

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the A. R. Gurney Papers

YCAL MSS 728



by Beinecke staff

2007

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	3
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Processing Information	4
A. R. Gurney (1930-2017)	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
Collection Contents	6
Series I: Writings, 1958-1991, undated	6
Plays	6
Translations and Adaptations	9
Screenplays and Teleplays	10
Novels	10
Criticism, Essays, and Other Writings	10
Series II: Correspondence, 1962-1978, undated	12
Series III: Printed Material, undated	13
Series IV: Other Material, undated	14
October 2012 Acquisition, circa 1960s-2009	15
October 2016 Acquisition, circa 1947-2016	17
Correspondence, circa 1947-2012	17
Personal papers, circa 1947-2016	17
Writings, 1992-2015	17
Performance and event recordings, 1979-2004	18
Selected Search Terms	20

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 728

CREATOR: Gurney, A. R. (Albert Ramsdell), 1930-2017

TITLE: A. R. Gurney papers

DATES: circa 1947-2016

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 27.96 linear feet (43 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The A. R. Gurney Papers document the life and career of American playwright and novelist A. R. Gurney and consist of correspondence, writings, printed material, and photographs.

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

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 <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.gurney>.

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:

b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of A. R. Gurney (Yale School of Drama 1958), 2004, 2012, 2016.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 38 (digital media): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 42 (audiovisual materials): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The A. R. Gurney Papers 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

A. R. Gurney Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and in some instances minimal organization.

The finding aid for this collection is compiled from a preliminary list for the acquisition that was created at or around the time of receipt by the library. The preliminary list was migrated to comply with current archival descriptive standards in 2007-2008. As part of the migration, modifications were made to the formatting of the list; however, the content of the list was neither modified nor verified.

As a rule, descriptive information found in the Collection Contents section is drawn in large part from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

Former call number: Uncat MSS 634.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

A. R. Gurney (1930-2017)

American author Albert Ramsdell Gurney was born on November 1, 1930 in Buffalo, New York, to Albert Ramsdell and Marion Spaulding Gurney. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts from Williams College (1952) and Master of Fine Arts from the Yale School of Drama (1958). The Yale School of Drama produced Gurney's first work, a musical titled *Love in Buffalo*, the year he graduated.

Following graduation Gurney taught English and Latin at a day school in Belmont, Massachusetts (1959-1960) and then joined the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a Professor of Humanities (1960-1996) and Professor of Literature (1970-1996). Gurney has written a number of plays, screenplays, and novels. *Children* (1974), *The Dining Room* (1982), and *Love Letters* (1988) are among his best known plays. His screenplays include *The House of Mirth* (1972) and *Sylvia* (1995). Gurney's novels are: *The Gospel According to Joe* (1974), *Entertaining Strangers* (1977), *The Snow Ball* (1984), and *Early American* (1996).

Gurney married Mary Forman Goodyear on June 8, 1957. They have four children: George, Amy, Evelyn, and Benjamin.

Gurney passed away on June 13, 2017, in New York City.

Scope and Contents

The A. R. Gurney Papers document the life and career of American playwright and novelist A. R. Gurney and consist of correspondence, writings, printed material, and photographs dating from roughly 1947 to 2016.

Arrangement

Organized into six series: I. Writings, 1958-1991. II. Correspondence, 1962-1978. III. Printed Material, undated. IV. Other Material, undated. V. October 2012 Acquisition, circa 1960s-2009. VI. October 2016 Acquisition, 1947-2016.

Collection Contents

Series I: Writings, 1958-1991, undated

10.42 linear feet (24 boxes)

Series I contains playscripts, screenplays, teleplays, and novels in draft form in addition to production files and translations of Gurney's writings.

Series I is organized into five subseries: Plays, Translations and Adaptations, Screenplays and Teleplays, Novels, Criticism, Essays, and Other Writings.

Plays

b.1	Another Aida 3 Folders	
b.1	Another Antigone 4 Folders	circa 1988
b.2	Around the World in Eighty Days 2 Folders	circa 1962
b.2	Cat and Dog, typescript, corrected	
b.2	Children 4 Folders	circa 1974
b.3	Children 2 Folders	circa 1974
b.3	Charlie Should Have Been There, typescript, corrected	
b.3	The Cocktail Hour 4 Folders	circa 1988
b.4	The Cocktail Hour 2 Folders	circa 1988
b.4	The Comeback 3 Folders	circa 1964
b.4	The Decision Makers	
b.4	David and Goliath	
b.4	The David Show	circa 1966
b.5	The Dining Room 5 Folders	circa 1981
b.5	Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays	
b.5	The Golden Age	circa 1980
b.6	The Golden Age 3 Folders	circa 1980

Plays (continued)

b. 7	The Golden Age <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1980
b. 8	The Golden Age	circa 1980
b. 8	The Golden Fleece, typescripts, electrostatic copies, corrected <i>4 Folders</i>	1968 June
b. 8	Hearts and Flowers	
b. 8	Hit List <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 8	An Internal Affair	
b. 9	The Love Course <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1969
b. 9	Love in Buffalo <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1958
b. 9	Love Letters <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1989
b. 10	Love Letters <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1989
b. 10	The Middle Ages <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1977
b. 11	The Middle Ages <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1977
b. 12	The Middle Ages	circa 1977
b. 12	Mixed Emotions	
b. 12	The Missing Person <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 12	The Old Boys <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1991
b. 13	The Old Boys	
b. 13	The Old One-Two <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1971
b. 14	The Old One-Two <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1971
b. 15	The Open Meeting	circa 1965
b. 15	The Perfect Party <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1986
b. 15	The Pig Sextet Based on the short story "The Pig Fell in the Well" by John Cheever	

Plays (continued)

b. 16	The Pig Sextet <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 16	The Pig Woman <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 17	A Progressive Lullaby, typescript, carbon	
b. 17	The Problem, typescript, original draft	circa 1968
b. 17	The Rape of Bunny Stuntz, typescript, carbon, corrected	circa 1964
b. 17	Saint Jane	
b. 17	Saturdays and Sundays	
b. 17	Sunday Morning	
b. 18	Scenes from American Life <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1970
b. 18	Snow Ball <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1990
b. 19	Snow Ball <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1990
b. 19	Sweet Sue <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1987
b. 19	Three People	
b. 19	The Thursday Club, typescript, corrected, with mimeograph copy	
b. 19	Tom Sawyer	
b. 19	Tonight! In Living Color! <i>3 Folders</i>	
b. 20	Turn of the Century <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 20	The Visitation	
b. 20	The Wayside Motor Inn <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1977
b. 20	What I Did Last Summer <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1983
b. 20	Who Is Sally?, typescript	
b. 20	Who Killed Richard Cory? <i>9 Folders</i>	1975
b. 21	Who Killed Richard Cory?	1975
b. 21	Windwagon Smith <i>2 Folders</i>	

Plays (continued)

b. 21 Unidentified manuscript

Out-takes and false starts

b. 21 The Cocktail Hour

b. 21 The Dining Room

b. 21 Last Summer

b. 21 Love Letters

b. 21 Open Meeting and Love Course

b. 21 Old Boys and Later Life

b. 21 Unidentified manuscripts
2 Folders

Translations and Adaptations

Children

b. 21 French

b. 21 German

b. 21 Spanish

The Cocktail Hour

b. 21 Danish

b. 21 Spanish

The Dining Room

b. 21 Dutch

b. 21 Italian

b. 21 Spanish
2 Folders

Later Life

b. 21 German

Love Letters

b. 21 Chilean

b. 21 Danish

b. 21 French
2 Folders

b. 22 German
2 Folders

Translations and Adaptations > Love Letters (continued)

b. 22	Hungarian
b. 22	Paraguay
b. 22	Polish
b. 22	Romanian
b. 22	Russian
b. 22	Spanish <i>8 Folders</i>
b. 22	Unidentified <i>4 Folders</i>
	Other
b. 22	Middle Ages, Spanish translation
b. 22	Sweet Sue, unidentified translation
b. 22	What I Did Last Summer, unidentified translation

Screenplays and Teleplays

Novels

b. 23	Entertaining Strangers [working titles: The Guest of Honor, Human Events] <i>9 Folders</i>	1977
b. 23	Entertaining Strangers <i>9 Folders</i>	circa 1977
b. 23	The Gospel According to Joseph <i>4 Folders</i>	1972
b. 22	House of Mirth	circa 1972
b. 22	Hurdles (O Youth and Beauty) <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1979
b. 22	Personal Effects, narrative synopsis for a teleplay	
b. 22	The Politician	
b. 23	Practical Politics	

Criticism, Essays, and Other Writings

b. 23	Conversations in Learning, [working title], a prospectus, typescript, edited by Gurney
b. 23	The Winter's Tale, analysis of the play, holograph and typescript
b. 23	Beecher, notes
b. 23	Measure for Measure

Criticism, Essays, and Other Writings (continued)

b. 24 On Conversation

b. 24 A Program on Reading Plays

b. 24 A Program for the Close Reading of Gibson's "The Miracle Worker"

b. 24 A Program for the Close Reading of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town"

b. 24 Miscellaneous
2 Folders

Series II: Correspondence, 1962-1978, undated*4 Folders*

Series II contains incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 24	Typed letter to Wyman Holmes, Tufts University	1962
b. 24	Typed letter, signed, from Wyman Holmes	
b. 24	Typed letter, signed, from Louise Tate, WGBH	1962 August 22
b. 24	Typed letter to Gilbert Leibinger, regarding "The Golden Age," with notes concerning the play	1978 July 28

Series III: Printed Material, undated*14 Folders*

Series III contains printed material such as playbills, posters, and other printed ephemera relating to productions of Gurney's works.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 24	Love Letters, playbill from Williamstown, MA
b. 24	Love Letters, playbill from Japan <i>2 Folders</i>
b. 24	Love Letters, playbill from Poland
b. 24	Love Letters, playbills from various performances <i>2 Folders</i>
b. 24	Playbills and promotional material from foreign adaptations of various plays <i>2 Folders</i>
b. 25	Photocopies of articles about Gurney's plays
b. 25	Children, announcement of performance at the Manhattan Theatre Club
b. 25	"Tumhari Amrita," poster Indian adaptation of "Love Letters"
b. 25	"Tumhari Amrita," newspaper announcement
b. 25	Articles about "Love Letters" and "Tumhari Amrita"
b. 25	Aplodi

Series IV: Other Material, undated

2 Folders

Contains photographs and a script.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 25 Photographs from "Tumhari Amrita"

b. 25 Binder labeled "Cheever Script (final version)"

October 2012 Acquisition, circa 1960s-2009*11.71 linear feet (13 boxes)*

b. 26	Writings Includes <i>Black Tie</i> , <i>Grand Manner</i> , <i>Early Americans</i> , <i>Flea</i> , <i>Light Lunch</i> , <i>Office Hours</i> , <i>Big Bill</i> , <i>O Jerusalem</i> , <i>Fourth Wall</i> , and other works.	circa 1990s
b. 27	Writings and related correspondence Includes, <i>Children</i> , <i>Golden Fleece</i> , <i>The Old One-Two</i> , <i>Scenes</i> , and other works.	circa 1970s and 1990s
b. 28	Writings, related correspondence and other materials Includes <i>Love Letters</i> , <i>The Dramatist</i> , <i>The House of Mirth</i> , <i>The Family Man</i> , <i>Rest and Recreation</i> , and other works.	circa 1950s-2009
b. 29	Printed materials Includes press materials, programs, and playbills for <i>The Perfect Party</i> , <i>Labor Day</i> , <i>Overtime</i> , <i>Sylvia</i> , <i>Cocktail Hour</i> , and others works.	1980s-2000s
b. 30	Press reviews, correspondence, and other papers	
b. 31	Writings and related materials Includes <i>Later Life</i> , <i>The Snow Ball</i> , <i>Sweet Sue</i> , <i>Wayside</i> , and other works.	circa 1970s-1990s
b. 32	Production related materials Includes materials related to <i>Strictly Academic</i> , <i>Buffalo Gal</i> , <i>Ancestral Voices</i> , <i>The Golden Age</i> , and other productions.	1970s-1990s
b. 33	Production related materials Includes materials related to <i>The Dining Room</i> , <i>Who Killed Richard Corey?</i> , <i>The Middle Ages</i> , and others.	circa 1970s-1980s
b. 34	Writings Includes <i>Who Killed Richard Cory?</i> , <i>Saint Jane</i> , <i>Let's Do It!</i> , <i>Children</i> , <i>House of Mirth</i> , and others.	circa 1970s-2000s
b. 35	Writings, including <i>House of Mirth</i> Also includes Yale School of Drama notebook and other early writings.	circa 1940s-2000s
b. 36	Early writings and other materials relating to later achievements	circa 1950s-2000s
b. 37	Newspaper clippings, sheet music and other printed materials	
	Computer media Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 38	LOVE LETTERS PART 1 2-7-3 2012-ycal-107-0001 1 CD-R Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	

Computer media (continued)

- b. 38 LOVE LETTERS PART 2 2-7-3
2012-ycal-107-0002
1 CD-R

Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested.
Consult Access Services for further information.
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- b. 38 Michael Torke A.R.Gurney House of Mirth 19 Cues April 2, 2002 (midi
realization)
2012-ycal-107-0003
1 CD-R

Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested.
Consult Access Services for further information.
-
- b. 38 House of Mirth: Opening Music Nov. 8, 2000 use track 3
2012-ycal-107-0004
1 CD-R

Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested.
Consult Access Services for further information.
-

October 2016 Acquisition, circa 1947-2016*5.83 linear feet (5 boxes)*

Organized into four series: Correspondence, Personal papers, Writings, and Performance and event recordings.

	Correspondence	circa 1947-2012
	Contains correspondence between A. R. Gurney and his family members, collaborators, and other acquaintances, along with photographs and ephemera sometimes included with the correspondence. The material documents personal and business relationships related to A. R. Gurney.	
	Materials within this series maintain the original physical organization found at time of acquisition.	
b. 39	Correspondence (15 folders)	circa 1947-2012
b. 40	Correspondence (13 folders)	circa 1947-2012
	Personal papers	circa 1947-2016
	Contains yearbooks, event programs, certificates, and other materials related to A. R. Gurney's life and work.	
	Materials within this series are organized chronologically.	
b. 41	Antony and Cleopatra souvenir program, autographed by Katharine Cornell	circa 1947
b. 41	Program for Zanuck in the Streets	1951
b. 41	Naval Academy yearbook	1952
b. 41	In the Wake of Drake	circa 1954
b. 41	First Stage magazine	1965
b. 41	Souvenir program for 25th reunion of Williams College Class of 1952	1977
b. 41	Program for St. Paul's School 50th Reunion	1998
b. 41	Congressional honor certificate	2013
b. 43	City of Buffalo proclamations in honor of A.R. Gurney	2013-2016
	Writings	1992-2015
	Contains playscripts, notes, clippings, photographs, correspondence, and other ephemera related to A. R. Gurney's writings.	
	Materials in this series are arranged alphabetically by work title, with the exception of uncollected notes, which are located at the end of the series.	
b. 41	The Anti-Semite script	2012
b. 41	Central Park West script and notes	2007
b. 41	Family Furniture program and correspondence	2013
b. 41	The Fourth Wall script (German translation)	undated

Writings (continued)

b. 41	Let's Do It script	circa 1996
b. 41	Love and Money script	2015
b. 41	Love Letters programs and clippings	circa 1994-2005
b. 41	Love Letters programs and clipping	circa 1994-1999
b. 41	Love Letters script (Catalan translation)	circa 1997
b. 41	Love Letters script (Polish translation)	undated
b. 41	Love Letters program from Polish production	1996
b. 41	Photographs from performances including Love Letters	undated
b. 41	The Old Boy script	2012
b. 41	The Old Boy program	circa 1995-1996
b. 41	Older People script and notes	2003-2012
b. 41	Posters for The Problem	undated
b. 41	Casting info and program for the Signature Theater	2014-2015
b. 41	Strawberry Fields piano and vocal score	1999
b. 41	Sylvia script (Polish translation)	undated
b. 41	Sylvia script (German translation)	undated
b. 41	Sylvia programs and posters from international productions	circa 1996-2000
b. 41	Wayside Motor Inn notes and casting information	circa 2013
b. 41	Uncollected notes	circa 1992-1993
b. 41	Uncollected notes	1996-2004
b. 41	Notebook	circa 2011
	Performance and event recordings	1979-2004
	Contains video recordings of theatrical productions of works by A.R. Gurney, along with recordings of events related to Gurney's life, work, and interests.	
	Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
	Materials in this series are arranged alphabetically by performance or event title.	
b. 42	My Brother's Wife 1 Videocassette (VHS)	undated
b. 42	Central Park (Thirteen/WNET Great Performances) 1 Videocassette (VHS)	1999
b. 42	The Dining Room 1 Videocassette (VHS)	undated

Performance and event recordings (continued)

b. 42	ESPN classic <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	undated
b. 42	Full Motion Video <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	undated
b. 42	On Stage <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	2004
b. 42	Shall We Dance/The Snowball Tape <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	1991
b. 42	Stage on Screen: Far East <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	undated
b. 42	A Tribute to A. R. Gurney <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	2000
b. 42	Trying Times: Hunger Chic; Trying Times: Hit List <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	undated
b. 42	Youth and Beauty <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	1979
b. 42	Trying Times (3 shows) <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	1988

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

American literature -- 20th Century
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Dramatists -- 20th Century -- Archives
Male dramatists -- 20th Century -- Archives

Genres / Formats

Born digital
Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century

Occupations

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century
Dramatists -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Gurney, A. R. (Albert Ramsdell), 1930-2017