

Guide to the Dudley Nichols Papers

YCAL MSS 671



by Beinecke staff

December 2012

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 671

CREATOR: Nichols, Dudley, 1895-1960

TITLE: Dudley Nichols papers

DATES: 1903-1969

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.92 linear feet (7 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Dudley Nichols papers contain correspondence, writings, and personal papers documenting the life and work of American screenwriter and director Dudley Nichols. Correspondence with family, friends, authors, critics, actors, and directors includes a number of authors who, like Nichols, served in the Armed Forces during World War I or resided or worked at least briefly in California and Hollywood. There are letters from Edward Dahlberg, William Faulkner, Gene Fowler, Aldous Huxley, William Marsh, Christopher Morley, Henry Miller, Ernst Toller, and Thornton Wilder, as well as Charlie Chaplin and Jean Renoir. Work by Nichols dating from 1920 to the late 1950s includes several scripts for cinematic and theatrical productions and shorter works, including poetry, reviews, and essays. Personal papers feature Nichols's military records dating from his service in the U.S. Navy and photographs.

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

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.nichols>.

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

Acquired by gift from various sources, 1949-1987.

The bulk of the collection, including incoming letters, outgoing letters to family, most writings, and all personal papers, was received by gift from Dudley Nichols, 1949-1960, and his widow, Esta Nichols, 1961-1966. Additional materials, including outgoing letters to others and some writings, were acquired by gift from other sources, 1960-1987.

For more information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Dudley Nichols 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

Dudley Nichols 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 upon receipt by the library. Incoming and outgoing correspondence, for example, were arranged into separate alphabetical runs by name of correspondent. During re-processing of the collection in 2012, series were formally established for I. Correspondence, II. Writings, and III. Personal Papers, and the writings and other materials were arranged alphabetically by title and material type in the Writings and Personal Papers series respectively.

Former call numbers: Uncat Za Nichols and Uncat Za Ms 34.

Associated Materials

Dudley Nichols Correspondence Regarding the Screen Adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Dudley Nichols (1895-1960)

Dudley Nichols, a screenwriter and director, was born in Wapakoneta, Ohio to Grant Byron Nichols and Mary Means. Nichols developed a fascination with electricity and worked on a crew that repaired high-tension power lines and as a ship's radio operator on the Great Lakes. In 1915 he entered the University of Michigan, where he studied electrical engineering and was employed as a student assistant in charge of the

radio laboratory. At the outbreak of World War I, Nichols enlisted in the Navy and set up a school for radio operators. Later, he was part of the North Sea Mine Laying Force.

After the armistice Nichols volunteered for minesweeping duty and invented a method of electrical protection for minesweepers for which he received the Distinguished Service Medal in 1920. Following the war Nichols worked as a reporter for ten years for the Philadelphia *Evening Public Ledger*, then the *New York Evening Post*, and finally the New York *World*. During this period he also studied at New York University and sailed again as a radio operator.

In 1929 Nichols was persuaded by Winfield Sheehan, head of Fox Studios, to become a screenwriter. His first film, *Men Without Women* (1930), directed by John Ford, led to a collaboration with Ford that lasted until 1947 and resulted in fourteen films, including *The Lost Patrol* (1934), *The Informer* (1935), *Stagecoach* (1939), *The Long Voyage Home* (1940), and *The Fugitive* (1947). During the 1940's Nichols also worked with Fritz Lang, Jean Renoir, Howard Hawks, Leo McCarey, René Clair, and Elia Kazan. He wrote the final script of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943) and produced and directed two films based on his own scripts, *Sister Kenny* (1946) and an adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1947).

Biographical information taken from "Dudley Nichols." *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980. *Gale Biography In Context*. Web. 13 Dec. 2012.

Scope and Contents

The Dudley Nichols papers contain correspondence, writings, and personal papers documenting the life and work of American screenwriter and director Dudley Nichols. Correspondence with family, friends, authors, critics, actors, and film directors includes a number of authors who, like Nichols, served in the Armed Forces during World War I or resided or worked at least briefly in California and Hollywood. There are letters from Edward Dahlberg, William Faulkner, Gene Fowler, Aldus Huxley, William Marsh, Christopher Morley, Henry Miller, Ernst Toller, and Thornton Wilder, as well as Charlie Chaplin and Jean Renoir. Work by Nichols dating from 1920 to the late 1950s includes several scripts for cinematic and theatrical productions and shorter work, including poetry, reviews, and essays. Personal papers feature Nichols's military records dating from his service in the the U.S. Navy and photographs.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1915-1960. II. Writings, 1920-1958. III. Personal Papers, 1903-1969.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1915-1960

1.67 linear feet (4 boxes)

Series I. contains correspondence with family, friends, authors, critics, actors, and film directors. Correspondents include a number of authors who also served in the Armed Forces during World War I or resided or worked at least briefly in California and Hollywood. There are letters from Edward Dahlberg, William Faulkner, Gene Fowler, Aldus Huxley, William Marsh, Christopher Morley, Henry Miller, Ernst Toller, and Thornton Wilder. There is also correspondence with film figures Charlie Chaplin and Jean Renoir.

Organized into three subseries for Incoming, Outgoing, and Third-Party correspondence. Arranged alphabetically within subseries by last name of correspondent.

Incoming

Gift of Dudley Nichols, 1949-1960.

b.1	Atkinson, Brooks	undated
b.1	Behrman, S. N. (Samuel Nathaniel) Includes letter from Behrman to "Irving"	1953, 1955
b.1	Belasco, David	1928 March
b.1	Benoit-Lévy, Jean	1954-1955
b.1	Brooks, Van Wyke	1953-1956
b.1	Chaplin, Charlie	1947 May 27
b.1	Cinémathèque française	1955 March 8
b.1	Commins, Saxe	1957 April 11
b.1	Crowther, Bosley	1957 September 4
b.1	Dahlberg, Edward	1952-1953
b.1	Daniels, Guy	1957-1958
b.1	Effinger, John	1921 June 7
b.1	Ernst, Morris L.	1955-1956
b.1	Faulkner, William	1956-1957
b.1	Feuchtwanger, Lion	1952, 1956
b.1	Fowler, Gene	1954-1958, undatedf
b.1	Gassner, John	1945-1954
b.1	Huxley, Aldous	1944 November 27

Incoming (continued)

b.1	Kenny, Elizabeth	1944 May 1
b.1	Lardner, Ring	1925 October 28
b.1	Lefevre, Edwin	1926 December 6
b.1	March, William	1952
b.1	Masters, Dexter	1956-1957
b.1	Masters, Edgar Lee Includes drafts of writings by Masters and letter from Alice Davis	1939-1945, undated
b.1	Miller, Henry	1943, undated
b.1	Morley, Christopher Includes letter from Rollo Ogden to Morley and printed ephemera	1924-1949, undated
b.1	<i>The Nation</i>	1927 January 24
b.1	Nichols, Grant B. (father)	1933-1935, undated
b.1	Nichols, Kitty (mother)	1935, undated
b.1	Paulson, Arvid	1952-1960
b.2	Philip, Sister Mary <i>2 Folders</i> Includes drafts of writings	1945-1960, undated
b.2	Stokowski, Leopold	1944
b.2	Swope, Herbert Bayard Includes letters to Swope from others	1925-1955
b.2	Tesla, N[ikola?]	1921 July 11
b.2	Toller, Ernst	1937 July 37
b.2	Tully, Jim Includes printed version of "The Wabash Cannon Ball" by Tully	1939-1941
b.2	Webster, Samuel	1949-1959
b.2	Wilder, Thornton	1952 August 18
b.2	Young, Art	1941
b.2	Unsorted correspondence	1921-1951, undated

Outgoing

Acquired from various sources, 1960-1981. For more information consult the appropriate curator.

Outgoing (continued)

b. 2	Babb, James T. Includes carbons of letters from Babb to Nichols	1957
b. 2	Brown, Nils F.	1952-1957, undated
b. 2	Effinger, John R.	1921 July [6?]
b. 2	Elder, Arthur	1922-1923, undated
b. 2	Elder, David	undated
b. 2	Feuchtwanger, Leon	1953-1957
b. 2	Fowler, Gene	1954, undated
b. 2	Gassner, John	[1949?]-1959
b. 2	Henri, Florette	1956 December 16
b. 2	Hoffman, Irving <i>2 Folders</i>	1956-1959, undated
b. 3	Merrild, Knud; Merrild, Else	1937-1957, undated
b. 3	Nichols, Grant B. <i>5 Folders</i> Includes enclosures	1915-1923
b. 4	Nichols, Grant B. <i>2 Folders</i>	1925-1927, undated
b. 4	[Nichols], John	1917 July 10
b. 4	Nichols, Lucille	1917 May 13
b. 4	Orlovitz, Gil Contains photostats	undated
b. 4	Paulson, Arvid	1954-1959
b. 4	Philip, Sister Mary <i>2 Folders</i>	1944-1959, undated
b. 4	Renoir, Jean; Renoir, Dido Includes copies	1949-1959, undated
Third-Party Correspondence		
b. 4	Burness, Peter to Gustave O. Arlit Includes enclosure	1956 April 20
b. 4	[Nichols], Esta to "Mac"	undated

Series II: Writings, 1920-1958*0.84 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Series II. contains work by Nichols dating from 1920 to the late 1950s. The series contains several scripts for cinematic and theatrical productions and shorter work, including poetry, reviews, and essays.

Arranged alphabetically by title.

b. 4	"Come Angel Band," script, typescript, and playbill <i>2 Folders</i>	1936, undated
b. 4	"Dialogue on a Rainy Day," draft, typescript, and printed version	1958, undated
b. 5	"Double Alex," script, typescript	1949 April 29
b. 5	"Epitaph for a Father," script, typescript and typescript carbon <i>3 Folders</i>	undated
b. 5	"Exiles," review, typescript	undated
b. 5	"The Father," script, typescript, and printed ephemera	1934-1935
b. 5	"A Few Characters in Search of a Novel," typescript	undated
b. 5	"Gentlemen, Be Seated," review, typescript carbon	undated
b. 5	"House in the Sky," script, typescript carbon	1939 December 11
b. 5	<i>The Informer</i> , radioscript <i>2 Folders</i>	undated
b. 6	<i>Judge Priest</i> , shooting script, mimeograph	1934 April 27
b. 6	<i>The Long Voyage Home</i> , screenplay	undated
b. 6	[Poems] <i>2 Folders</i>	1920-1957, undated
b. 6	"Secret Places of the Groin," review, printed version, <i>The Nation</i>	1955 November 5
b. 6	"Sin is Abolished," drafts, typescript	undated
b. 6	"Witches Win in York," printed version, <i>The Nation</i>	1929 January 23
b. 6	Unsorted writings <i>3 Folders</i>	1927-1947, undated

Series III: Personal Papers, 1903-1969*0.42 linear feet (1 box)*

Series III. Personal Papers features Nichols's military records dating chiefly from his service in the the U.S. Navy during World War I and photographs.

Arranged alphabetically by material type.

b. 7	Clippings	1925-1928, undated
b. 7	Military records and material <i>3 Folders</i>	1913-1939, undated
b. 7	Miscellaneous unsorted material <i>2 Folders</i>	1905-1969, undated
b. 7	Photographs Includes photographs of Nichols, Robinson Jeffers, Aldus Huxley, and others	1903-1941, undated

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 -- 20th Century -- Archives
Motion picture producers and directors --
United States
Screenwriters -- United States -- 20th Century
-- Archives

Genres / Formats

Film scripts
Photographic prints

Occupations

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century
Motion picture producers and directors --
United States -- 20th Century
Screenwriters -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Chaplin, Charlie, 1889-1977
Dahlberg, Edward, 1900-1977
Faulkner, William, 1897-1962
Fowler, Gene, 1890-1960
Huxley, Aldous, 1894-1963
Marsh, W. Lockwood (William Lockwood),
1886-1963
Morley, Christopher, 1890-1957
Nichols, Dudley, 1895-1960
Renoir, Jean, 1894-1979
Toller, Ernst, 1893-1939
Wilder, Thornton, 1897-1975