



**UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK**

**OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH**

**THE  
EDWARD P. MCGRATH  
PAPERS**

**P8/**

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## Introduction

Phyliss R. McGrath, widow of Edward P. McGrath, donated the McGrath papers to the University of Limerick in July 2001. Edward McGrath, a professor of English Literature in New York University, had a major research interest in James Joyce.

The collection is based on a single theme, namely, the publishing background to James Joyce's *Dubliners*. The book did, indeed, have a very strange history. Its journey began in 1904, when Joyce submitted a collection of short stories to the publisher, Grant Richards. It was not until February 1906 that Richards accepted them. Unfortunately, Richards had problems with his printer who refused to set up the print for the story Two Gallants, as he objected to certain passages therein. Richards and Joyce had many debates and arguments about the deletion and modification of this and other passages in the book. Finally in 1907, Richards backed away from publishing the work.

In 1909, George Roberts of the Dublin firm, Maunsel & Co., accepted *Dubliners* and signed a publication contract in August of that year. However, Roberts had second thoughts about its publication soon after and the entire first print run of the book was burned before it was launched. *Dubliners* was finally published in 1914 by the original publisher, Grant Richards, a full 10 years after it was written.

McGrath seems to have had a great interest in discovering what influenced two successive publishers to reject the manuscript. Section A of the list contains descriptions of the letters sent to him by various Joycean scholars and biographers, a Jesuit priest and various curators of rare book libraries holding Joyce material. The letters are in the form of replies to requests for information surrounding the rejection of the manuscript by Richards in the first instance and secondly, Roberts. Section B of the list contains McGrath's collection of photostatic copies of Joyce's letters to Richards. The originals of these letters are held in the New York Public Library.

Other items in the collection include an original Seán O'Casey letter to McGrath in which he enclosed a large signed b/w photograph of himself (P8/4). There are also newspaper clippings which comprise of an obituary of Oliver St. John Gogarty (P8/20) and a review of a book about Joyce (P8/21).

Lisa Collins

July 2001

*The Edward P. McGrath Papers*A: LETTERS TO EDWARD P. McGRATH (1957-1958: 1963)

- 1            24 April 1957            From Martin Secker, director of The Richards Press Ltd., 5 Royal Opera Arcade, Pall Mall, London. Informs McGrath that he cannot be of any help as Mr. Grant Richards (founder of Richards Press) and others associated with the business at the time of the publication of Joyce's *Dubliners* were now dead. Also notes that the reason why publication was delayed was because 'publisher's were too blind to recognize genius when they saw it' and that any suggestion of outside influences was 'purely moonshine'. Included with this letter by McGrath is a brief history of Richards Pres Ltd. and a newspaper cutting advertising a Sotheby's auction at which *inter alia* the page proofs of Joyce's *Dubliners* were to be sold.
- 3 items
- 2            9 May 1957            From Oliver St. John Gogarty, Irish-American writer and surgeon, 45 East 61<sup>st</sup> Street, New York. Informs McGrath he could find his writing s about Joyce in *Mourning became Mrs. Spendlove*. Notes that in America he is ineligible to discuss Joyce because he happened to know him
- 1p
- 3            7 July 1957            From Vivien Mercier, 42-40 Bowne Street, Flushing 55, New York. In which he discusses Mrs. George Roberts who allegedly owned a copy of *Lonehy Antagonists* by Maurice Joy, one of the second series of Tower Press Booklets, suppressed in 1998. Also states that she was not responsible for the printer's destruction of the *Dubliners* sheets which her husband had agreed to sell to Joyce.
- 1p

- 4            15 August 1957            From Seán O'Casey, Irish writer, Flat 3, 40 Trumlands Road, St. Marychurch, Torquay, Devon. In which he encloses a large signed b/w photograph of himself instead of a signed program, which McGrath requested. Asks McGrath that when remembering Irish Literature, not to forget American writers such as Emerson whose work O'Casey admires. Also states that he's not 'bothered' about being an exile and that he's 'lost in the crowd, for 50,000 [Irish people], or so, leave Éireann every year'.
- 3 items
- 5            10 February 1958            From Marvin Magalaner, writer and Joyce biographer, Flushing, New York. Postcard in which he discusses possible reasons why George Roberts of Maunsel & Co.Ltd, publishers, 'got cold feet' when it came to publishing Joyce's *Dubliners*. States that some people suspect Roberts' wife 'engineered the dumping'. Also notes that previously Grant Richards, publisher, had refused to publish as he was 'afraid to stick his neck out' after the (Oscar) Wilde 'fiasco'. Suggests to McGrath to try Richard Ellman, a biographer of Joyce.
- 1 item
- 6            10 February 1958            From Stephen A. McCarthy, director of Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York. Informs McGrath that their collection of Joyce material is in the process of sorting arranging and cataloguing and therefore unavailable to users. Also notes that Cornell does not own the literary copyright to the material.
- 1p
- 7            11 February 1958            From Marjorie G. Wynne, Librarian, Rare Book Room, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut. Informs McGrath that he can view the Joyce Collection in the Library without special appointment. Also notes that Joyce material previously in the ownership of John Slocum is now the property of Yale University Library.
- 1p

- 8            19 February 1958        From Hugh Kenner, writer, critic and author of *inter alia* "Dublin's Joyce", 512 Hunter Street West, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. In reply to a question posed by McGrath, Kenner suggests that Joyce's talent was to some extent recognised or *Dubliners* would not have been accepted by the publishers in the first instance. States that he suspects that Joyce had 'powerful ecclesiastical enemies in Dublin' and that this may have had some bearing on why there was a delay in the publication of *Dubliners*.  
1p
- 9            23 March 1958            From Feargal McGrath S.J., 35 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin. Replying on behalf of Fr. M. A. O'Grady S. J., he informs Edward McGrath that it would be important to spend a few weeks in Dublin in order to interview people who knew Joyce. States that 'the idea that there was a concerted move on the part of the Order (Jesuit) to get the book (*Dubliners*) suppressed is completely without foundation'. In reply to a question concerning the opinion of Irish Jesuits of Joyce, he notes that 'some Jesuits think Joyce of great significance, in view of his undoubted influence on modern writing. Others think him greatly over-rated, and believe that the vogue for him will pass.'  
4pp
- 10           19 September 1958       From George Harris Healy, curator, Department of Rare Books, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York. Informs McGrath that the Joyce Collection is catalogued, and though not available to the public, can be consulted by persons outside the university who are scholars or Joyce specialists.  
1p
- 11           20 March 1963            From Pádraig Colum (1881-1972), poet and writer, 11 Edenvale Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6. In which he praises McGrath's Lament for Kincora, -an article about Joyce. States that it is well written, knowledgeable about Irish history, and keen in the understanding of Joyce's attitude to nationalism. Notes, however, that he should have 'liked you to have noted Joyce's virtuosity in the interpolations by which he giganticises the CYCLOPS episode'.  
1p

**B: COPIES OF LETTERS BY JAMES JOYCE****I To Grant Richards, publisher (1904: 1906: 1913)**

- 12            26 September 1904    At 7 St. Peter's Terrace, Cabra, Dublin, in which he understands that Richards is considering the publication of his book of verse: *Chamber Music*. States that he needs a decision on the matter soon as another publishing house is interested in bringing the book out and as well as that he is leaving Ireland for Holland in a fortnight. Photostatic copy of original held in New York Public Library.
- 2pp
- 13            26 April 1906            Via Giovanni Boccaccio, Trieste, Austria, in which he states that he cannot accede to Richards's request that he suppress his story Two Gallants or modify it in such a way that it will pass a censorship board. Mentions the short stories Counterparts, Grace, and A Little Cloud and how he does not intend to change anything about them. Notes that he would regret if his relations with Richards were to end but that 'the service which you ask me to do for your printer's conscience is not in my power'. Photostatic copy of original held in New York Public Library.
- 2pp
- 14            23 June 1906            Via Giovanni Boccaccio, Trieste, Austria, in which he agrees to modify certain words and passages in Counterparts and other stories in order that the story Two Gallants may be included. Suggest to Richards that he find another printer 'who was dumb from his birth, or, if none such can be found, a person who will not "argue the point"'. Concludes by saying that he has sent Richards a copy of a Dublin paper which will illustrate that 'the Irish are the most spiritual race on the face of the earth' and hope that this will reconcile him to *Dubliners*. States that he seriously believes that Richards 'will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass'. Photostatic copy of original held in New York Public Library.
- 3pp

- 15            10 July 1906            Via Giovanni Boccaccio, Trieste, Austria, in which he outlines the various concessions he has made as to the alteration of some stories in *Dubliners*. States that he would rather omit five stories from the book than omit the story Two Gallants which is 'the most important story in the book'. Also states that he regrets not being able to meet Richards in person and that if it were possible he 'could much more easily defeat whatever influences you in holding your present position'. Concludes by noting that in composing his chapter of moral history, he has 'taken the first step towards the moral liberation of my country.' Photostatic copy of original held in New York Public Library.
- 4pp
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- 16            13 October 1906        Via Frattina, Rome, Italy, in which he requests that Richards send back the MSS of his verses, the publication of which Richards had indicated was indefinitely postponed, in order that he might send it to Arthur Squires, who has agreed to publish it. Also outlines his disappointment at Richards refusal to publish and concludes letter by stating that he is not in 'a fit state of mind' to finish his novel (*Ulysses*) because of the disappointment he has endured in waiting for the publication of *Dubliners*. Photostatic copy of original held in New York Public Library.
- 3pp
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- 17            13 October 1913        Via Donato Bramante, Trieste, Austria, in which outlines the publishing history of *Dubliners*. Mentions a letter which he had sent to the press in August 1911 concerning the book (copy included). Suggests that in view of the strange publishing history of the book, and the fact that 'Dublin is the centre of general interest', the time is opportune for his 'luckless book to appear'. States that he is willing to contribute to the expenses of publication if Richards is prepared to publish. Photostatic copy of original held in New York Public Library.
- 4pp

**II To Others (1931)**

- 18 [undated] To an unknown recipient requesting that she type his material for him. Request in form of three verses beginning 'Dear, I am asking a favour...'  
1p
- 19 31 January 1931 In Paris, France. Addressed to 'Stephen, in which he mentions his exhaustion due to his inability to sleep properly for the previous three months.'  
1p

**C: NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS (1957-1958)**

- 20 23 September 1957 Obituary of Oliver St. John Gogarty that appeared in the New York Times.  
1 item
- 21 1958 Review of the book *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years* by Stanislaus Joyce, brother of James Joyce by Kevin Sullivan.  
1 item

