Piazza San Marco, Venice: Writers & Tourists

Literary archives provide windows into writers’ creative processes, their writing communities, their intellectual endeavors. They also document family vacations and holiday diversions. Throughout the early decades of the 20th century, American writers and artists traveled to Europe for brief holidays, extended tours, or to live as expatriates. Like other American tourists, they visited celebrated and beloved sites, including the Piazza San Marco, the central public square in Venice, Italy. The great arches of Saint Mark’s Basilica and its 15th-century clock tower are among the Piazza’s attractions, but the square’s famously abundant and tame pigeons feature more prominently in many tourists’ photographs. For decades visitors to the Piazza could purchase grain from street vendors to feed the birds, and visitors frequently posed with the birds for photo-postcards to send home to friends and family.

Photographs and postcards from the literary archives of Blanche C. Matthias, Gerald and Sara Murphy (pictured with their children Honoria and Baoth), Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, H. D., Carl Van Vechten (pictured with his wife Fania Marinoff), William Carlos Williams (pictured with his wife Flossie Williams), and Donald Windham and Sandy M. Campbell (Windham pictured with Truman Capote), 1920-1940s

Objects

WC Williams
YCAL MSS 116 Box 70 folder
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3523454

HD
YCAL mss 24 box 53 folder 1344
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3586151
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3586149

Blanche C. Matthias
YCAL MSS 45 box 9 folder 167 –
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3520490

Stein and Toklas
YCAL MSS 76 Box 147 Folder 3434
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3520530?image_id=1014880

Murphy Family
YCAL MSS 468 Box 30 folder 581
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3806040

Donald Windham and Truman Capote
YCAL Mss 424 Box 36 folder 11
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3736369

Van Vechten //Call number?
http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3769168?image_id=4169079