

Yale University Library  
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

# Guide to the Ruth Pine Furniss Papers

YCAL MSS 431



by H. Dean

2010

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## 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 431

**CREATOR:** Furniss, Ruth Pine, 1893-1957

**TITLE:** Ruth Pine Furniss papers

**DATES:** 1919-1960

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.5 linear feet (2 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Papers contain writings and other papers of American author Ruth Pine Furniss. Furniss's writings drew on her struggle with mental illness and her exposure to various medical treatments. Her career as an author is documented in various material, including drafts, printed versions of her writings, contracts with publishers, and copyright records. Some of her poetry, short stories, and articles written in the 1920s, and largely published in magazines and newspapers, are in a scrapbook of clippings. Reception of Furniss's novels, including *Gay, Snow*, and *The Layman Looks at Doctors*, is documented in reviews gathered into two scrapbooks. The Papers also include a draft for *The Dreamland Tree*, an unpublished novel completed in 1952. The correspondence of Furniss's son, W. Todd Furniss, reveal his endeavor to have *The Dreamland Tree* published following his mother's death.

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

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## 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.furniss>.

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](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

- b. box
- f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of W. Todd Furniss (Yale 1942), 1983.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The Ruth Pine Furniss 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.

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### Preferred Citation

Ruth Pine Furniss Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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### Processing Information

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization, in 2010. Printed material were removed from the Papers and catalogued separately at an earlier point in time. Former call number: Uncat Za Furniss.

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## Ruth Pine Furniss (1893-1957)

Ruth Kellogg Pine Furniss was born on March 2, 1893 to Charles LeRoy and Grace Eddy Kellogg Pine in Lansingburg, New York. She attended the Emma Willard School (Troy, New York) and Miss Porter's School (Farmington, Connecticut). She studied short story writing with Dr. Blanche Colton Williams at Columbia University and went on to publish a number of short stories and novels.

It is believed Furniss suffered from manic-depression, which was treated through periods of institutionalization, shock-therapy, a topectomy, and ultimately, a lobotomy. Furniss's writings drew on her struggle with mental illness and her exposure to various medical treatments, as can be seen in her novels *Gay* (1928) and *Snow* (1929), and *The Dreamland Tree* (completed in 1952 after Furniss received a topectomy and shock therapy). Furniss published *The Layman Looks at Doctors* (1929) under the pseudonyms S.W. and J.T. Pierce, who were a fictional couple.

In 1912 Furniss married Dr. Henry Dawson Furniss (d. 1942), with whom she had five children, three of whom survived childhood (Henry Dawson, Junior; James P.; and W. Todd). The Furniss family lived in Pelham, New York and New York City. During World War II Furniss served as a Gray Lady with the Red Cross. Furniss was hospitalized at several points during her life for what may have been manic-depression. At the end of her life she was hospitalized at Pilgrim State and Central Islip (Long Island). Furniss died of a heart attack in December 1957 at the age of 64.

## Scope and Contents

The Papers contain writings and other papers of American author Ruth Pine Furniss. Furniss's career as an author is documented in various material, including drafts, printed versions of her writings, contracts with publishers, and copyright cards. Some of Furniss's poetry, short stories, and articles written in the 1920s, and largely published in magazines and newspapers, are in a scrapbook of clippings. Reception of Furniss's novels, including *Gay*, *Snow*, and *The Layman Looks at Doctors*, is documented in reviews gathered into two scrapbooks. The Papers also include a draft for *The Dreamland Tree*, an unpublished novel completed in 1952 close to the end of Furniss's life. The correspondence of Furniss's son, W. Todd Furniss, reveal his endeavor to have *The Dreamland Tree* published following his mother's death.

The Papers also include personal effects, such as calling cards and photographs.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. W. Todd Furniss Correspondence, 1958-1960; II. Writings, 1926-1952; and III. Other Papers, 1919-1940.

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## Collection Contents

### . I.: W. Todd Furniss Correspondence, 1958-1960

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Correspondence contains letters between Furniss's son (W. Todd Furniss) and various individuals in relation to his endeavor to have *The Dreamland Tree* published posthumously. Some of Furniss's correspondence can be found in her "Scrapbook of reviews and correspondence" (Series III).

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

b. 1, f. 1	Amster, Leonard	1958-1959
b. 1, f. 2	Harcourt, Brace, and Co.	1958
b. 1, f. 3	Menninger Foundation	1958-1960
b. 1, f. 4	Scherman, Bernadine	1958
b. 1, f. 5	University Microfilm, Inc.	1958

**Series II: Writings, 1926-1952, undated**

Writings consists of drafts and printed versions of Furniss's writings. Printed versions and reviews of Furniss's writings can also be found in Furniss's scrapbooks (Series III).

The series is organized into two subseries: Major Works and Articles. Furniss's writings are arranged alphabetically by title.

## Major Works

b. 1, f. 6	<i>The Dreamland Tree</i> , typescript, carbon	circa 1952
b. 1, f. 7	Foreward by W. Todd Furniss for <i>The Dreamland Tree</i> , typescript, carbon	circa 1952
b. 1, f. 8	"The Tear-Test: A One-Act Comedy in Two Scenes," typescript, carbon	undated

## Articles

b. 1, f. 9	"Notes on Apprenticeship," printed version, <i>The Editor</i> , Vol. 73, No. 9	1926
b. 1, f. 10	"The Second Shall Be First," printed version, <i>The Editor</i> , Vol. 82, No. 11	1928

**Series III: Other Papers, 1919-1940**

The series contains documents relating to Furniss's writing career, including scrapbooks, contracts, and copyright cards, as well as personal items such as callings cards and photographs.

b. 1, f. 11	Scrapbook of reviews and correspondence	1927-1930
	Scrapbook of writings and reviews Stored in: Oversize box 2, folder 15 Contains poems, short stories, articles, and reviews. Short stories include: "Sentence" ( <i>Charm</i> , December, 1924); "Only Once" ( <i>The New Eve</i> , April, 1926); "Relax" ( <i>Chicago Sunday Tribune</i> , May 9, 1926); "Clay" ( <i>Transition</i> , August, 1927); "Bess Does Her Best" ( <i>Chicago Sunday Tribune</i> , November 27, 1927); "Answer" ( <i>Transition</i> , September, 1929); "Triangle" ( <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> , July, 1930); and "Bess gør sit bedste" ( <i>Søndags B.T.</i> , October 12, 1930).	1921-1930
b. 1, f. 12	Contracts and agreements	1928-1929
b. 1, f. 13	Copyright cards	1920-1940
b. 1, f. 14	Calling cards	undated
	Photographs of Ruth Pine Furniss and W. Todd Furniss Stored in: Oversize, box 2, folder 16	1919-1922, undated



**Oversize**

*1.08 linear feet (1 box)*

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b. 2, f. 15	Scrapbook of writings and reviews	1921-1930
b. 2, f. 16	Photographs of Ruth Pine Furniss and W. Todd Furniss	1919-1922, undated

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## **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  
Literature and mental illness  
Mental illness -- Fiction  
Mental illness in literature

### **Genres / Formats**

Scrapbooks

### **Names**

Furniss, Ruth Pine, 1893-1957  
Furniss, W. Todd (Warren Todd), 1921-