
Guide to the Bliss Carman Papers , 1889-1927

Collection number: M0081

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Bliss Carman Papers ,

Date (inclusive): 1889-1927

Collection number: Special Collections M0081

Creator: Carman, Bliss, 1861-1929.

Extent: 2 linear ft.

Repository: Stanford University. Libraries. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives.

Language: English

Access Restrictions

None.

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Provenance

Purchased from various sources, 1932-1945.

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Scope and Content

Personal correspondence mainly with Washington Irving Way and Richard Hovey and his wife Henrietta Hovey. A few comments on world affairs but primarily concerned with his personal life and travels. References to Hovey about their joint work Vagabondia. ca. 250 letters and

postcards.

Typescript of a book ed. by Carman. Oxford Book of American Verse. ca. 60 poems typescript and holograph, some signed by the author.

Typescript articles--all about health and personal appearance

Broadsheets of ca. 30 poems

Misc. printed material including mainly printed articles by him and some biographical articles about him.ca.10 pieces

ca. 15 photographs of buildings and landscapes, place unknown

ca. 150 clippings (some duplicates) mostly about his life and travels and various awards. Also published poems and articles by Carman.

Notes for a Carman bibliography by Nathan Van Pattan (3 drafts)

Biographical Note

Carman, (William) Bliss 1861-1929

Carman was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, on April 15, 1861. He was the son of William Carman and Sophia Bliss. He graduated from the University of New Brunswick in 1881 with honors in Latin and Greek. He received his masters from the University of New Brunswick. He read law and studied engineering. Later he taught school from 1884-1886. Though he traveled some, he lived in New Canaan, Conn., and he always retained his Canadian citizenship.

Carman was Canada's major poet, generally referred to as the Poet Laureate of Canada. He was awarded the Lorne Pierce Medal, which is the highest literary distinction a Canadian can win. Though he is primarily known for his poetry, he served as assistant editor of the New York Independent and editor of Chap Book in Boston. Also, he worked on The Cosmopolitan Magazine, Current Literature, and The Atlantic Monthly.

Eulogy

BLISS CARMAN: 1861-1929

True poets, like true marriages, are made in heaven, and their coming here confounds statistical averages. They cannot be foretold, nor their influence measured. They are unaccountable and cannot account for them selves. Not at first are they aware that they are alien to the rest of us; or do they feel that their poetry makes us known to our true selves, a kinship that the world had caused us to forget? We are less ignoble than we had thought, and lofty oracles of the Prime, which we had disbelieved, become credible once more.

We discover poets in secret moments, and they so outride the orbit of daily experience that we are prone to doubt their authenticity. Is not this strange new kindling of beauty in our souls due to some happy mood or insight of our own? But the poem, as we ponder it, presently convicts us of error: we could not, of ourselves, have begotten such thoughts, such emotions. There is a fresh divinity manifesting itself on the page, as of dewy roses miraculously blooming and fragrant in the desert. It is beyond forecasting, unprecedented, and yet not new in the common sense; it is primeval, like each morning's sunrise, which never till now was, nor can be again. And as each violin of the great masters has its special tone and quality, so is each true poet, in spite of his appeal to the whole human spirit of man, himself and unlike any other, with an eye and a voice to reveal and interpret every occasion of life.

He is a prophet, too, and an historian and biographer, and shows how these functions should be performed; he gives you a key to every door, a master key, the simple wards of which inexplicably fit unexpected locks. Plainly he is a magician, whose magic operates even without his personal privity. We learn through him that all things are wonderful, yet transparent as the eyes of a child. The great mysteries are not puzzles, but veils that clarify what they had seemed to conceal; as it were, the chiaroscuro of creation. Existence would be an intolerable glare without their gracious mitigation.

Bliss Carman was of a skyey nature, and like the sky ever brooding lovingly above the earth. He had seasons of sadness-earth-engendered clouds-but the sun and the untroubled blue were always beyond, and the clouds themselves were engendered of light and love. A strong and tranquil nature, but sensitive to the lightest touch of emotion, though not to be lightly disturbed; for he had acquired a penetrating and genial philosophy, not of dogmas, but of thoughtful insight; and so prone was he to be amused by the perversity and paradox of things, that had he not been a poet he might have been one of the great humorists. You often detect a smile beneath the composure of the poem, but this was oftener manifest in personal intercourse. Under strong pressure, a low privately owned chuckle was sometimes audible, or rather visible in the vibration of his wide shoulders.

His figure, lightly built and perfectly symmetrical, rose to a height of fully six feet three inches, though he had no use for high-heeled shoes. His movements and postures were careless, but graceful; his head, superbly proportioned, sat on a neck round and firm as a pillar. He was of blond complexion, with dense and abundant hair, with a wave through it, and he often allowed it to reach a length disapproved by hairdressers, but Carman was averse to spending time and thought on personal adornment; after his cold bath at sunrise he became inattentive to attire and fashion, though unconscious of eccentricities until they reached a stage where friends felt impelled to interfere. But his bodily movements were finely co-ordinated and controlled; his lofty stature, supple as a faun's, was hardly noticeable until you measured it against your own. His face was classically handsome; a broad forehead with level brows and gray eyes, kindly, but with an imperial sweep

of the lids; a generous mouth with lips of the Apollo curve, a powerful nose, an aspect of kindness and dignity. I have never seen a face molded on lines of greater masculine beauty, expressing authority and human modesty combined. He had no more egotism than a tree or a mountain, making no demands upon a companion, but royal in gifts.

This man, always young, always mature, never old, was born to the purest crown of poetry. Our Lady of Snows (New Brunswick) was his mother, but he came southward in his youth, though never losing touch with the North, where he was loved and honored, and became in due time their poet laureate. He was always poor as Elijah, and the ravens must often have been his familiars; he was always diligent in his calling, but never allowed it to call him away from the beauty and nature that were the source of his inspiration. He wrote much, though not diffusely, nor in any line heedless of the Muse. In cities he was a passing presence; his life and activity were in the country, and anthologists dubbed him a nature-poet. But nature, as he conceived it, is a broad term. No theme was alien to him: forest and sea, pasture and mountain, the miles of wandering road, the wayside scenes, the wayside inns and gossips, with the jug of brown cider and the hearty fare. Yet from these immediate contacts he could turn, in another mood, and write a wondrous volume of a hundred lyrics of Sappho—those long-lost lyrics of which poets dream; but alone of them all, Carman, mingling love and beauty with his longing, ventured to listen for the immortal music of her lips, and to write down what he seemed to hear.

And did Sappho, across the abyss of forty centuries, respond to his appeal, and admit him to the passionate intimacy of her chamber? I think the temperature of untrodden space has chilled the verses somewhat, and that something of the mysterious magic has been lost on the way. But it is a beautiful, gentle, and reverent effort. Sappho, indeed, esteemed inimitable by contemporaries, has become truly so ere this. Were her book to be now retrieved, in truth, from the unexplored libraries of remote antiquity I should hesitate to read it lest the renown of her spirit should be found to surpass the actuality. Nothing mortal could be so supreme as what we have come to believe it was; we may wisely be content to forego the reality for the ideal. And such, I am sure, would be Carman's own opinion. Neither in this nor in his other poetry could he satisfy himself; from whatever height he reached, higher heights would beckon him.

In many other directions did he pursue his art, joyfully but humbly, without arrogance, but with self-surrender. What the Muse would give him, he took, but felt that his transcript was fallible. His ditties often have the charm of Shakespeare's songs; his serious poems are fearless and harmonious. But there is the feeling in the reader's mind, after all is done, that his great poem was never written. The verses are like strains of the acolian harp or like the rune and play of sea waves on the shore, always musical, but not rising to such splendid culminations as their beauty seems to demand. He prepares us for more than he bestows. It is left to us to surmise that no culmination could fulfill the promise of such preludes.

I look up from reading him with the thought that he has given me the true record of a soul on its journey through the world. He is as catholic as Walt Whitman in his acceptance of any theme life offers, but so controlled and modest otherwise, so remote from blatancy and outcries, that no sober comparison between them can be made. Whitman, perhaps, is the favorite of the democracy—and democracy has its divine aspects—but Carman's genius has melted experience in his alembic and recreated it, stamped with the image of his own mind and heart. He is complete master of the instruments and technique of his art, and does not fear to speak as simply as a child; he uses meter for his purpose and is not straitened by it; or again he discloses its value in conveying what words cannot tell. He liberates us from tyranny of rule and precedent but not to wander in the wilderness. From first to last his words are truth, unafraid, but not dogmatic. Through the flow of his verses we see in glimpses the rocky constancy of the bed of the stream, but he does not obtrude it. He is beauty's observer and worshiper but passes unseeing by the altars of goddesses whose fair outside veils foulness within.

Nor would he wholly restrict himself to the poetic form. He published several volumes of essays on the conduct and vision of life, which not only are valuable in thought, but show him to possess control of the prose form in both elegance and simplicity. They announce no startling departures from modern thought, but are often illuminated with a naïve clear-sightedness that reveals rarity and distinction in things we had regarded as of everyday. Yet even in his felicities, we feel that he is wasting time. He cannot compete with his own poetry, which opens to him fairylands inaccessible to the sober march of prose. I am glad he did not end on this bypath; he returned presently to the highway, always high where he trod it.

We met forty years ago and were friends at once, though often parted for long intervals. Though an outdoor man, and fond of long walks, he was not robust, but his death at 68 was a surprise. But I can be glad that he is gone; he will still be my companion, and mortal conditions for him were not always easy. To the last he was a devoted lover of his country, and would spend some months of the year in revisiting it, meeting with a personal affection from the people that deeply touched him. In all the great concerns of his career he was fortunate and happy. Last summer, in the Catskills, after we had met for an hour and said goodbye. I saw him striding away in his frontier garb, with his long elastic swing. We had been looking for him here in California this season, but it is not here that our next meeting will be. He is off among the Delectable Mountains, meditating, perhaps, the supreme poem that he could not achieve on earth.

Publication Year Book Title

(1886)	October
(1886)	November
1887	The Canadian Birthday Book.
1889	Songs of the Great Dominion.
1891	Canadian Poems and Lays.
(1891)	Library of the World's Best Literature.

1891	Younger American Poets.
1892	Ave.
1893	Later Canadian Poems.
1895	Silas Marner.
1895	A Victorian Anthology.
1896	Ninety-Six.
1896	A Treasury of Helpful Verse.
1899	Northland Lyrics.
1904	The World's Best Poetry.
(1905)	A Christmas Portfolio.
1906	The Summer Cloud.
1907	The Holy Grail.
(1910)	A Century of Sonnets.
1911	The Champlain Tercentenary.
1911	Travelers Five.
1912	The Lyric Year.
(1913)	Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1913.
(1914)	Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1914.
(1915)	For the Benefit of the Sufferers in Tangier.
(1915)	Riley Day Programs.
(1917)	Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1917.
1918	The Masque of Poets.
(1919)	Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1919.
(1919)	Canadian Singers and their Songs.
1919	The Great War in Prose and Verse.
1919	A Treasury of War Poetry.
1923	Ecstasy.
1923	Winnipeg Male Voice Choir. (Program)
Publication YearBook Title	
1890	Lester the Loyalist (Douglas Sladen)
1905	The Time Has Come, the Walrus Said, To Talk of Many Things.
(1912)	Bliss Carman, A Study in Canadian Poetry. (H. D. C. Lee)
(1913)	To Bliss Carman.
1915	Check List of First Editions (F.F.Sherman)
(1923)	Bliss Carman. (Odell Shepard)
1925	The Poetry of Bliss Carman. (R.H. Hathaway)
1929	Bliss Carman: 1861-1929 (Julian Hawthorne)
Publication YearBook Title	
(1888)	Death in April.
(1889)	Low Tide on Grand Pré.
1893	Low Tide on Grand Pré.
1894	Low Tide on Grand Pré.
1894	Saint Kavin.
1894	Songs from Vagabondia.
1895	At Michaelmas.
1895	Behind the Arras.
1895	A Seamark.
1896	More Songs from Vagabondia.
1897	Ballads of Lost Haven.
1897	The Girl in the Poster.
1898	By the Aurelian Wall.
1898	The Green Book of the Bards.
1899	Behind the Arras.
1899	The Vengeance of Noel Brassard.
1899	A Winter Holiday.
1901	Christmas Eve at S. Kavin's.

1901	Last Songs from Vagabondia.
1902	Ballads and Lyrics.
1902	A Coronation Ode.
1902	From the Book of Myths.
1902	Ode on the Coronation of King Edward.
1902	Sappho: One hundred lyrics.
1903	From the Book of Myths.
1903	From the Green Book of the Bards.
1903	A Vision of Sappho.
1903	The Word at St. Kavin's.
1904	From the Book of Myths.
1904	Poems.
1904	Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics.
1904	Songs from a Northern Garden.
1904	Songs of the Sea Children.
1905	From the Book of Valentines.
1905	Low Tide on Grand Pré.
1905	Poems.
1905	A Vision of Sappho.
1906	Pipes of Pan.
1906	The Princess of the Tower.
1906	Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics.
1907	The Gate of Peace.
1909	The Gate of Peace.
1909	Lyrics from Sappho.
1909	The Rough Rider
1911	A Painter's Holiday.
1911	A Painter's Holiday.
1912	Echoes from Vagabondia.
1913	Daughters of Dawn.
1914	Earth Deities.
1916	April Airs.
1916	Four Sonnets.
1918	The Man of the Marne.
1921	Later Poems.
(1923)	Ballads and Lyrics.
1925	Far Horizons.

Publication YearBook Title

1904	The Friendship of Art.
1904	The Kinship of Nature.
1905	The Poetry of Life.
1908	The Making of Personality.
1911	Address to the Graduating Class.
(1911)	Apostle of Personal Harmonizing.
(1918)	James Whitcomb Riley.
(1920)	An Open Letter.
1926	Talks on Poetry and Life.

Publication DateBook Title

(1887)	A Woman's Exile.
1889	Gwendolen (and) Marjorie.
1889	The Kelpie Riders.
1889	Marian Drurie.
(1890)	The End of the Trail.
(1890)	Pulvis et Umbra.
1890	A Windflower.
1891	The Last Watch.

1891	A Pagan's Prayer.
1891	A Sailor's Wedding.
1891	The Trail of the Bugles.
1891	The Yule Guest.
1892	An April Alibi.
1892	The Grave Tree.
1892	In the Heart of the Hills.
1892	Marjory Darrow.
1892	The Master of the Isles.
1892	Olaf Hjordward.
1892	The White Gull.
1893	Morning.
1898	A Winter Holiday.
1901	Daisies (and) Marigolds.
1901	The Sceptics.
1901	The Spell.
1901	A Vagabond Song.
1908	The Path to Sankoty.
1910	The Madonna.
1911	Messiah.
1913	Christmas Eve.
1913	To Those Who Wear Shoes.
1916	The Yule Tree.
1920	A Valentine.
1922	Vestigia.
1924	All in All (N.B.)
1924	In Excelsis.

Volume 1. (vol.) **Correspondence - Washington Irving Way etc. (Feb. 23, 1905-Apr. 11, 1918)**

Scope and Content Note

regular personal correspondence ca. 100 letters all with covers, a few with clippings and programs enclosed, and ca. 30 postcards. Also enclosed letters: to Carman from Lyman P. Powell (a typed copy) Oct. 24, 1911; to Carman from Frank Arthur French, May 26, 1919.

One Carman letter to Irving Way, July 24, 1926

One note following that - no date.

Volume 2. (vol.) **Correspondence - Hovey and Braithwaite**

1. 1889-1898 personal correspondence and concerning Hovey's writings. Later letters about their joint work Vagabondia

Physical Description: ca. 50 letters

2. 1908-1915 Carman to Mrs. Richard Hovey

3. 1908-1915 Henrietta Hovey to Carmen? to Miss B. [?]

4. 1894, May 4 Dickon [Richard Hovey] to Carman

Physical Description: (copy)

5. 1894, Jun. 13 Dickon [Richard Hovey] to Carman

Physical Description: (copy)

6. 1895, Jan. 13, Dickon [Richard Hovey] to Carman

Physical Description: (copy)

7. 1912, Jun. 1 H.H. [Henrietta Hovey] to Carman
8. 1895, Nov. ?Richard [Hovey] to Carman
9. 1914, Dec. 26 Carman to Braithwaite
10. signed poem The Wooing of the Wind
11. To a Young Lady on Her Birthday holograph Jun. 16, 1910

Box 3, Folder 1 **Correspondence**

1. clippings

Note

1894, Feb. 3 A.L.S. Carman to Richard [Hovey]

2. 1920, Jun. 19 Mary Perry King to Irving Way
3. [1920, Feb. 19] Mary Perry King to Irving Way
4. 1917, Dec. 24 Mary Perry King to Irving Way

Physical Description: (cover)

5. 1923, Feb. 9 Mary Perry King to Irving Way

Physical Description: (postcard)

6. 1920, Jan. 30 Mary Perry King to Irving Way

Physical Description: (with program)

7. 1923, Nov. 2. Mary Perry King to Irving Way

Physical Description: (cover)

8. 1904-1926 Carman to Irving Way

Physical Description: ca. 50. most with covers and some enclosures- postcards, programs etc.

9. Clippings cards

Physical Description: (2),

10. Carman to Irving Way undated note

Box 3, Folder 2 **Correspondence**

1. 1906-1908 Carman to Mrs. Richard Hovey,

Physical Description: seven letters with covers

2. 1912-1917 Carman to Mrs. Richard Hovey,

Physical Description: seven letters (four with covers)

3. 1893, Dec. 9 Carman to Richard Hovey

4. ?Carman to Mrs. Richard Hovey a note

Box 3, Folder 3 **Correspondence - Misc.**

1. 1898, Jan. 21 Carman to [F. H.] Day with cover
2. 1898, Jan 26 Carman to [F. H.] Day with cover
3. 1901, May 1 Carman to W. Poillar, Esq.
4. 1901, May 22 Carman to [J.Ray] Peck.
5. 1904, Mar. 25 Carman to Miss Rittenhouse with cover

- 5a. 1907, Dec. 3 Carman to unknown
- 6. 1913, Oct. 21 Carman to [?] Yard
- 7. 1913, Dec. 2 Carman to [?] Yard
- 8. 1914, Feb. 7 Carman to [?] Yard
- 9. 1914, Mar. 1 Carman to [?] Yard

Poems and other works

- Box 3, Folder 4 **Youth in the Air poem. Holograph manuscript signed by the author and dated Jul. 25, 1927. Final draft with original envelop addressed to Mitchell Kennerley (bound)**
- Box 3, Folder 5 **A Christmas Reverie typescript signed and corrected by the author (bound)**
- Box 3, Folder 6 **The Mysteriarchs poem. Holograph manuscript signed by the author (Bound)**
- Box 3, Folder 7 **Oxford Book of American Verse typescript ed. by Bliss Carman 1927**
- Box 3, Folder 8 **To Michael holograph poem 1908**
- Box 3, Folder 9 **The Truce of the Manitou typescript, corrected by Carman**
- Box 3, Folder 10 **To a Chickadee 1905**
Physical Description: holograph

- Box 3, Folder 11 **A Toast to Tusitala Nov. 1900**
Physical Description: holograph

- Box 3, Folder 12 **Longfellow signed 1905**
- Box 3, Folder 13 **Some Uses of Personal Harmonizing to an Overworked Homemaker**
Physical Description: typescript of an essay

- Box 3, Folder 14 **Daughters of Dawn by Carman and Mary Perry King**
Physical Description: typescript

- Box 3, Folder 15 **assorted poems written Feb. 1919**
Physical Description: typescript

- Box 3, Folder 16 **poems from The Reader 1902-1907**
Physical Description: typescript

- Box 3, Folder 17 **poems, misc.**
Physical Description: unsigned typescripts

- Box 3, Folder 18 **poems, mics. 1 added July 6, 1970**
Physical Description: unsigned typescripts

- Box 3, Folder 19 **Some Essentials of Good Appearance Oct., 1912**
Physical Description: three articles typescript

- Box 4, Folder 20 **1. two lists holograph (poets and works)**
2. Poetry is written to be read beginning of an unsigned holograph manuscript
3. Hill below rain... beginning of holograph poem
4. The Spitiir of the Reed holograph poem signed Jan. 1902
5. For Mrs. Boice's 75th Birthday holograph poem in pencil. London 1894
6. Beyond the Gamut typescript poem Sept. 1894
7. autographed printed Christmas poem
8. A Thanksgiving poem by Carman printed from Collier's

Box 4, Folder 21 **poems and articles, typescript**

Physical Description: ca. 10

Box 4, Folder 22 **Broadsheets, printed of poems**

Physical Description: ca 30

Box 4, Folder 23 **Photographs: buildings and landscapes- place unknown**

Box 4, Folder 24 **Miscellaneous printed material**

1. **The Man of the Marne by B.C and M.P.K. [Bliss Carman and Mary Perry King]**
2. **An Apostle of Personal Harmonizing by Carmanan essay**
3. **An Apostle of Personal Harm onizing - printed in Good Housekeeping May 1911**
4. **Personal Harmonizing, As A Truine Basis of General Education essays by Mary Perry King with note about Carman's poetry**
5. **Canadian Poets and Poems--Border Chapter I.O.D.E. Windsor, Ont. A small collection of Canadian poems-Carman had two Vestigia and Trees**
6. **The Guide to Nature magazine July 1915article about Carman with photograph**
7. **photographed copy of article Bliss Carman 1861-1929**
8. **Article and characature of Carman from The Bookman Apr. 1904**
9. **The Carman apple by MacArthur poem [about Carman?]**

Physical Description: typed copy

Box 4, Folder 25 **Clippings**

Box 4, Folder 26 **Clippings**

Note

Addition of 23 clippings, July 6, 1970

Box 4, Folder 23 **Clippings July 6 1980**

Box 4, Folder 27-29 **Nathan van Pattan--Notes for a Bibliography of Bliss Carman;**

Physical Description: 3 typescript drafts, one bound.