



Special Collections and University Archives

**Agnes Sligh Turnbull Papers
Manuscript Group 41**

**For Scholarly Use Only
Last Modified July 28, 2023**

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Agnes Sligh Turnbull Papers, Manuscript Group 41
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Special Collections and University Archives
1 box; 1 linear foot

Biographical Note



Agnes McConnell Sligh Turnbull (October 14, 1888 – January 31, 1982) was born in New Alexandria, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Alexander and Lucinda McConnell Sligh. In 1910, she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and was the Valedictorian of her class at Indiana State Normal School in Indiana, Pennsylvania.

After finishing her education at the University of Chicago, she began teaching high school English. She resigned from teaching in 1918 when she married an Englishman named James Lyall Turnbull just before he left for military service during World War I. In 1922, the Turnbull family moved to Maplewood, New Jersey. Agnes and James Turnbull adopted a little girl, Martha Turnbull O'Hearn (May 21, 1921 – August 27, 2006), who married James Paul O'Hearn on December 30, 1949 in Maplewood.

Agnes Sligh Turnbull began writing short stories in the 1920s, but her most successful work came in 1936 with a novel titled *The Rolling Years*. Her other novels included *Remember the End* (1938), *The Day Must Dawn* (1942), *The Bishop's Mantle* (1947), *The Gown of Glory* (1952), *The Golden Journey* (1955), *The Nightingale* (1960), *The King's Orchard* (1963), *The Wedding Bargain* (1966), *The Flowering* (1972), *The Richlands* (1974), and *The Two Bishops* (1980). Her juvenile works included *Elijah the Fish-bite* (1940), *Jed the Shepherd's Dog* (1957), *George* (1964), and *The White Lark* (1968). Agnes Sligh Turnbull wrote her memoir *Dear Me: Leaves from the Diary of Agnes Sligh Turnbull* (1941). All of her books were published by Houghton Mifflin.

In 1966, Agnes Sligh Turnbull appeared in *Who's Who*. Her alma mater, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, conferred upon her the honorary Doctorate of Letters during their Centennial Convocation on September 13, 1974. Throughout her life, Agnes Sligh Turnbull maintained close ties to her hometown and many of the fictitious towns in her novels are based on New Alexandria, Pennsylvania. In 1982, Agnes Sligh Turnbull passed away at Saint Barnabus Medical Center in Livingston, New Jersey at the age of 93.

Scope and Content

The Agnes Sligh Turnbull Collection at the IUP Special Collections and University Archives is housed in one archival box. The collection includes correspondence, and

early drafts of Turnbull's novels. The collection contains a file of biographical information including various newspaper articles and an article written by Mrs. Turnbull concerning the adoption of her daughter Martha. Several notebooks, which are the handwritten copies of Agnes' books, can also be found in the collection. Notebooks of *The Rolling Years* (1936), *Remember the End* (1938), *The Bishop's Mantle* (1947), and *The Gown of Glory* (1952) are included. In addition to the handwritten notes for *The Gown of Glory*, galley proofs and page proofs have been donated for this book. A letter written by Agnes relates a short story which is titled *A Belated Easter Tail*. All of Turnbull's novels housed in the IUP Special Collections & University Archives have been cataloged and are listed at the end of this collection finding aid.

In this collection, there is also an early inventory of the [Agnes Sligh Turnbull Collection](#) at the [Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center](#) in the Special Collections Library at Boston University. The Turnbull Collection at Boston University consists of 8 linear feet of manuscript materials.

Provenance

The collection was donated by Agnes Sligh Turnbull.

Restrictions

None.

Processor

This collection finding aid was updated by Special Collections in 2014.

Container List

Box 1 (19 folders)

1. Correspondence: letter from Agnes Sligh Turnbull "A Little Easter Tail," to little Sara Jane, Easter 1927
2. Correspondence: photocopy of the "A Little Easter Tail" letter (photocopy), 1927
3. Correspondence: letter from Agnes Sligh Turnbull to Dr. William W. Hassler (University President of IUP), in regard to the IUP Centennial Scrapbook and the 1974 Centennial Convocation at IUP, during which she received an honorary degree, handwritten letter dated April 15, 1975
4. Correspondence: letter from Agnes Sligh Turnbull to Dr. William Lafranchi (Director of the IUP Libraries) in regard to donating her manuscript notebooks, no date (circa 1970s-1980s)
5. Correspondence: letter to Special Collections Librarian Phillip Zorich from Bess Cochran, September 30, 1987
6. Book Reviews, and Newspaper and Magazine articles, 1929-1976
 - a. *The American Magazine* (May 1929) "Agnes Sligh Turnbull describes the great adventure of adopting a baby," pp. 44-45, 180, 182, 184 (original)
 - b. *New York Times Book Review* (November 27, 1938) "*Remember the End* and other works of fiction: Agnes Turnbull's portrait of a rugged individualist – Philip Barry's *War in Heaven*, p. 7 (original and copy)

- c. *New York Herald Tribune Books* (December 4, 1938) “*Self-Made Immigrant*: A good novel, set in Pennsylvania, telling that typically American story,” p. 4. Book Review
 - d. *News and Previews of books for high school libraries* (1942) “Our Heritage: *The Day Must Dawn*.” Book Review
 - e. *Presbyterian Life* (May 15, 1962) “Maker of buoyant books: In an era of sordid realism, Agnes Sligh Turnbull, Presbyterian novelist, writes of healthy, happy, yet true-to-life people,” pp. 33-35
 - f. *Pittsburgh Press* (September 29, 1974) “*Richlands* set in area: Love, eccentrics contrasted – Agnes Turnbull and Iris Murdoch, contrasts in their new books,” p. G-7
 - g. *Tribune Review* (October 15, 1974) “Left her heart: Westmoreland County native, rustic New Alexandria graces Turnbull novels,” p. 13
 - h. *The Sentinel*, published in New Alexandria, Pennsylvania (February 1976) “Sligh home renovated,” p. 13
7. Correspondence about the collection inventory of [Agnes Sligh Turnbull Collection](#) in the Special Collections Library at Boston University at the [Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center](#), 1965-2000
 8. Photograph of Agnes Sligh Turnbull in 1974, used for the IUP Centennial Convocation program
 9. Book Dust Jackets of Turnbull’s first editions that were cataloged in Special Collections:
 - a. *The Gown of Glory* (1952)
 - b. *The Flowering* (1972)
 - c. *Many a Green Isle* (1968)
 - d. *Whistle and I’ll Come to You* (1970)
 - e. *The Richlands* (1974)
 10. Manuscript Notebook of Turnbull’s novel *The Rolling Years* (1936)
 11. Manuscript Notebook of Turnbull’s novel *Remember the End* (1938)
 12. Manuscript Notebook of Turnbull’s novel *The Bishop’s Mantle* (1947)
 13. Manuscript Pages and Gallery Proofs of Turnbull’s novel *The Gown of Glory* (1952)
 14. Manuscript Notebook of Turnbull’s novel *The Gown of Glory* (1952)
 15. Alma Mater:
 - a. [1910 Indiana State Normal School \(ISNS\) Commencement Program](#), Agnes Sligh (Turnbull) was Valedictorian of her class (photocopy)
 - b. [Fall 1974 IUP Report to the Alumni](#), announcing that author and alumni Agnes Sligh Turnbull and actor Jimmy Stewart will be receiving honorary degrees at the IUP Centennial Convocation on September 13, 1974 (photocopy)
 - c. Centennial Convocation of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, honorary degree recipients novelist Agnes Sligh Turnbull and actor Jimmy Stewart, September 13, 1974
 - d. Excerpt from *Indiana County 175th Anniversary History* by Clarence Stephenson, Volume III (1979), pp. 330-333, “Indiana Normal in the old days” written by Agnes Sligh Turnbull and published in the IUP Centennial Convocation program, September 13, 1974 (photocopy)
 16. Obituaries and Tributes of Agnes Sligh Turnbull (1888-1982)

- a. *Indiana Gazette*, February 1, 1982 (copy)
 - b. *Indiana Gazette*, February 2, 1982 (original and copy)
 - c. *New York Times*, February 2, 1982 (copy)
 - d. *The Sentinel*, published in New Alexandria, Pennsylvania (March 1982) cover story "Agnes Sligh Turnbull: Her life and career," pp. 3-7. (original and copy)
17. Biographical and bibliographic information about novelist Agnes Sligh Turnbull including a copy of this document (collection finding aid for Manuscript Group 41).
18. [Correspondence from Agnes Sligh Turnbull to classmate Margaret Redman Ferguson](#) (1892-1990), ISNS Class of 1911, letter is undated (August 21st), this file contains a letter from Margaret Redman Ferguson's granddaughter Beth Atkins Lawrence dated September 21, 2022
19. Correspondence with researcher Samuel J. Richards (IUP Class of 2004)
- a. Photographs of Agnes Sligh Turnbull's childhood home and the family cemetery plot in Union Cemetery, 2023
 - b. 2007-2008 Westmoreland History Magazine (Volume 12 Number 3) article, "Remembering Agnes Sligh Turnbull," pages 4-7 (Winter 2008)



Agnes Sligh Turnbull in 1970

Materials removed from Manuscript Group 41 and stored separately in the IUP Special Collections and University Archives

1. Artifact: 5" Souvenir sterling silver spoon, attributed to being donated by Agnes Sligh Turnbull; obverse, Indiana Normal School of Pennsylvania (Indiana State Normal School) seal; reverse, inscribed "1910" (stored in vault)

Books by Agnes Sligh Turnbull (1888-1982) that are part of the Rare Book Collection in the IUP Special Collections & University Archives are available for research:

1. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1926). *Far above rubies*. New York: Fleming H. Revell. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 F3
2. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1932). *The four Marys*. New York: Fleming H. Revell. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 F65
3. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1933). *The colt that carried a king*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 C6 (Inscribed)
4. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1936). *The rolling years*. New York: Macmillan. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 R6 1957
5. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1938). *Remember the end*. New York: Macmillan. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 R38 1938 (Inscribed)
6. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1941). *Dear me, Leaves from the diary of Agnes Sligh Turnbull*. New York: Macmillan. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 Z55 1941
7. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1942). *Day must dawn*. New York: Macmillan. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 D3 1942
8. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1947). *The bishop's mantle*. New York: Macmillan. Call Number: PS3539 .U79 B5 1947 (Inscribed)
9. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1952). *The gown of glory*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 G69 1952 (Inscribed)
10. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1957). *Jed, the shepherd's dog*. Boston: Houghton. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 J44 1957
11. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1960). *The nightingale a romance*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 N5
12. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1964). *The king's orchard*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 K5 (Inscribed)
13. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1964). *Little Christmas*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 L5 (Inscribed)
14. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1965). *George*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 G64 1965
15. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1966). *The wedding bargain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 W4 1966 (Inscribed)
16. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1968). *Many a green isle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 M3
17. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1970). *Whistle and I'll come to you: an idyll*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 W557
18. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1972). *The flowering*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 F5 (Inscribed)
19. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1974). *Richlands*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 R53 1974
20. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1964). *Winds of love*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 W56 (Inscribed)
21. Turnbull, Agnes Sligh. (1980). *The two bishops*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Call Number: PS3539 .U76 T9