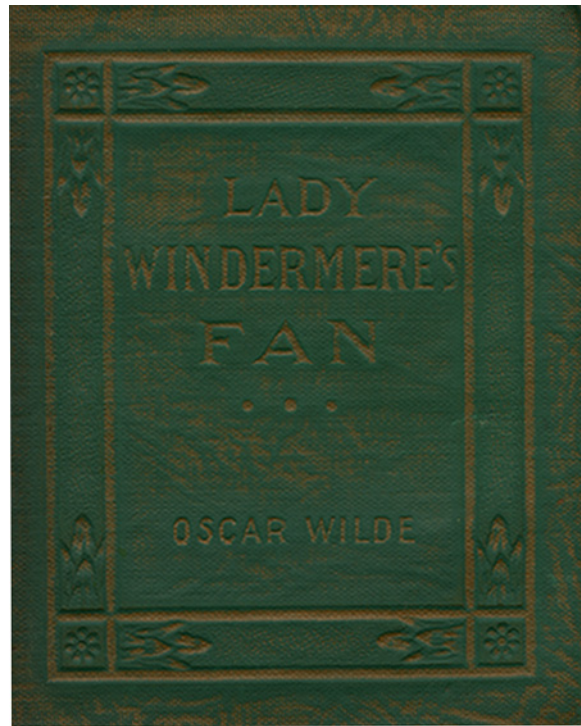


## Guide to the Little Leather Library Collection, 1920-1924



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Little Leather Library, 1920-1924

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## **Descriptive Summary**

### **Title:**

Little Leather Library Collection, 1920-1924

### **Collection Number:**

MS 160

### **Creator:**

Little Leather Library Corporation of New York

### **Abstract:**

The Little Leather Library Collection consists of 101 books, 3-1/4" x 4," published by the Little Leather Library Corporation of New York. The miniature books are brownish green in color, of imitation leather, and characteristic of the Redcroft edition published between 1920-1924. There were over 100 miniature book titles published in the various editions of the Little Leather Library, but it is not known if all of these titles were included in the Redcroft edition. The collection was donated in 2008.

### **Extent:**

The Little Leather Library Collection consists of 101 books, 3-1/4" x 4," and is housed in two flat boxes.

### **Language:**

English

### **Repository:**

Special Collections, Robert E. Kennedy Library  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

## **Administrative Information**

### **Provenance:**

Donated by John Helps in 2008.

### **Access:**

Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page.

### **Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:**

In order to reproduce, publish, broadcast, exhibit, and/or quote from this material, researchers must submit a written request and obtain formal permission from Special Collections, Cal Poly, as the owner of the physical collection.

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**Preferred Citation:**

[Identification of Item]. Little Leather Library Collection, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects:**

Literature – Collections  
American Literature  
English Literature  
Hubbard, Elbert, 1856-1915  
Kipling, Rudyard, 1865-1936  
Morris, William, 1834-1896  
Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616

**Genres and Forms of Material:**

Miniature books, 3-1/4" x 4"

**Related Materials**

**Related Collections:**

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, Rare Books Collection  
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, Fine Printing Graphic Arts Collection

**Corporate Note**

The Little Leather Library Corporation of New York was the first company to mass-market inexpensive books in the United States. The corporation, founded in 1916 by Albert Boni, Harry Scherman and Maxwell Sackheim, made available a wide variety of classics by authors including Rudyard Kipling, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Morris, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Henry James, Leo Tolstoy, Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats in miniature editions. The 101 books in this collection are brownish green in color, bound in imitation leather, and characteristic of the Redcroft edition published between 1920-1924. Only the first two editions were bound in real leather.

When first published, the little books were sold at the Woolworth's chain. By the early 1920s, the books were advertised in popular magazines, selling in National Geographic from 1922 to 1924. Sometimes a miniature classic might appear in a cereal box as a promotion. Robert K. Hass, Inc., Publishers took control of the Little Leather Library Corporation in 1924. Boni later established Modern Library Publishing Company, of which Random House

Publishers would become a subsidiary company. Scherman and Sackheim as well as Hass were later involved in the establishment of the Book of the Month Club.

## Sources

"Arts and Crafts Movement." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arts\\_and\\_Crafts\\_movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arts_and_Crafts_movement)>

Hamilton, Charles F. *As Bees in Honey Drown: Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters*. New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1973.

Helps, John. Personal interview. 26 Jun 2008.

Hubbard, Elbert. *The Tale of Two Tailors: Which the Same Has the Quality of Being TRUE*. East Aurora, N.Y.: Roycrofters, 1909.

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Wolfe, Richard J., and Paul McKenna. *Louis Herman Kinder and Fine Bookbinding in America: A Chapter in the History of the Roycroft Shop*. Newtown, PA.: Bird & Bull Press, 1985.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Little Leather Library Collection consists of 101 books, 3-1/4" x 4," published by the Little Leather Library Corporation of New York. The miniature books are brownish green in color, of imitation leather, and characteristic of the Redcroft edition published between 1920-1924.

There were over 100 miniature book titles published in the various editions of the Little Leather Library, but it is not known if all of these titles were included in the Redcroft edition. Only the first two editions were bound in real leather.

The production of the Little Leather Library enabled the masses to read inexpensive classics. The cheap imitation leather Redcroft edition, published between 1920-1924, appears to have been a take-off on the well-crafted books published by Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Press.

Elbert Hubbard, who was inspired by William Morris' Arts and Crafts movement in England, became an important Reformist in the United States, beginning the Roycroft movement and community in East Aurora, New York in 1895.

Hubbard's Roycroft Press was modeled after Morris' Kelmscott Press. Books made from handmade paper were printed on the Roycrofter's Golding Pearl letterpress. There is a marked difference between the finely bound, hand-crafted Roycroft volumes of Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson and Coleridge and their Redcroft edition counterparts.

Although the Arts and Crafts Movement was a reaction to the mechanization of the Industrial Revolution, there were those in the movement who felt that objects should be affordable.

Roycrofters supported those who did fine personal work in all endeavors, including design work in factories, but it is doubtful that the Roycroft seal would be applied to the volumes of the Little Leather Library.

The volumes of the Little Leather Library are stored in two boxes. The provenance, or original organization, of the books has been preserved for the most part and the collection is in one series.

## **Series Description/Folder List**

### **Series 1. Book volumes, 1920-1924**

Contains one subseries: A. Book volumes, Redcroft edition

#### **A. Series 1. Book volumes, Redcroft edition, 1920-1924**

Contains 101 Little Leather Library books, arranged alphabetically by author's last name, with the first five books arranged alphabetically by book title for collected works.

Box 1 Volume 1

*Fifty Best Poems of America*

Box 1 Volume 2

*Fifty Best Poems of England*

Box 1 Volume 3

*Mother Goose Rhymes*

Box 1 Volume 4

*Words of Jesus, Vol. I*

Box 1 Volume 5

*Words of Jesus, Vol. II*

Box 1 Volume 6

Allen, James

*As a Man Thinketh*

Box 1 Volume 7

Andersen, Hans Christian

*Fairy Tales*

Box 1 Volume 8

Balzac, Honoré de

*Christ in Flanders and Other Stories*

Box 1 Volume 9

Barrie, J.M.

*A Tillyloss Scandal*

Box 1 Volume 10

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett

*Sonnets from the Portuguese*

Box 1 Volume 11

Browning, Robert

*Pippa Passes*

Box 1 Volume 12

Browning, Robert

*Poems and Plays*

Box 1 Volume 13  
Burns, Robert  
*The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*

Box 1 Volume 14  
Burton, Richard F. – trans.  
*Tales from the Arabian Knights, Vol. I*

Box 1 Volume 15  
Burton, Richard F. – trans.  
*Tales from the Arabian Knights, Vol. II*

Box 1 Volume 16  
Carroll, Lewis  
*Alice in Wonderland*

Box 1 Volume 17  
Carroll, Lewis  
*Through the Looking Glass*

Box 1 Volume 18  
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor  
*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Other Poems*

Box 1 Volume 19  
Dante  
*Inferno, Vol. I*

Box 1 Volume 20  
Dante  
*Inferno, Vol. II*

Box 1 Volume 21  
De Quincey, Thomas  
*Confessions of an Opium Eater, Vol. I*

Box 1 Volume 22  
De Quincey, Thomas  
*Confessions of an Opium Eater, Vol. II*

Box 1 Volume 23  
Dickens, Charles  
*A Christmas Carol*

Box 1 Volume 24  
Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir  
*Tales of Sherlock Holmes*

Box 1 Volume 25  
Drummond, Henry  
*The Greatest Thing in the World*



Box 1 Volume 26  
Dumas, Alexandre  
*The Comtesse de Saint-Géran*

Box 1 Volume 27  
Emerson, Ralph Waldo  
*Essays*

Box 1 Volume 28  
Emerson, Ralph Waldo  
*Uses of Great Men*

Box 1 Volume 29  
Fitzgerald, Edward – trans.  
*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*

Box 1 Volume 30  
Gilbert, W.S.  
*The "Bab" Ballads*

Box 1 Volume 31  
Hale, Edward  
*Man Without a Country*

Box 1 Volume 32  
Hubbard, Elbert  
*A Message to Garcia*

Box 1 Volume 33  
Hugo, Victor  
*Last Days of a Condemned Man*

Box 1 Volume 34  
Ibsen, Henrik  
*A Doll's House*

Box 1 Volume 35  
Ibsen, Henrik  
*Ghosts*

Box 1 Volume 36  
Irving, Washington  
*Old Christmas*

Box 1 Volume 37  
Irving, Washington  
*Rip Van Winkle*

Box 1 Volume 38  
Kielty, Bernardine  
*The Sidewalks of New York*

Box 1 Volume 39  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*At the End of the Passage and The Mutiny of the Mavericks*

Box 1 Volume 40  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*Barrack Room Ballads*

Box 1 Volume 41  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*City of Dreadful Night and Other Stories*

Box 1 Volume 42  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*Finest Story in the World*

Box 1 Volume 43  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*The Man Who Was and Other Stories*

Box 1 Volume 44  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*The Mark of the Beast and the Head of the District*

Box 1 Volume 45  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*Mulvanney Stories*

Box 1 Volume 46  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*The Phantom Rickshaw and My Own True Ghost Story*

Box 1 Volume 47  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*Vampire and Other Verses*

Box 1 Volume 48  
Kipling, Rudyard  
*Without Benefit of Clergy*

Box 2 Volume 49  
Lamb, Charles  
*Dream Children*

Box 2 Volume 50  
Lincoln, Abraham  
*Speeches and Addresses*

Box 2 Volume 51  
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth  
*Evangeline*

Box 2 Volume 52  
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth  
*Hiawatha, Vol. I*

Box 2 Volume 53  
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth  
*Hiawatha, Vol. II*

Box 2 Volume 54  
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth  
*The Courtship of Miles Standish*

Box 2 Volume 55  
Macaulay, Thomas  
*Lays of Ancient Rome*

Box 2 Volume 56  
Maeterlinck, Maurice  
*Pelleas and Melisande*

Box 2 Volume 57  
Maupassant, Guy de  
*Short Stories*

Box 2 Volume 58  
Mérimée, Prosper  
*Carmen*

Box 2 Volume 59  
Moore, Thomas  
*Irish Melodies*

Box 2 Volume 60  
Morris, William  
*A Dream of John Ball*

Box 2 Volume 61  
Plato  
*The Trial of Socrates*

Box 2 Volume 62  
Poe, Edgar Allan  
*The Gold Bug*

Box 2 Volume 63  
Poe, Edgar Allan  
*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*

Box 2 Volume 64  
Poe, Edgar Allan  
*The Raven and Other Poems*

Box 2 Volume 65  
Schreiner, Olive  
*Dreams*

Box 2 Volume 66  
Shakespeare, William  
*As You Like It*

Box 2 Volume 67  
Shakespeare, William  
*A Comedy of Errors*

Box 2 Volume 68  
Shakespeare, William  
*Hamlet*

Box 2 Volume 69  
Shakespeare, William  
*Julius Caesar*

Box 2 Volume 70  
Shakespeare, William  
*King Lear*

Box 2 Volume 71  
Shakespeare, William  
*Macbeth*

Box 2 Volume 72  
Shakespeare, William  
*Merchant of Venice*

Box 2 Volume 73  
Shakespeare, William  
*Merry Wives of Windsor*

Box 2 Volume 74  
Shakespeare, William  
*Midsummer Night's Dream*

Box 2 Volume 75  
Shakespeare, William  
*Othello*

Box 2 Volume 76  
Shakespeare, William  
*Romeo and Juliet*

Box 2 Volume 77  
Shakespeare, William  
*Sonnets*

Box 2 Volume 78  
Shakespeare, William  
*The Taming of the Shrew*

Box 2 Volume 79  
Shakespeare, William  
*The Tempest*

Box 2 Volume 80  
Shakespeare, William  
*Twelfth Night*

Box 2 Volume 81  
Shaw, George Bernard  
*On Going to Church*

Box 2 Volume 82  
Shaw, George Bernard  
*Socialism for Millionaires*

Box 2 Volume 83  
Stevenson, Robert Louis  
*A Child's Garden of Verses*

Box 2 Volume 84  
Stevenson, Robert Louis  
*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Box 2 Volume 85  
Stevenson, Robert Louis  
*Will O' the Mill and Markheim*

Box 2 Volume 86  
Tennyson, Alfred  
*Coming of Arthur*

Box 2 Volume 87  
Tennyson, Alfred  
*Enoch Arden*

Box 2 Volume 88  
Tennyson, Alfred  
*The Holy Grail*

Box 2 Volume 89  
Tennyson, Alfred  
*Lancelot and Elaine*

Box 2 Volume 90  
Thoreau, Henry David  
*Friendship and Other Essays*

Box 2 Volume 91  
Tolstoy, Leo  
*The Bear Hunt and Other Stories*

Box 2 Volume 92  
Turgenev, Ivan  
*Mumu and Kassyan of Fair Springs*

Box 2 Volume 93  
Washington, George  
*Speeches and Letters*

Box 2 Volume 94  
Whitman, Walt  
*Memories of President Lincoln*

Box 2 Volume 95  
Whittier, John Greenleaf  
*Snow-bound and Other Poems*

Box 2 Volume 96  
Wilde, Oscar  
*Ballad of Reading Gaol and Other Poems*

Box 2 Volume 97  
Wilde, Oscar  
*The Happy Prince*

Box 2 Volume 98  
Wilde, Oscar  
*The Importance of Being Earnest*

Box 2 Volume 99  
Wilde, Oscar  
*Lady Windermere's Fan*

Box 2 Volume 100  
Wilde, Oscar  
*Salomé*

Box 2 Volume 101  
Yeats, William  
*Land of Heart's Desire*