Includes discussion of Brown and Craigie's friendship. Includes some political discussion and discussion of Mary Curzon's death.

1 folder

MS
2133A/1/3

Correspondence between Pearl Craigie and others

MS
2133A/1/3/1

Envelope of letters written to Pearl Craigie [1899-1906]

Includes letters from Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India[?], Peter I Bovenizer[?], Craigie's son John [Jack], Cuthbert Hedly[?], Father Seddon and another. Some letters are undated.

11 letters

- MS
2133A/1/4** Correspondence between W F Brown and others
- MS
2133A/1/4/1** Folder of letters written to Father William Brown [1899]-1908
Includes letters from 'Moodoo' [Craigie's son John] after Craigie's death, John Morgan Richards, Craigie's father, after Craigie's death, James Pells[?], Lady Talbot and others. Some letters are undated or have incomplete dates.
- 19 letters
- MS
2133A/1/5** Unidentified correspondence
Undated [1890s-1910s]
- MS
2133A/1/5/1** Unidentified correspondence
Undated[1890s-1910s]
Includes part of a letter from W Brown on headed paper 'North British Hotel, Fort William', part of a letter from R J Seddon[?] and part of a letter dated 18th January but without a sender or recipient.
- 2 items
- MS 2133A/2** Scrapbooks
1905-1906
Includes two scrapbooks of newscuttings, the first relating to Pearl Craigie's US tour 1905-1906 and the second relating to her death in 1906.
- 2 volumes
- MS
2133A/2/1** Scrapbook relating to Pearl Craigie's tour of the United States of America
1905-1908
Includes cuttings from mostly American newspapers on talks given and activities undertaken by Pearl Craigie during her

literary tour of the USA in 1905-1906 as the author John Oliver Hobbes. Includes a dedication, dated 1908, to John Morgan Richards Esq, father of Pearl Craigie, from Blanche Elizabeth Eaton (formerly Blanche Elizabeth Eliot) who travelled with the author to the USA for the tour.

1 volume

**MS
2133A/2/2**

Scrapbook relating to Pearl Craigie's death

1906

Includes cuttings from various regional and national British and Irish newspapers and magazines as well as from some international publications.

1 volume