

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Samuel Goodman Hoffenstein, American humorist, journalist, poet, and screenwriter, was born October 8, 1890, in Lithuania. When Hoffenstein was four years old, he and his parents Josiah Mayer and Taube Gita Kahn Hoffenstein immigrated to Wilkes-Barre, PA. In 1911, Hoffenstein graduated from Lafayette College with a PhB degree and a reputation as the "literary shark" of his graduating class. After graduation, Hoffenstein served as the principal of the North Main Street School in Wilkes-Barre and worked on the staff of the Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader.

Hoffenstein began his career as a professional journalist and poet between 1912 and 1915, when he worked for the New York Sun as a reporter, special writer, and drama critic. During this time he also contributed poetry to magazines such as The New Yorker. In 1916, Boni & Liveright published Life Sings a Song, the first of four books of Hoffenstein's poetry. Although The New York Times praised this collection of serious lyrical verse as "an interesting little book," Life Sings a Song failed to make much of a literary impact.

Over the next thirteen years, from 1916 to 1928, Hoffenstein established his reputation as a humorist. During this time, he was the press agent for Al Woods. The witty legends that Hoffenstein wrote about Woods became so popular that newspaper editors asked for them. Between 1923 and 1925, Hoffenstein was also a regular contributor to literary critic Burton Rascoe's syndicated column "The Daybook of a New Yorker," which appeared in the New York Tribune (later renamed the New York Herald Tribune in 1924). Throughout this time, Hoffenstein's poetry appeared in anthologies such as as Richard Le Galienne's Anthology of American Verse, as well as in magazines.

In 1928, Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing, Hoffenstein's most popular book, was published by Boni & Liveright. This collection of cynically humorous verse, parodies, and satires seem to convey the idea that "Life is sad, even tragic, but also ludicrous, and emphasizing its absurdity helps one endure it." (DLB, p. 202) In the first six months 90,000 copies of the book were sold, and by the time of Hoffenstein's death twenty years later, a total of over 200,000 copies had been sold. According to Rascoe, the poetry was "technically perfect, original as far as originality can go, in the main line of Heinesque tradition, the epitome of lyrical wit."

Hoffenstein's third collection of poems, Year in, You're Out, was published in 1930 by Liveright. In this book, the combination of serious poetry and witty verse caused critics to describe the overall effect of the book as "uneven." One such critic, Harry Hansen, called the book "a vaudeville program with an outstanding headliner and a lot of cheaper acts."

In 1931, Hoffenstein moved to Hollywood, California, where he became a successful screenwriter. Between 1931 and 1948, he co-authored 15 screenplays for MGM, United Artists, and Twentieth Century-Fox. His work includes Give My Regards to Broadway (1948) and The

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Loves of Edgar Allen Poe (1942). Hoffenstein was nominated for two Academy Awards, one in 1932 for Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde and another in 1944 for Laura.

While in Hollywood, Hoffenstein published only a few poems, which appeared in The New Yorker, Harper's, and a few other magazines. These final efforts formed his last volume of poetry, Pencil in the Air, which was published by Doubleday shortly after his death in 1947. In 1954, the Modern Library brought together Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing, Year In, You're Out, and Pencil in the Air and published them as Hoffenstein's Complete Works.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Samuel Hoffenstein Papers (1 box) comprises over 150 handwritten and typed pages of his poetic works, as well as annotated magazine and newspaper clippings, a few photographs, and correspondence from and to Hoffenstein, including letters from editors, fans, and one anti-Semitic detractor. Materials are filed alphabetically, beginning with the works of Hoffenstein. Whenever two folders are listed under one folder title, the second folder contains fragile originals. Dates for poems are given in the inventory only when this information is included on the manuscript.

The bulk of the collection are manuscripts and typescripts of poetry that appeared in **Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing** (Boni & Liveright, 1928) and **Year In, You're Out** (Liveright, 1930). Hoffenstein divided both these books into several titled sections, with separate verses indicated by poem title or simply by roman numeral. Poetry manuscripts are arranged as they appear in the published books, first by section and then by individual poem. The inventory lists the individual verses by first line rather than by title or roman numeral, since these features on the manuscript and the published pieces do not always correspond. Various states of the poems are indicated by AMs (entirely handwritten), TMs/AMs (typescript with emendations), and TMs (typescript). Whenever possible, various states of the same poem are kept together in the folder. Occasionally, several short but separate poems will appear together on the same page in the AMs state; however, as a double-spaced TMs, these same poems may fill more than one page. In these instances, the poems are grouped together by state labeled Set A and Set B.

In addition to the Collection's book manuscripts are several other noteworthy items. One such item is a 10-page poem Hoffenstein wrote for the Class of 1911, which did not appear in any Lafayette publication. Another is a version of "Come Weal, Come Woe, My Status is Quo" that is completely different from the one in **Year In, You're Out**, with verses later published in several sections of **Year In, You're Out** and in the section "Songs About Life and Brighter Things Yet" from **Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing**. "Poems Designed to Court the Favor of Celebrated Thespians, Living and Dead" is twelve short verses concerning press agent Al Woods. Short poetical works that do not constitute an identifiable series and are not published in one of Hoffenstein's books are in the folder designated Unidentified Poetry. All of Hoffenstein's books are held by the David Bishop Skillman Library Special Collections.

INVENTORY

Folder 1-2

Class poem: 1911. 5 p., AMs

Folder 3

Come weal, come woe, my status is quo: 12 p., TMs/AMs.
When winter's here, my thoughts revert: 2 p., TMs
How sweet upon the silent night: 2 p., TMs/AMs
When I was young, my hopes ran high: 1 p., TMs/AMs. Completely
crossed out.
For hours and hours I could not sleep: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I've had troubles all my life: 2 p., TMs/AMs
When I consider how we fret: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The grass, it does not meditate: 2 p., TMs/AMs
Sometimes I think I'd like to be: 1 p., TMs
I'm sorry for the people pent: 2 p., TMs
I like the broad and starry track: 1 p., TMs
Like lidless eyes, the windows stare: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The backs of houses in the rain: 1 p., TMs
Lamplight, through a leafy lace: 1 p., TMs
Cross-legged where the lamplight gleams: 1 p., TMs
I like the autumn days that stand: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The parrot imitates the man: 1 p., TMs
The most intense of all distress: 1 p., TMS

Folder 4-5

Poems designed to court the favor of celebrated thespians, living and
dead: 5 p., AMs
I've never seen Miss Harding play: 1 p.
I like few leading men, if any: 1 p.
I understand that Little Nell: 1 p.
Though business has not been so brisk: 1 p.
I'd gladly beg an Annie Oakley: 1 p.
Now Davy plays the asphodel: 1 p.
If you have never seen La Carter: 1 p.
I like to hear Al Jolson sing: 1 p.
For pere and fils, I'm sure there are: 1 p.
There's none but speaks exceeding well: 2 p.
Though Mique is not upon the stage: 1 p.

POEMS IN PRAISE OF PRACTICALLY NOTHING (P.I.P.O.P.N)

Folder 6-7

P.I.P.O.P.N: Preliminary pages; Songs to break the tedium...; A garden of verses for the little ones

Title page: 1 p., 2 copies, page proof
Section title page: 2 p., 2 copies, page proof, AMs
Along the country roads there grow: 1 p., 2 copies, page proof
My luck with the proverbial sex: 2 p., 2 copies, page proof
When trouble drives me into rhyme: 1 p., 2 copies, page proof
The rain that falls upon my heart: 2 p., TMs
Sweetling, try not to forget: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Oh the first kiss is sweet: 1 p., TMs/AMs
You're a pure spirit; you're air and water: 1 p., TMs/AMs
You're a positive fiend for life extension: 1 p., TMs
I love to hear the little bird: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Sleep, my little bay, sleep: 2 p., TMs/AMs
The calf, the goat, the little lamb: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The gnu is a remarka-bul: 1 p., AMs
Go to sleep, my little oaf: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The moon is made of Stilton cheese: 1 p., TMs/AMs
God gave us the blue sky above: 1 p., AMs

Folder 8-9

P.I.P.O.P.N.: Songs about life and brighter things yet
I'd rather listen to a flute: 1 p., AMs
The serpent has no feet or hands: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The leopard cannot change his spots: 1 p., TMs/AMs. On the same page as "The small chameleon has the knack..." from the section "Songs of Faith in the Year After Next."
Stars reflected in the water: 1 p., AMs
They say a rolling stone's a loss: 1 p., TMs
We see strange creatures in the zoo: 1 p., TMs/AMs
It drinks up all -- and yet the sea: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Blossoms in a May-day breeze: 1 p., AMs
The church, for all its Heavenly birth: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I do respect that noble man: 1 p., AMs
The ostrich lives in foreign: 1 p., TMs/AMs

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The dinosaur and ichthyosaur: 1 p., TMs/AMs. Complete crossed out.
When I was young, my hopes ran high: 1 p., AMs
When I was young, my hopes ran high: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The monkey chatters in the tree: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I have only a bicycle: 1 p., AMs
The ant, he lays aside some dough: 1 p., AMs
How doth the busy little bee: 1 p., AMs

Folder 10-11

P.I.P.O.P.N.: Songs of faith in the year after next; Interlude for a solitary flute
I never see the long giraffe: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The day I like the least is Sunday: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I do not like to be alone: 1 p., TMs
The year is at the spring, and so: 1 p., TMs
Behold the crowd; from far it seems: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Sorrow that cries: 3 p., TMs
Sorrow that cries: 3 p., TMs/AMs (Date erased)
In the fine land of Nowhere: Feb. 1927, 2 p., TMs/AMs
You will be the breezes: 2 p., TMs/AMs

Folder 12

P.I.P.O.P.N.: Review by Burton Rascoe

Folder 13-14

Published Pieces by Hoffenstein (n.d., 1923-1927)

Folder 15-16

Remarkable Portraits: 2 p., AMs; 1 p., TMs

Folder 17-18

Unidentified Poems

I have little of skittles and gin: 1 p., AMs
Excuse my unnatural stance: 2 p., TMs/AMs
Reader, from your noble look: 3 p., AMs
Now the violet hour of eve: 1 p., AMs
Child actors should not be seen: 1 p., AMs
In the merry month of spring: 1 p., AMs
There is not a prettier sight: 1 p., TMs/AMs
A little while together: Sep. 30, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
Could I in golden syllables ensnare: Oct. 19, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
I ask not for the lightning-word: Nov. 30, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
No earth your little feet have trod: Nov. 7, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs

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The difference that makes you dear: Nov. 7, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
Ah, could I have imagined you: Nov. 7, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
You, whom I sought for; you, whom I wanted: Dec. 3, 1924, 1 p.,
TMs/AMs
His cup was laid upon the cross: Dec. 15, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
I wandered in the starry gloom: Dec. 15, 1924; 1 p., TMs/AMs
Your life undiluted by living: Jan. 6, 1925; 2 p., TMs/AMs
The branches sway and pray: 1 p., TMs/AMs
This is thy glory, Love, forevermore: 1 p., TMs/AMs
My senses I've sated: 3 p., TMs/AMs
How happy I, if I could wear: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The seasons are intangible: 2 p., TMs
There lived in days now dead and gone: 2 p., TMs/AMs
In that dear old land of cotton: 2 p., TMs/AMs
No birds where lunar angels light: Apr. 8, 1927; 1 p., TMs/AMs
Ah, had my clay been a bit more common: 2 p., TMs/AMs
The shell with but a mild commotion: 1 p. Completely crossed out.
The bird has wings with which to fly: 1 p. Completely crossed out.
I'm not a trifle superstitious: 1 p. Completely crossed out.
When dawn, between the red and white: 1 p. Completely crossed out.
The serpent crawls upon its belly: 1 p., TMs Completely crossed out.
Stars reflected in the water: 1 p., TMs Completely crossed out.
Lions roar and pigeons moan: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The lion has a mighty roar: 1 p., TMs/AMs Completely crossed out.
Water cannot flow uphill: 1 p., TMs/AMs Completely crossed out.
When I was six or seven or eight: 1 p., TMs/AMs
YEAR IN, YOU'RE OUT (Y.I.Y.O)

Folder 19

Y.I.Y.O.: Preliminary pages; Invocation; Lyrics to be skipped by those
who do not care for this sort of time of thing
Preliminary pages: 2 copies; 1 p., AMs; 1 p., TMs
Table of contents: 2 copies: 2 p., AMs; 2 p., TMs
Come, lovely Muse, desert for me: Jan. 14, 1930, 4 p., AMs
Come, lovely Muse, desert for me: 4 p., TMs
Come, lovely Muse, desert for me: Jan. 14, 1930, 4 p., TMs
We have starved on bread and meat: 1 p., TMs/AMs
We have starved on bread and meat: 1 p., TMs

Folder 20

Y.I.Y.O.: Come weal, come woe, my status is quo
Title page: 1 p., AMs

Set A

Now I see clearly as they are: 2 p., TMs/AMs
For hours and hours I could not sleep: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I've had troubles all my life: 1 p., TMs/AMs
When I consider how we fret: 1 p., TMs/AMs
The grass, it does not meditate: 2 p., TMs/AMs
Dear God, or Allah, Buddha, Christ: 1 p., TMs/AMs

Set B

Now I see clearly as they are: 1 p., TMs
How sweet upon the silent night: 1 p., TMs
For hours and hours I could not sleep: 1 p., TMs

I've had troubles all my life: 2 p., TMs
When I consider how we fret: 1 p., TMs
The grass, it does not meditate: 1 p., TMs
Dear God, or Allah, Buddha, Christ: 2 p., TMs

Folder 21

Y.I.Y.O.: Tis I sir, rhyming rapidly; Well, let's include them anyhow
He who has not suffered away: 3 p., TMs/AMs
He who has not suffered away: 5 p., TMs

Set A

You're a good boy; you mind your mother: 1 p., TMs/AMs
You go to bed; you can't sleep yet: 2 p., TMs/AMs
You've had your share of care and trouble: 1 p., TMs
You've had your share of care and trouble: 1 p., TMs
With her you haven't a single care yet: 1 p., TMs/AMs
You have a date to meet your sweetie: 1 p., TMs/AMs

Set B

You're a good boy; you mind your mother: 1 p., TMs
You go to bed; you can't sleep yet: 2 p., TMs
You've had your share of care and trouble: 1 p., TMs
You have a girl, a real beauty: 1 p., TMs
You have a date to meet your sweetie: 1 p., TMs

Folder 22

Y.I.Y.O.: Serenades and songs for a pent-house window

Set A

Sometimes, since you must absent be: 1 p., AMs
Darling, you have lived and loved: 1 p., AMs/TMs
The interfering stars above: 1 p., TMs/AMs
If the truth were not so hard: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Ah, the house that we shall build: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Your hair is so golden: 1 p., AMs
How long, how long, are the days without you: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I love my love: 1 p., TMs/AMs
You love me and I love you: 1 p., AMs
Please remember that you are: 1 p., AMs
Oh, had you but tarried: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Loving me, be not too faint: 1 p.; TMs/AMs

Set B

Sometimes, since you must absent be: 1 p., TMs
Darling, you have lived and loved: 1 p., TMs
The interfering stars above: 1 p., TMs
If the truth were not so hard: 1 p., TMs
Ah, the house that we shall build: 1 p., TMs
Your hair is so golden: 1 p., TMs
How long, how long, are the days without you: 1 p., TMs
I love my love: 1 p., TMs
You love me and I love you: 1 p., TMs
Please remember that you are: 1 p., TMs
Oh, had you but tarried: 1 p., TMs
Loving me, be not too faint: 1 p., TMs
Love, a little of myself: 1 p., TMs
Stand not too near me: 2 p., TMs/AMs
The interfering stars above: June 13-29, 1 p., AMs

Folder 23

Y.I.Y.O.: Out of the everywhere into the here; The moist land
The ocean spills upon the sands: 1 p., AMs
The ocean spills upon the sands: 1 p., TMs
The ocean spills upon the sands: 1 p., TMs
I've been in love a dozen times: 1 p., AMs
When winter's here, my thoughts revert: 2 p., TMs/AMs
When winter's here, my thoughts revert: 1 p., TMs

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Who stares upon a star too long: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Who stares upon a star too long: 1 p., TMs
Lovely you seem, and yet I know: 1 p., TMs/AMs
April's very fickle following: 10 p., TMs

Folder 24

Y.I.Y.O.: Rag-Bag; Dialect poems
Rag-Bag (Section title): 1 p., AMs
Little by little we subtract: 1 p., AMs
Little by little we subtract: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Little by little we subtract: 1 p., TMs
The shelves of the world: 2 p., TMs/AMs
The shelves of the world: 2 p., TMs
When one has broken, say, thirty acres: 1 p., TMs/AMs
When one has broken, say, thirty acres: 2 p., TMs
Only one thing knows: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Only one thing knows: 1 p., TMs
I had a sorrow: 2 p., TMs/AMs
I had a sorrow: 2 p., TMs
I bring you truce for your desire: 1 p., TMs/AMs
I bring you truce for your desire: 1 p., TMs
He comes at last into the shade: 1 p., TMs/AMs
He comes at last into the shade: 1 p., TMs
I shall stand before God: 2 p., TMs/AMs
I shall stand before God: 1 p., TMs
Out of what air flows sorrow: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Out of what air flows sorrow: 1 p., TMs
When you come back to me beloved: Dec. 11, 1924 (crossed out), 2 p.,
TMs/AMs
I who may walk the wide world over: 1 p. (page 2 of "When you come
back to me beloved") TMs/AMs
I got a complex; you got a complex: 1 p., AMs
I got a complex; you got a complex: 1 p., TMs
Mommer, oo, how bloo I feel: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Mommer, oo, how bloo I feel: 2 p., TMs

Folder 25

Y.I.Y.O.: Hymn to science; Entr'acte
Science, I sing, the Super-Goddess flute: 3 p.; AMs
Science, I sing, the Super-Goddess flute: 3 p.; TMs
Mamma's kind o' lonely: 2 p., AMs
It's your mamma you'll be: 1 p., AMs
Won't he look strange with a beaver full of foam: 1 p. (part of "Mamma's

kind o'lonely"), TMs
It's your mama you'll be looking at: 1 p., TMs
I kept the house on the corner of Linden and Pineapple Streets: 2 p.,
TMs/AMs
I kept the house on the corner of Linden and Pineapple Streets: 2 p., TMs
I won't get up tomorrow: 3 p., TMs
I won't get up tomorrow: 3 p., TMs

Folder 26

Y.I.Y.O.: As the crow flies let him fly; Pass, oh, Time

Set A

She walks in beauty, like the night: 1 p., AMs
The cats sits: 1 p., AMs
The camel isn't very bright: 1 p., AMs
Behold the High Official, he: 1 p., AMs
Sing a song of sixpence: 1 p., AMs
Unaware of sun or moon: 2 p., TMs/AMs
Fools may go: 1 p., AMs
If you're a naughty little girl: 1 p., AMs
This is the Banker, all that's lent: 1 p., AMs Completely crossed out.
I understand that God is not: 1 p., AMs
I envy things of wood or stone: 1 p., TMs/AMs
A bird in the hand may sometimes be: 1 p., AMs
Fish have scales but cannot sing: 1 p., AMs
Well may he be to censure blind: 1 p., AMs
The early bird may catch the worm: 1 p., AMs
I'm not a huntsman bold and brave: 1 p., AMs
It took much longer than a day: 1 p., AMs
The lion roars, the echoes try: 1 p., AMs

Set B

She walks in beauty, like the night: 1 p., TMs
The cat sits: 1 p., TMs
The camel isn't very bright: TMs
Behold the High Official, he: 1 p., TMs
Sing a song of sixpence: 1 p., TMs
Unaware of sun or moon: 1 p., TMs
Fools may go: 1 p., TMs
If you're a naughty little girl: 1 p., TMs
I understand that God is not: 1 p., TMs
I envy things of wood or stone: 1 p., TMs
A bird in the hand may sometimes be: 1 p., TMs

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Fish have scales but cannot sing: 1 p., TMs
Well may he be to censure blind: 1 p., TMs
The early bird may catch the worm: 1 p., TMs
I'm not a huntsman bold and brave: 1 p., TMs
It took much longer than a day: 1 p., TMs
The lion roars, the echoes try: 1 p., TMs
Pass, oh, Time (oh, Passing Medicinal): 2 p., TMs
Pass, oh, Time (oh, Passing Medicinal): 2 p., TMs

Folder 27

Y.I.Y.O.: Songs out of an earlier time; Apologia
It lies like tired, spent lightning, that has: 1 p., AMs
It lies like tired, spent lightning, that has 1 p., TMs
The years shall bring us rest: 1 p., AMs
The years shall bring us rest: 1 p., TMs
The dead they sleep a long, long sleep: 1 p., AMs
The dead they sleep a long, long sleep: 1 p., TMs
Hear you, all you celibate: 1 p., AMs
Hear you, all you celibate: 1 p., TMs
When I was little I used to sit: 3 p., TMs/AMs
When I was little I used to sit: 3 p., TMs
Sing, wind of summer, through the leaves: 1 p., AMs
Sing, wind of summer, through the leaves: 1 p., TMs
Let the tears be dry in your eyes, and the cloud melt on your brow: 2 p.,
TMs/AMs
Let the tears be dry in your eyes, and the cloud melt on your brow: 2 p.,
TMs
Under my words securely lie: 2 p., AMs
Under my words securely lie: 2 p., TMs
Though I made songs clear as green-housed birds: 1 p., TMs/AMs
Though I made songs clear as green-housed birds: 2 p., TMs

Folder 28

Y.I.Y.O.: Fragile originals

Folder 29

Correspondence: By Hoffenstein -- 1924, 1937

Folder 30

Correspondence: To Hoffenstein -- 1923-1934, undated

Folder 31

Correspondence: To Alyce Geraldine Fagan -- undated

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Folder 32

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Paramount Film, screenplay by Samuel Hoffenstein)
poster

Folder 33

Marriage and Divorce Papers

Folder 34

Photographs

Folder 35

Poems (Misc.)