

Hector Bolitho:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Bolitho, Hector, 1897-1974
Title:	Hector Bolitho Collection
Dates:	1851-1969 (bulk 1926-1969)
Extent:	3 boxes (1.26 linear feet)
Abstract:	The Hector Bolitho Collection consists primarily of typescript and handwritten manuscripts of unpublished works with the author's revisions as well as correspondence, all ranging in date from 1851 to 1969, with the bulk covering the period from 1926 to 1969.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-00439
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchases, 1961-1975 (R1251, R3995, R4921, R6747), Gift, 2018-12-007-G
Processed by:	Jamie Hawkins-Kirkham, 2010
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Hector Bolitho was born in Auckland, New Zealand, on May 28, 1897, to Henry and Ethelred Frances Bolitho. Bolitho's mother hoped that he would study medicine, but while attending Seddon Memorial College, a love of English literature was instilled in him. At the age of fifteen, Bolitho left school without permission from his parents to pursue a career in writing. He attained a job at the *New Zealand Herald* and in 1915 moved on to the *Auckland Star*.

During World War I, Bolitho became a corporal in the New Zealand army. After the war Bolitho went to live on a small island near Auckland which became the subject of his first book, *The Island of Kawau* (1919).

In 1923, Bolitho moved to London where he worked as a freelance journalist, writing for the *Spectator*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Financial Times*. While in England he wrote two novels, *Solemn Boy* (1927) and *Judith Silver* (1929), but in the following years began to focus on writing biographies.

In 1926, Bolitho was invited by the Dean of Windsor, Albert Victor Baillie, to live in Windsor Castle, where he would remain for eight years. While at Windsor Castle, Bolitho had access to the royal archives which provided material for many important works, including *Albert the Good* (1932) and *Albert, Prince Consort* (1964).

During World War II, Bolitho served as an intelligence officer in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve where he edited the *Royal Air Force Weekly* and later the *Royal Air Force Journal*. In 1942, he was appointed editor of the *Coastal Command Intelligence Review*. After the war, Bolitho met his long-time partner Derek Wilmot Douglas Peel, an army officer with whom he would live for the rest of his life. Bolitho and Peel collaborated on a book, *Without the City Wall* (1952), and after Bolitho's death, Peel continued negotiations with publisher A. H. Reed on behalf of Bolitho.

Hector Bolitho died on September 12, 1974, in Brighton, England.

Sources:

Thornton, "Michael. Bolitho, (Henry) Hector." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004,
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50314> (accessed 24 September 2010).

Scope and Contents

The Hector Bolitho Collection consists primarily of typescript and handwritten manuscripts of unpublished works with the author's revisions as well as correspondence, all ranging in date from 1851 to 1969, with the bulk covering the period from 1926 to 1969. The material is arranged in three series: I. Works, 1926-1969, II. Correspondence, 1930-1967, and III. Other Papers, 1851-1964. Part of this collection was previously accessible through a card catalog but has been recataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.

The Works Series consists of manuscripts of two published biographies, four unpublished or largely unpublished works, as well as research, notes, and correspondence regarding published biographies, all arranged alphabetically by title. Also included is a review of *Aspects of E. M. Forster* and autobiographical material in the form of a personal diary and Bolitho's manuscript, *My Restless Years* (1962). Most manuscripts contain handwritten revisions as well as paste-in clippings and letters. Subjects include Kaiser Wilhelm II, King Edward VIII, Peter Townsend, Prince Albert, Queen Victoria of Great Britain, Rudyard Kipling, and Somerset Maugham.

The Correspondence series is divided into outgoing and incoming letters and arranged alphabetically by recipient or sender. The bulk of the outgoing correspondence is made up of letters from Bolitho to his parents, Henry and Ethelred Frances Bolitho (73 letters), and to his long-time partner, Derek Peel (43 letters). Incoming correspondence consists of five letters: three from Walker Churton regarding the marriage of King George V and two from Carlos M. Mishler. All correspondent names, including those of people whose letters are present in the Works Series, are listed in the Index of Correspondents in this finding aid.

The Other Papers Series consists of a scrapbook compiled by Bolitho on Oliver Cromwell and King Charles I, as well as third-party correspondence from Victoria, Duchess of Kent to Lady Frances Baillie (17 letters).

Related Material

Additional manuscript material by Bolitho is located in the following collections at the Ransom Center: Terrence Ian Fytton Armstrong, Rupert Croft-Cooke, J. Frank Dobie, Golden Cockerel Press, Gerald Hamilton, Kenneth Hopkins, Francis Henry King, Philip Lindsay, PEN, Peter Owen Ltd., Dame Marie Tempest, Alec Waugh, Denton Welch, Geoffrey Harry Wells, and William A. Bradley Literary Agency. A scrapbook on *King Edward VIII* by Bolitho is located in the Vertical File Collection for Compton Mackenzie.

Series I. Works 1926-1969

<i>Albert, Prince Consort</i> (1964), handwritten manuscript with revisions, undated	Container 1.1-2
<i>Albert, Prince Consort</i> (1964), typescript, undated	Container 1.3-4
From My Diary, composite typed and carbon copy typescript, 1926-1927	Container 1.5
The Kaiser's Left Arm, handwritten manuscript with revisions, undated	Container 2.1
<i>King Edward VIII: His Life and Reign</i> (1937), typescript notes and paste-in letters regarding the work, undated	Container 2.2
<i>My Restless Years</i> (1962), composite handwritten, typed and carbon copy typescript with revisions, undated	Container 2.3-.5
The Other Somerset Maugham, handwritten manuscript with paste-in clippings and pictures, undated	Container 2.6
Peter Townsend, handwritten manuscript with paste-in letters and clippings, undated	Container 3.2
<i>The Reign of Queen Victoria</i> (1948), printed text with handwritten corrections and paste-in clippings, undated	Container 3.3
Review of <i>Aspects of E. M. Forster</i> , edited by Oliver Stallybrass, handwritten manuscript with revisions, 1969	Container 3.1
Rudyard Kipling as I Remember Him, handwritten manuscript with revisions and paste-in letters, clippings, and pictures, 1965	Container 3.4
Two Specials, typescript note, 27 April 1969	Container 3.1

Series II. Correspondence 1930-1967

Outgoing

To Bolitho, Henry and Ethelred Frances, 1930-1957, undated

Container
3.6

To Miss Munro, 27 March [1927]

Container 3.11

To Nelson, _____, 1932

Container 3.5

To Peel, Derek, 1956-1957

Container 3.7

To Runkel, Madame de, undated

Container 3.5

Incoming

From Mishler, Carlos M., 1967

Container 3.8

From Walker, Churton, 1959-1963

Series III. Other Papers, 1851-1964

Bolitho, Hector. Scrapbook on Oliver Cromwell and King Charles I, 1950-1964

Container
3.9

Victoria, Duchess of Kent. 17 letters to Lady Frances Baillie, 1851-1856

Container
3.10

Index of Correspondents

- Angus, R. H.--3.9 (1 to Bolitho)
- Baillie, Albert Victor, 1864---2.2 (3 to Bolitho); 3.4 (1 to Bolitho)
- Bambridge, Elsie, 1896?---3.4 (2 to Bolitho)
- Bolitho, Ethelred Frances--3.6 (73 letters from Bolitho to his father and mother)
- Bolitho, Henry, 1868-1945--3.6 (73 letters from Bolitho to his father and mother)
- Churton, Walker--3.8 (3 to Bolitho)
- Colville, Richard--3.2 (1 to Bolitho plus draft of a letter from Bolitho to Colville)
- Dickinson, Philip George Murgatroyd--3.9 (2 to Bolitho)
- Dinsdale, Dorothy V.--2.2 (2 to Bolitho)
- Freek, Ruth--3.7 (1 to Bolitho)
- _____, Gordon--3.7 (1 to Peel, Derek)
- Griffith, Arthur--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Hall, Edith M., 1937--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Hook, C.V.--3.9 (1 to Bolitho)
- Keevil, J. J. (John Joyce)--3.9 (2 to Bolitho)
- Lewis, Nesta--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Mishler, Carlos M.--3.8 (2 to Bolitho)
- Nelson, _____--3.5 (1 from Bolitho)
- Peel, Derek, 1924-1979--3.7 (43 letters from Bolitho, 2 letters to Bolitho from Peel)
- Pickthall, G.--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Runkel, _____, Madame de--3.5 (1 from Bolitho)
- Secorde, Reggie--3.7 (1 to Bolitho)
- Stuart, Margaret--3.9 (1 to Bolitho)
- Thomas, Godfrey--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Thomson, David--3.9 (1 to Bolitho, 1 from Bolitho to Thomson)
- Townsend, Peter, 1914-1995--3.2 (2 to Bolitho)
- Van Thal, Herbert, 1904-1983--3.7 (1 from Bolitho)
- Vernon, Emily--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 1819-1901--3.3 (facsimile of letter to unidentified recipient, 22 June 188?)
- Victoria Mary Louisa, Duchess of Kent, 1786-1861--3.10 (17 letters to Lady Frances Baillie)
- Watkin, M. N.--3.3 (1 to Bolitho)
- Wigram, _____--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)
- Unidentified--2.2 (1 to Bolitho)