

# The John Dewey Papers Come to SIU-C

*Jo Ann Boydston*

In May 1972, Sidney Hook, the distinguished philosopher who is president of the John Dewey Foundation, announced the gift by the Foundation to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale of all the papers in John Dewey's personal estate—manuscripts, memorabilia, correspondence, books, paintings, photographs—stored in eighty-four warehouse boxes since 1970.

The nature of this collection and the story of how it came, twenty years after Dewey's death, to be deposited in Morris Library are matters that may be of special interest to collectors.

Roberta Grant Dewey, whom Dewey married in 1946, established the John Dewey Foundation in 1964, twelve years after Dewey's death. Through this foundation, special grants were made to promote Dewey studies and to promulgate Dewey's philosophy. Not long before her death in 1970, she made a holograph will with bequests of \$100,000 each to the two adopted Dewey children, Adrienne and John, Jr. The remainder of her estate, estimated later at some two million dollars, she left to the John Dewey Foundation. However, New York State mandates that unless children are specifically excluded by a will, not more than half an estate can be left to a charitable foundation. It was necessary, therefore, to divide the estate between the Foundation and the Dewey children. As one step in this division, a decision was reached to sell the collection of papers and materials. The members of the Foundation board, who were at that time Sidney Hook, Ernest Nagel, and Gail Kennedy—all noted Dewey scholars—urged that the collection not be broken up and sold to various persons and institutions. After the collection had been formally appraised, the Foundation board, exercising its rights as legatee, purchased all the materials and deposited them with the other Dewey papers at SIU-C.

Some of the reasons for the Foundation's decision and action can be found by looking back into the early 1960s when Southern Illinois University initiated a research project, entitled at that time Cooperative Research on Dewey Publications. The purpose of the project was to collect,

*John Margulies drawing of John Dewey*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

1922-3

SYLLABUS FOR PHILOSOPHY 191-192

TYPES OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

1. The word "experience" is here taken non-technically. Its nearest equivalents are such words as "life", "history", "culture" (in its anthropological use). It does not mean processes and modes of experiencing apart from what is experienced and lived. The philosophical value of the term is to provide a way of referring to the unity or totality between what is experienced and the way it is experienced, a totality which is broken up and referred to only in ready-made distinctions or by such words as "world", "things", "objects" on the one hand, and "mind", "subject", "person", "consciousness" on the other. Similarly "history" denotes both events and our record or interpretation of them; while "events" include not only the acts and sufferings of human beings but all the cosmic and institutional conditions and forces which in any way whatsoever enter into and affect these human beings - in short, the wide universe as manifesting itself in the careers and fortunes of human beings.

REFERENCES: Murray's Oxford Dictionary, on Experience; Monroe's Cyclopaedia of Education, on Experience; Democracy and Education, p. 2; Influence of Darwin, 198-204. For technical meanings, themselves the product of philosophical reflection, see Baldwin's Dictionary of Philosophy. For the value of the term in philosophy, see BUSH, Jour. of Phil. 6: 175-182; same Journal, 10: 533-541; DEWEY, same Journal, 3: 253-257, and Essays in Experimental Logic, Introduction, especially p. 1-10.

*Stroph. Down. Introduction Experience - on Ed. and Ling. See Index, p. 517 of v. 4 of 196 - 182; Rural; Aristotle, vol. XIV, p. 2-16, title on Argument*

Syllabus which was precursor for Experience and Nature

edit, and publish all the writings of John Dewey.<sup>1</sup> As this work progressed, all Dewey's previously published works in all their variant forms were collected; copies of his correspondence were sought, as were publishers' records, works about Dewey, translations, and similar kinds of background materials. The "Dewey Project" gradually grew into what is now known as The Center for Dewey Studies.

The Center has now completed publication of the first series of Dewey's works, five volumes of *The Early Works of John Dewey, 1882-1898*.<sup>2</sup> Yet to follow are fifteen volumes of The Middle Works, 1899-1924, and twenty-five volumes of The Later Works, 1925-1952. Other publications are also being produced at the Center: a *Dewey Newsletter*, a *Checklist of Translations*,<sup>3</sup> a *Guide to the Works of John Dewey*,<sup>4</sup> a Checklist of Works about John Dewey, 1886-1972 (in process), a checklist of works about John Dewey in other languages, and numerous articles.

In the process of collecting and planning the complete edition, the Dewey Center acquired original materials—letters, class lecture notes, books with Dewey's marginalia, photographs. However, a major impetus toward collecting manuscripts came when Kenneth Duckett joined the Morris Library staff in 1965 as archivist and encouraged the Library to make a special effort to collect Dewey papers in connection with the publication of Dewey's works.

A series of oral history interviews that Mr. Duckett conducted with Dewey family members and associates opened a number of possibilities for this collecting. A steadily growing nucleus of manuscript material gradually began to attract additional gifts, and from time to time items were purchased.

Dewey correspondence and manuscripts also were acquired by the Library in other collections; notable among these were the papers of the Open Court Publishing Company, obtained through the efforts of Ralph McCoy, Dean of Library Affairs, and Lewis Hahn, Chairman of the Dewey Center Editorial Board. A significant addition to the Dewey collection was the windfall gift by Charlotte B. Windsor of the Elsie Ripley Clapp papers. These papers, like the Dewey papers, were presented to the Dewey Center

1. The history and development of this undertaking are described more fully in Jo Ann Boydston and Joe R. Burnett, "The Dewey Project," *Educational Forum* 35 (January 1971), 177-83.  
 2. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1972.  
 3. Jo Ann Boydston with Robert L. Andresen, *John Dewey: A Checklist of Translations, 1900-1967* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967).  
 4. Jo Ann Boydston, ed., *Guide to the Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970; Arcturus Books Edition, 1972).

Carus Lectures.

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Notes for the famed Carus Lectures

but are housed in and are under the auspices of Special Collections of Morris Library. This fact should be noted because, although the concentration of Dewey scholarship at Southern Illinois University has been the chief force in attracting such collections, the quality of Special Collections as a depository has also been a force.

Thus the University had been involved on two fronts in collecting and studying Dewey materials since 1961. During her lifetime, Roberta Dewey had not wanted to deposit Dewey's personal papers in any institution; after her death, however, it was apparent that arrangements would have to be made to dispose of the papers. When Sidney Hook became president of the John Dewey Foundation, he and the other two directors were invited to visit the Dewey Center to consider Southern Illinois University as a permanent location for the materials. Dr. Hook and Dr. Nagel each spent a day at the Center, at Morris Library, and at the Southern Illinois University Press. Firsthand acquaintance with the resources, facilities, and people at Southern Illinois University persuaded both men that the interests of Dewey scholarship would best be served by depositing the papers at this institution. Dr. Kennedy, who had been here earlier as a consultant to the Center, considered this from the outset the logical and desirable depository.

Meanwhile, from among the stored materials, one large oil portrait of Dewey by Joseph Margulies was offered for sale; Corliss Lamont, philosopher and philanthropist, promptly purchased the portrait as a gift for the Center for Dewey Studies. That painting now hangs in the Education Library on the fourth floor of Morris Library.

Some Dewey scholars, and among them was Corliss Lamont, were convinced that the logical place for Dewey's personal papers was Columbia University, because of Dewey's long and intimate identification with that institution. But Dr. Lamont's visit to Carbondale to present the Margulies portrait provided an opportunity for him to see the possibilities for preservation and extensive use of the materials here. The problems of restoring the materials were of special concern to him; when the Foundation announced the gift of the papers to Southern Illinois University, Dr. Lamont committed \$10,000 for their restoration.

The need for extensive restoration was caused by Roberta Dewey's attempts to preserve and restore the more valuable documents; she had mended many items with cellophane tape, had put others between plastic covers that fused, and had extensively disturbed the original arrangement of the materials.

The papers are now being processed. Although the materials themselves will not be available to scholars until the processing is complete, preliminary information about the collection has already been provided by three persons who examined it between 1970 and 1972. First, a lifelong Dewey scholar Dr. Gail Kennedy, who is now deceased, as a director of the John Dewey Foundation made a detailed listing of the contents of the boxes for the Foundation; then, Kenneth Duckett, Curator of Special Collections of Morris Library, inspected the materials and made notes on the Kennedy inventory; and finally, Mr. Robert Metzdorf, New York manuscript expert who used both the Kennedy list and the Duckett notes as he worked through the boxes, made an official appraisal for the Estate of Roberta Dewey.

From these sources, we know that the collection is extremely varied; the items are diverse both in kind and in value. The Dewey library forms one large segment, with more than 2,500 books collected through the years by Dewey and by other family members. Some 900 of the books are dedicated to Dewey, inscribed to Dewey, or—most importantly—annotated by Dewey. A section of the library comprises Dewey's own works in different editions, reprints, and translations.

Among the miscellaneous kinds of items are doctoral hoods, portraits, photographs, a terra cotta bust of Dewey, diplomas, films, tapes, newspaper clippings, cancelled checks, and the now famous Underwood typewriter at which Dewey wrote most of his correspondence and drafts of books and articles.

Of special interest and value are the many family letters, dating from the 1860s. Dewey's first wife, Alice Chipman Dewey, died in 1927; from that time up to his second marriage in 1946, one or another of his daughters lived with him. This continuous maintenance of the family household is probably the reason the papers include so many materials from the very early days of Dewey's and Alice's life together, such as the numerous letters they exchanged during their courtship, and correspondence with their children.

Among the manuscripts are many that underlie subsequently published items; these will play an important role in the textual editing of those writings for inclusion in the collected edition of Dewey's works: the typescript for the revised edition of *Experience and Nature*, considered by many Dewey's *magnum opus*; the typescript for the Carus Lectures, from which the first edition of *Experience and Nature* was published; much of the manuscript for *Knowing and the Known*; a number of chapters of

*Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*; chapters and revisions from books as yet not identified. There are, in addition, many previously unpublished manuscripts, lectures, notes for speeches, drafts of articles, class notes, and reading notes.

The more than eighty poems that Dewey wrote but never published also are among the papers. Of these the John Dewey Foundation retained ownership, with a view to publishing them. The heroic size bronze bust of John Dewey by Jacob Epstein, also still the property of the Foundation, is on loan to the Center for Dewey Studies and is presently displayed in the Rare Book Room of Morris Library.

This is a significant collection of materials in itself, but the John Dewey Papers derive added significance from being incorporated with the already collected Dewey materials. The total Dewey collection will have continuing importance through the years, serving as a rich resource for study by scholars from many fields. Thus, although the John Dewey Papers are of incalculable value in the work of the Dewey Center, they will also inevitably make Southern Illinois University at Carbondale the world center for Dewey studies.