

# A. A. (Alan Alexander) Milne:

## An Inventory of His Collection in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Milne, A. A. (Alan Alexander), 1882-1956
<b>Title:</b>	A. A. (Alan Alexander) Milne Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1886-1961, undated (bulk circa 1920-1952)
<b>Extent:</b>	6 document boxes, 1 oversize folder (2.31 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The A. A. Milne Collection consists of manuscript drafts and fragments for over 150 of Milne's works, as well as correspondence, legal documents, and genealogical records.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-02844
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research. Several notebooks containing drafts of <i>It's Too Late Now: The Autobiography of a Writer</i> (1939) have been restricted due to their fragile condition. Digital copies of these notebooks are available in the Ransom Center for patron access.

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Purchase, 1964 (R1364), and earlier acquisitions
<b>Processed by:</b>	Katy Hill, 2008
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Alan Alexander Milne was born on January 18, 1882, in London, England, to John Vine Milne, the headmaster of Henley House School, and Sarah Maria Heginbotham Milne. Known best for his children's stories, Milne was also a prolific essayist, playwright, and mystery writer.

As a child, Milne attended his father's school, where H. G. Wells was one of his instructors. Beginning at age eleven, Milne attended Westminster School and later entered Trinity College, Cambridge University, where he graduated with honors in 1903 with a B. A. in mathematics.

Milne began his writing career as an assistant editor and contributor to the humor magazine *Punch*. His early essays often dealt with humorous twists to everyday situations, such as a bumbling man attempting to use an exercise machine. In 1913, Milne married Dorothy de Sélincourt, known as Daphne, and in 1914, joined the British Army at the onset of World War I.

While in the army, Milne wrote plays for his fellow soldiers and following his discharge in 1918, he endeavored to become a professional playwright. Success did not take long and he gained both critical acclaim and financial security with his 1919 play *Mr. Pim Passes By*. The following year, Milne's only child, Christopher Robin Milne, was born.

In 1922, Milne wrote his first mystery novel, *The Red House Mystery*, in which he used his stated strategy for success: use everyday language, make the detective an amateur, include a "Dr. Watson" so that the reader can know what the protagonist is thinking, and minimize romantic interest. Of previous mystery novels, Milne said, "I had read most of those which had been written, admired their ingenuity, but didn't like their English.... I wondered if I could write a detective story about real people in real English. I thought it would be 'fun to try,' my only reason for writing anything."

Milne's next genre became his most memorable: children's literature. *When We Were Very Young*, a collection of poems for children, was published in 1924, and included for the first time one of Milne's most famous characters, Christopher Robin, named after his son. This was followed by a collection of poetry, *Now We Are Six* (1927), and two books about his son's stuffed toys, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928).

The Pooh books and his collections of children's poetry soon became Milne's most popular works, but Milne came to resent his success as a children's author, wondering in 1928 how he found success in writing "four children's books, containing altogether 70,000 words--the number of words in the average-length novel."

Milne's later works include an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* titled *Toad of Toad Hall* (1930), and essays on war and pacifism. In his book *Peace with Honour* (1934), Milne wrote that Europe's problems could be solved by politicians realizing the absurdity of war. But, with the outbreak of World War II, Milne renounced his previous position, publishing *War with Honour* (1940) and *War Aims Unlimited* (1941).

*Year In, Year Out* (1952), a collection of essays ranging in tone and topic from philosophical to whimsical, was Milne's final published work. In 1952 he suffered a stroke, leaving him partially paralyzed. He died on January 31, 1956, at his home in Sussex.

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## Sources:

"A. A. Milne." *Contemporary Authors Online*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed 7 July 2008).

"A. A. Milne." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 10. Detroit: Gale, 1982.

"A. A. Milne." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 160. Detroit: Gale, 1996.

"Christopher (Robin) Milne." *Contemporary Authors Online*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed 7 July 2008).

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## Scope and Contents

The A. A. Milne Collection consists of manuscript drafts and fragments for over 150 of Milne's works as well as correspondence, legal documents, and genealogical records. The collection is arranged into two series: I. Works, circa 1920-1946, undated (4 boxes); and II. Correspondence and Other Materials, 1886-1961, undated (1 box, 1 oversized folder). The collection was previously accessible through a card catalog but has been recataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.

Series I. Works makes up the majority of the collection and contains handwritten fragments, incomplete drafts, and complete drafts of numerous Milne plays, stories, and books, both published and unpublished. The materials are arranged alphabetically by title and have been listed individually in an Index of Works in this guide. Included are materials for *The House at Pooh Corner*, *The Red House Mystery*, and *Mr. Pim*. Several notebooks containing drafts of *It's Too Late Now: The Autobiography of a Writer* (1939) have been restricted due to their fragile condition. Digital copies of these notebooks are available in the Ransom Center for patron access. Three original drawings by *Winnie-the-Pooh* illustrator Ernest H. Shepard have been transferred to the Ransom Center Art Collection.

The Correspondence and Other Materials series contains correspondence arranged as incoming, outgoing, and third-party. Incoming correspondence contains only one letter. Outgoing correspondence is in alphabetical order by last name of recipient. The majority of the third-party correspondence is either to or from Milne's wife, Dorothy "Daphne" Milne, and is in alphabetical order by last name of sender. Also in the series are publishing contracts for Milne's works *Four Days Wonder* and *Two People* and a marketing agreement for characters from the *Winnie-the-Pooh* stories. A chart of Milne's family tree is also present in this series.

## Related Material

Additional A. A. Milne material is housed in the Ransom Center Personal Effects, Book, Art, and Vertical Files collections. Milne materials are also located in the following Ransom Center collections: Terence Armstrong, Rupert Croft-Cooke, St. John Ervine, Marie Lowndes, Compton McKenzie, Christopher Robin Milne, Christopher Morley, John Murry, PEN, Grant Richards, Ernest H. Shepard, Leonard Strong, Ann Thwaite, Henry Tomlinson, Sir Hugh Walpole, and Geoffrey Wells.

Other A. A. Milne manuscript material is located at Trinity College, Cambridge University.

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## Separated Material

Three original drawings by *Winnie-the-Pooh* illustrator Ernest H. Shepard have been transferred to the Ransom Center Art Collection.

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## Index Terms

### Subjects

Authors, English--20th century.

Children's Literature, English.

English drama--20th century.

English fiction--20th century.

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**Series I. Works, circa 1920-1946, undated**

Unidentified-A, 1929, undated	<b>Container 1.1</b>
<i>Ariadne, or Business First: A Comedy in Three Acts</i> (1925), undated	<b>Container 1.2</b>
B-Be, undated	<b>Container 1.3</b>
Bf-Bz, undated	<b>Container 1.4</b>
C, undated	<b>Container 1.5</b>
C. O. D., undated	<b>Container 1.6</b>
<i>Chloe Marr</i> (1946), undated	<b>Container 1.7-8</b>
D-F, undated	<b>Container 2.1</b>
G-H, undated	<b>Container 2.2</b>
<i>Gentleman Unknown</i> (1938), undated	<b>Container 2.3</b>
<i>The Great Broxopp (Four Chapters in His Life): A Comedy</i> (1921), undated	<b>Container 2.4</b>
H for Helena: A Midsummer Night's Folly in Three Acts, undated	<b>Container 2.5</b>
I-J, undated	<b>Container 2.6</b>
<i>It's Too Late Now: The Autobiography of a Writer</i> (1939), undated (*some materials restricted due to fragile condition; digital copies available for patron access)	<b>Container 2.7*</b>
K-Ma, 1929, undated	<b>Container 2.8</b>
<i>The Lucky One: A Play in Three Acts</i> (1922), undated	<b>Container 2.9</b>
Mi-Mz, undated	<b>Container 3.1</b>
<i>Miss Elizabeth Bennet</i> (1936), 1936	<b>Container 3.2</b>
<i>Mr. Pim</i> (1921), undated	<b>Container 3.3</b>
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P, undated	<b>Container 3.5</b>

Penny Royal: A Comedy in Three Acts, undated	<b>Container 3.6</b>
R, undated	<b>Container 3.7</b>
<i>The Red House Mystery</i> (1922), undated	<b>Container 3.8</b>
<i>The Romantic Age</i> (1920), undated	<b>Container 3.9</b>
S, undated	<b>Container 4.1</b>
<i>Success: A Play in Three Acts</i> (1923), undated	<b>Container 4.2</b>
T, undated	<b>Container 4.3</b>
<i>They Don't Mean Any Harm: A Play in Three Acts</i> (1932), undated	<b>Container 4.4</b>
<i>Toad of Toad Hall</i> (adaptation of <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> , 1930), undated	<b>Container 4.5</b>
<i>The Truth about Blayds</i> (1921), undated	<b>Container 4.6</b>
<i>Two People</i> (1931), undated	<b>Container 4.7</b>
U-Z, undated	<b>Container 4.8</b>

**Series II. Correspondence and Other Materials, 1886-1961, undated**

## Correspondence

## Incoming

The Weald Electricity Supply Company, 1938 **Container 5.1**

## Outgoing

Burke, Thomas, 1927 **Container 5.2**

Curtis Brown, Ltd., circa 1924-1925

Gomme, Bernard (?), 1919

Lister, Francis, 1929

Lucas, Edward Verrall, 1926-1949

Massingham, Henry William, 1919

Milne, Ken, circa 1916-1928

Milne, Sarah Maria "Mama," 1886-1890

Robertson, Eric S. (Eric Sutherland), undated

## Third-party

Curtis Brown, Ltd. to Dorothy "Daphne" Milne, 1955-1959 **Container 5.3**

Lane, Lupino to John Mcree, 1924

Milne, Dorothy "Daphne" to Harry Hunt Ransom, 1961

Legal agreements and genealogical document, 1930-1942, undated (\*oversize materials removed to oversize folder) **Container 5.4\***

Fragile materials removed from folder 2.7 - not to be paged without curatorial permission **Container 6**

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