Guide to the James S. Jaffe Collection of Jonathan Williams and The Jargon Society

YCAL MSS 332

by Matthew D. Mason

July 2009

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/
# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .................................................................................................................. 3  
Requesting Instructions ............................................................................................................. 3  
Administrative Information ....................................................................................................... 4  
  Immediate Source of Acquisition ............................................................................................ 4  
  Conditions Governing Access ................................................................................................. 4  
  Conditions Governing Use ...................................................................................................... 4  
  Preferred Citation .................................................................................................................. 4  
  Processing Information ........................................................................................................... 4  
James S. Jaffe ............................................................................................................................ 4  
Jonathan Williams (1929-2008) and The Jargon Society ......................................................... 4  
Scope and Contents .................................................................................................................. 5  
Arrangement ............................................................................................................................ 5  
Collection Contents .................................................................................................................. 6  
  Series I. Correspondence ....................................................................................................... 6  
  Series II. Manuscripts and Galley Proofs .............................................................................. 8  
  Series III. Artwork ................................................................................................................ 9  
Selected Search Terms ............................................................................................................. 11
Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 332

CREATOR: Jaffe, James S.

TITLE: James S. Jaffe collection of Jonathan Williams and The Jargon Society

DATES: 1949–1990

BULK DATES: 1968–1980

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.42 linear feet (4 boxes) + 1 broadside folder

LANGUAGE: English


Manuscripts and galley proofs document projects related to Williams. This includes a description of the ceramic art of Arnold Ward written by Williams in 1949, and the graphic design work of Dana Winslow Atchley for Jonathan Williams and Nicholas Dean, Blues & Roots, Rue & Bluets (1971) and a manuscript by Michael McClure for Passage (1957) published by The Jargon Society.

Artwork documents illustration material created, used, or considered by Williams in his personal projects or works published by The Jargon Society, as well as works by artists associated with him and the press. Artists include Fielding Dawson, Thomas Reuben George, Barbara Mildred Jones, David Ruff, and Paul Sinodhinos.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.jaffe

Requesting Instructions
To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.jaffe.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
James S. Jaffe collection of Jonathan Williams and The Jargon Society
YCAL MSS 332

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Purchased from James S. Jaffe Rare Books on the Ezra Pound Archive Fund, 2009.

Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
The James S. Jaffe Collection of Jonathan Williams and The Jargon Society is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Processing Information
The description of material in this collection were chiefly repurposed from identifications provided by the collector, James S. Jaffe.

James S. Jaffe

Jonathan Williams (1929-2008) and The Jargon Society
Jonathan Chamberlain Williams was a poet, essayist, and photographer, as well as the founder and publisher of The Jargon Society.


Since 1951, the same year Williams became a student at Black Mountain College, The Jargon Society has published works of poetry, experimental fiction, photography, and art by innovative authors of
the twentieth century. Prominent authors and artists published by The Jargon Society include James Broughton, Basil Bunting, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Lou Harrison, Ronald Johnson, Denise Levertov, Paul Metcalf, Henry Miller, Lorine Niedecker, Charles Olson, Joel Oppenheimer, Kenneth Patchen, and Louis Zukofksy. In his poetry and publishing with The Jargon Society, Williams maintained an association with the Black Mountain Poets.

Thomas Meyer (born 1947), a poet and translator whose works include *Uranian Roses* (1977), *Staves Calends Legends* (1979), and *Sappho’s Raft* (1982), was Williams’ partner and collaborator with The Jargon Society.

**Scope and Contents**

This collection consists of correspondence, manuscripts, galley proofs, and artwork collected independently by James S. Jaffe, which documents a varied sample of projects undertaken by Jonathan Williams and The Jargon Society. Overall, the collection provides glimpses into the working habits of Williams and underscores his associations with collaborators, including their conflicts and camaraderie. The collection includes especially rich documentation of William’s professional and personal relationship with Thomas A. Clark, a poet and publisher, as demonstrated by his correspondence to Clark.

Correspondence in the collection documents the associations Williams had with collaborators for projects for The Jargon Society, as well as with other publishers. Correspondents include Dana Winslow Atchley, Thomas A. Clark, Ian Gardner, Michael Loeb, Tom Phillips, U. Grant Roman, David Ruff, Henry Holmes Smith, Jon Edgar Webb, and Henry Weaning. The correspondence also includes related printed material collected by Williams’ collaborators.


Artwork in the collection includes illustrations created, used, or considered by Williams in his personal projects or works published by The Jargon Society, as well as other works by artists associated with him and the press. Artists include Fielding Dawson, Thomas Reuben George, Barbara Mildred Jones, David Ruff, and Paul Sinodhinos.

**Arrangement**

# Collection Contents

## Series I. Correspondence

**19 folders**

The series consists of correspondence, some printed material, and occasional manuscripts, collected by Jaffe from authors and artists who collaborated with Williams. Most letters were written by Williams and document joint projects with collaborators. The most substantive material relates to Thomas A. Clark.

Arranged alphabetically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1</td>
<td>Atchley, Dana Winslow</td>
<td>1968–1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 2-14</td>
<td>Clark, Thomas A.</td>
<td>1970–1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 15</td>
<td>Gardner, Ian</td>
<td>1972–1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 16</td>
<td>Phillips, Tom</td>
<td>1966–1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 17</td>
<td>Roman, U. Grant (1962–1965) Correspondence and related material originally compiled by Roman that primarily documents the publishing of Jonathan Williams, <em>Lines About Hills Above Lakes</em> (1964). It documents the planning for the book and Williams’ dissatisfaction with the final publication. Includes copies of correspondence between Williams and Henry Wenning, a bookseller in New Haven, Connecticut, who introduced Williams to Roman. Related material includes prospectuses for the book, pamphlets about Williams, a printed resume for Williams, and a promotional pamphlet for the Nantahala Foundation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 18</td>
<td>Smith, Henry Holmes (1967–1980) Correspondence by Williams that discusses his projects and their shared acquaintances, including Clarence John Laughlin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series II. Manuscripts and Galley Proofs

7 folders

The series consists of galley proofs and a manuscript for two works by Williams, as well as a typed manuscript for Passage, written by Michael McClure and published by The Jargon Society in 1957. Arranged alphabetically.

Blues & Roots, Rue & Bluets: A Garland for the Appalachians
Correspondence about the graphic design is available in Series I, Correspondence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 20</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 21</td>
<td>Camera-ready copy</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 22</td>
<td>Galley proofs</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 23</td>
<td>Oversize galley proofs</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 24</td>
<td>Photocopies of page proofs</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Bsd</td>
<td>Notes on Arnold Ward and a Theory of Ceramics</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 25</td>
<td>Passage</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Series III. Artwork

11 folders

The series consists of drawings, collages, engravings, and illustrations by Williams and his collaborators. The works primarily relate to Williams and The Jargon Society.

Arranged alphabetically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dawson, Fielding</td>
<td>Ink portraits of Jonathan Williams</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 26</td>
<td>3 drawings, 30.5 x 22.7 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 27-29</td>
<td>Collages</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 collages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Thomas Reuben</td>
<td>Drawing of trees</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 30</td>
<td>1 drawing, 21.2 x 35.7 cm on mount 25.8 x 45.7 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ink drawing intended as an illustration for Ronald Johnson and Thomas George, <em>A Line of Poetry, a Row of Trees</em>, (1964), but it did not appear in the final work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Barbara Mildred</td>
<td>Book cover illustration</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 31</td>
<td>1 drawing, 23.7 x 15.2 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pen and colored marker drawing of a scale for the cover of Jonathan Williams and Barbara Mildred Jones, <em>Super-Duper Zuppa Inglese (and Other Trifles from the Land of Stodge)</em> (1977).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruff, David</td>
<td>Engravings, “The Love of the Gentle Land” and “The Light in the Wood”</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 32</td>
<td>2 engravings, each 10.1 x 14.8 cm, on paper 27.7 x 20.3 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The engravings originally accompanied the fifth issue of <em>Inferno</em> (San Francisco, California).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinodhinos, Paul</td>
<td>Book cover illustration</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 33</td>
<td>1 drawing, 41.8 x 29.8 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Jonathan</td>
<td>Etching, “Spring Rounds”</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 34</td>
<td>1 etching print, 17.8 x 12.2 cm on paper 22.9 x 17.8 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A proof signed by Williams for his friend, Stanley Willis, a classmate and later English teacher at St. Albans School.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 35</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>circa 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 print, 32.2 x 38.2 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 36</td>
<td>Envelope</td>
<td>circa 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large envelope with a printed return address for Williams and abbreviations representing the 5th General Hospital in Stuttgart, Germany, probably used by Williams while he served as a conscientious objector in the United States Army.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
Authors, American
Poets, American

Genres / Formats
Drawings (visual works)

Names
Atchley, Dana
Clark, Thomas A.
Dawson, Fielding, 1930-2002
Dean, Nicholas
Gardner, Ian, 1944-
George, Thomas, 1918-
Jaffe, James S.
Jones, Barbara, 1912-1978
McClure, Michael
Phillips, Tom, 1937-
Roman, U. Grant
Ruff, David
Sinodhinos, Paul
Smith, Henry Holmes
Webb, Jon Edgar
Williams, Jonathan, 1929-2008
Williams, Jonathan, 1929-2008 -- Friends and associates

Corporate Body
Jargon Society