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Gustavus Watts Cunningham. Letters, 1911-1944. Calendar

Professor of Philosophy, Middlebury College, 1908-1917, and the University of Texas, 1917-1927; chairman of the Sage School of Philosophy and Susan Linn Sage Professor of Philosophy at Cornell, 1927-1949. (Cornell University Ph.D., 1908)

Summary: Incoming correspondence from fellow philosophers, including forty-seven letters from Richard Burdon, Viscount Haldane (1856-1928), in which he discusses the philosophical systems of Hesel and Kant, comments on Cunningham's studies of Hesel and Henri Bersson, and on the writings of Bersson; Bernard Bosanquet, Francis Herbert Bradley, John Dewey, Albert Einstein, Alfred North Whitehead, and others, and refers to World War I, in particular the condition of the French army, the situation in Russia in 1917, and the presence of American troops in Europe, to his wartime posts in the British government, and to his meeting (1919) with Woodrow Wilson; five letters from Herbert Wildon Carr, mainly concerning the views and writings of Hesel, Bersson, and Benedetto Croce; one or two letters each from Henry Rutsers Marshall, Stewart A. McDowell, Andrew Seth Prinly-Pattison, and George H. Sabine; three letters from James E. Creighton, discussing the 'absolute problem,' Cunningham's critique of a recently published book by Bosanquet, presumably The Mectins of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy, administrative matters at both Texas and Cornell, and the decline of the 'solid studies that promote discipline of mind,' the pitfalls of early specialization, and the 'tremendous importance of setting a few general critical ideas into the heads of college graduates'; and single letters from William A. Hammond, John Laird, T.V. Smith, and Frank Thilly, on personal and professional matters.

Finding aids: Calendar available.

Cite as: Gustavus Watts Cunningham. Letters, 14\12\796. Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Library.

Calendar in chronological order:

Sabine, George H. (b.1880-d.1961)
Ithaca, N. Y., February 9, 1911. To Cunningham, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. Suggests several persons for Cunningham to send his thesis to: Bosanquet, A. S. Pringle-Pattison, Henry Jones. Comments on pragmatism and its giving way to realism. TLS, 1 pc. & en.
Also 1944 letter.

Pringle-Pattison, Andrew Seth (b.1891-d.1919)

Haldane, Richard Burdon (b.1856-d.1928)


London, May 21, 1914. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Hopes he has received a book he sent him and that Cunningham will come to England soon. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

London, October 2, 1914. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Comments on a paper he has just read by Bergson, based on a study of Kant, and on the war situation. ALS, 1 pc. & en.


Carr, Herbert Wildon (b.1857-d.1931)
10 More's Garden, Cheyne Walk, S. W., London, England. January 25, 1915. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Discusses two papers of Cunningham's which he had received, dealing with "Duration and Finality" in regard to Bergson's works. Refers to Lucretius' idea that besides the atoms there must be the void. TLS, 2 pcs. & en.

Haldane
London, March 21, 1915. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Is opposed to revision of Cunningham's last book. Suggests rather a new book on nature of Reality, which would lead to "untrodden ground" and would involve interpreting Hegel "detachedly." Proposes that the new American school will absorb the new Realists and Bergson alike. In regard to the war, he comments, that Germany must not be crushed, but must be "purified." ALS, 1 pc. & en.

London, June 4, 1915. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Is glad to hear that Cunningham is seriously thinking about a new book. Explains why he is presently out of the government. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Perthshire, August 9, 1915. To Cunningham, n.p. Comments on his presently held political views and past goals. Has just returned from France and discusses the army there. Says he is delving more deeply into realism. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Perthshire, October 17, 1915. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Is writing an address for the Aristotelian Society on the new realism and objective realism. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Carr
London, November 6, 1915. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Discusses the need of supplementary ideas to Bergson's doctrine of intuition. Mentions Benedetto Croce's works in this connection. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Haldane
London, November 24, 1915. To Cunningham, covering note. ALS, 1 pc.

Perthshire, January 13, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Tells of a lecture he gave in Glasgow about New Realism and Bradley's doctrine of the finite center. Had visited with Pringle-Pattison. He is to return to London and politics shortly. The English are determined to win the war. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

London, May 7, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Glad to have book on Bergson. Has been thinking about the genesis of the New Realism. Reading has impressed him with fact that "the whole of modern philosophy exhibits a struggle for emancipation from the category of substance." Says Leibnitz did not succeed, but paved way for Kant. Enlarges upon the New Realism as a "final protest against the view of mind as substance." Discusses Hegel at length in this connection. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Carr
London, June 11, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Is happy that Cunningham has published The Philosophy of Bergson. He is studying Benedetto Croce's works, especially his ideas on intuition. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Haldane

Pringle-Pattison
Haldane
London, August 8, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Wildon Carr is to review Cunningham's book. He is working on educational problems and military matters for the government. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

McDowell, Stewart A.
5 Kingsgate Street, Winchester, England, August 20, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. He comments on Bergson's work and its incomplete and unfinished nature. Discusses the work in which he, himself, is involved. ALS, 2 pcs. & en.

Haldane

Perthshire, September 18, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Discusses the synthesis of reason. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

McDowell
Winchester, October 1, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Will write a criticism on Bradley as soon as he rereads the book. McDowell wrote two books: Evolution and the Need of Atonement and Evolution and Spiritual Life. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Haldane

Carr
107 Church Street, Chelsea, London, S. W., November 6, 1916. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Notice of change of address. TLS, 1 pc.

Haldane

Marshall, Henry Rutgers

Haldane


London, July 27, 1917. To Cunningham, Middlebury. Discusses the meaning of coherence and idealism. Mentions that he is on a secret committee that is concerned with establishing new governmental organizations. Mentions problems of Russia and Greece. ALS, 1 pc. & en.


London, March 21, 1918. To Cunningham, Texas. Discusses the current state of affairs. Mentions Prince Lichnowsky as confirming earlier impressions he had of Russia. Was visited by Pringle-Pattison. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

London, July 3, 1918. To Cunningham, Texas. Describes the situation on the French front. Is sending him a copy of a philosophical paper he had written. ALS, 1 pc. & en.


Perthshire, January 2, 1919. To Cunningham, Texas. Describes Woodrow Wilson's reception in England and his meeting the President. Discusses a book he is writing and a few problems he's having. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Perthshire, October 9, 1919. To Cunningham, Texas. He's working on his book on degrees in knowledge and reality. Mentions recent railroad strike. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Cloan, Auchterarder, Perthshire, December 4, 1919 to Cunningham, University of Texas. Much more to be worked out on relation of knowledge to reality. Is pure old controversy between idealism and realism is about to be superseded. Is difficult to work on book because of pressure of political business. Has had to write a book on prewar diplomacy and military preparations; says the books of Admiral [von] Tirpitz and Bethmann-Hollweg have forced him to speak. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Perthshire, April 8, 1920. To Cunningham, Texas. Feels teaching gives one time to write and study as well. He is quite busy with government work. Says that philosophy and physics are in a state of transition. Mentions Bosanquet's "Philosophical Theory of the State." ALS, 1 pc. & en.


Creighton, James Edwin (b.1861-d.1931)

Ithaca, N. Y., August 14, 1921. To Cunningham, Texas. Discusses the problems of the University of Texas is having with the state legislature in regard to appropriations for the University. Mentions that Livingstone Farrand is to be the new President of Cornell and discusses his background. Asks Cunningham to write a review of Haldane's book and recounts a meeting he had with him. A discussion of the nature of reason.

Haldane

Perthshire, August 29, 1921. To Cunningham, Texas. Is involved with the idea of mathematical physics and the new quantum theory. Is working on a portion of address he is to deliver at the University of Dublin which he plans to include in a volume entitled Philosophical Significance of Humanism. Lord Grey is visiting.


Creighton

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, June 26, 1922. To Cunningham, Texas. Discusses Cunningham's ideas on a book for introductory philosophy. Emphasizes the importance of philosophical knowledge to a college graduate in avoiding the pitfalls that seem to accompany specialization. Comments on the critique Cunningham had written of an article by Bosanquet.

Haldane

Perthshire, August 24, 1922. To Cunningham, Texas. Comments on Bosanquet's article in The Philosophical Review. He's been working on his book. Mentions Hegel's Encyclopaedia Logic, also Goethe's Philosophische Seinen Werken by Max Herracker.

Creighton

Ithaca, New York, November 27, 1922. To Cunningham, Texas. A discussion of the "Absolute problem." Hopes he will come back East for a visit.

Haldane

Perthshire, September 26, 1923. To Cunningham, Texas. Glad to hear that Cunningham had been back to Ithaca for a while. Discusses Bosanquet's article. Mentions his interest in mathematical physics and a visit to Cambridge in that connection.

London, March 2, 1924. To Cunningham, Texas. Enjoyed Cunningham's article in The Philosophical Review on Bosanquet and finds himself in agreement with his points.

Perthshire, January 8, 1925. To Cunningham, Texas. Has just read Cunningham's Problems of Philosophy. Discusses it and suggests firms in England that might publish it. Mentions that he led the opposition in the House of Lords. He also presides over the hearing of appeals for the different parts of the Empire to the Supreme Tribunal in London. Comments on his bachelorhood.


Thilly, Frank (b.1865-d.1934)
9 East Avenue, Ithaca, New York. May 28, 1926. To Cunningham, Texas. Refers to a previous letter and understands Cunningham's position. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Laird, John (b.1887-d.1934)
Milestone House, Blackwater, Hampshire, England, August 31, 1926. To Cunningham, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Hopes he is enjoying the Congress of Philosophy at Harvard. Says his trip home was pleasant. Hampshire is a lovely area. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Haldane

Laird
University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, October 17, 1926. To Cunningham, Texas. Scotland is having lovely weather. He broke his toe. There is a coal shortage. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Haldane

London, January 17, 1927. To Cunningham, Texas. He hopes Cunningham will accept the position at Cornell. His book, Pathway to Reality, has come out in a new volume. Discusses a series of lectures to be delivered at Oxford relating to metaphysics. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Hammond, William Alexander (b. ? - d.1938)
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, January 18, 1927. To Cunningham, Texas. Is glad to hear that Cunningham has accepted a position at Cornell. TLS, 1 pc. & en.

Haldane
London, April 11, 1927. To Cunningham, Texas. Is happy to hear that he is going to Cornell. Hopes he will continue to study and write. ALS, 1 pc. & en.

Smith, T. V. (b.1890-d. )
Syracuse, New York, July 17, 1927. To Cunningham, Texas. Had just visited Cornell and discourses on its beautiful scenery and the feeling of closeness he had to Cunningham there at his Alma Mater. TLS, 2 pcs. & en.

Miscellaneous