

# Guide to the Ruth Jespersen Papers

YCAL MSS 708



by Beinecke staff

2007-05-16

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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 708

**CREATOR:** Jespersen, Ruth

**TITLE:** Ruth Jespersen papers

**DATES:** 1976-1990

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 4.44 linear feet (6 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Ruth Jespersen Papers consist of correspondence, writings, audiocassettes, and printed material regarding the professional life of the American writer Ruth Jespersen. Correspondence includes letters between Jespersen and Stephen Baily and Steven Milhauser and a letter from Jespersen to Phil Lyman. Writings contain typescript drafts, typescript photocopies, printed versions, and photocopies of printed versions of Jespersen's poetry, prose, a teleplay, and a screenplay. Two audiocassettes contain Jespersen reading *The Blink of an Eye*, a screenplay written by Jespersen and Michael O'Rourke. Printed material includes printed versions of Jespersen's publications and photocopies of publicity.

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

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

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  
    item barcode

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Ruth Jespersen, 1993-1996.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 6 (audiocassettes): Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The Ruth Jespersen 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 Jespersen Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

The collection received preliminary processing at the time of acquisition. Further organization, rehousing, and description were carried out in 2013.

The collection is comprised of material formerly classed as: Uncat ZA MS 307, Uncat ZA MS 427 and Uncat ZA MS 490. Various acquisitions associated with the collection have not been merged and organized as a whole. Each acquisition is described separately in the contents list below, according to month and year of acquisition.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn 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 basic processing.

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

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## Ruth Jespersen

Ruth Jespersen, American poet, and prose, teleplay, and screenplay writer.

## Scope and Contents

The Ruth Jespersen Papers consist of correspondence, writings, audiocassettes, and printed material regarding the professional life of the American writer. Correspondence includes letters between Jespersen and Stephen Baily and Steven Milhauser and a letter from Jespersen to Phil Lyman. Writings contain typescript drafts, typescript photocopies, printed versions, and photocopies of printed versions of Jespersen's poetry, prose, a teleplay, and a screenplay. Two audiocassettes contain Jespersen reading *The Blink of an Eye*, a screenplay written by Jespersen and Michael O'Rourke. Printed material includes printed versions of Jespersen's publications and photocopies of publicity.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three groupings: I. December 1993 Acquisition, 1976-1989. II. February 1995 Acquisition, 1990. III. July 1996 Acquisition, undated.

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## Collection Contents

### 1: December 1993 Acquisition, 1976-1989, undated

1 linear foot (1 box)

Former call number: Uncat ZA MS 307

b.1	Correspondence between Stephen Baily and Steven Milhauser, with index <i>6 Folders</i>	1976-1988
b.1	Letter to Phil Lyman at the Gotham Book Mart regarding a contribution to the Francis Steloff Memorial Lecture at Skidmore College	1989 April 23
b.1	Typescript drafts (photocopies) of poems and bibliography	undated
b.1	Typescript drafts (photocopies) and printed versions of poems and other writings published between 1954 and 1988 <i>46 Folders</i>	undated
b.1	<i>The Strange Ordeal of Edwin Panquo</i> (Biblia Candida, 1979)	1979
b.1	<i>The Printer's Devil</i> , Volume I, Number 2	1986 November 22

**2: February 1995 Acquisition, 1990, undated**

0.44 linear feet (2 boxes)

Former call number: Uncat ZA MS 427

Box 6 (audiocassettes): Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

b. 2	<p><i>The Blink of an Eye</i>, written with Michael O'Rourke, screenplay, typescript, with two audiocassettes of Jespersen reading from <i>The Blink of an Eye</i> 1 Folder</p> <p>Box 6 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p> <p>Two audiocassettes related to this material can be found in Box 6. See <a href="#">Ruth Jespersen reading The Blink of an Eye, 1990</a> (audiocassette 1) as well as <a href="#">Ruth Jespersen reading The Blink of an Eye, 1990</a> (audiocassette 2).</p>	1990
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091396946	<p>Ruth Jespersen reading <i>The Blink of an Eye</i> 1 Audiocassette 01:02:10 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm) There is static on the tape. <a href="#">[Aviary] ycalmss070839002091396946a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>The recording references the date as July 24, 1983.</p> <p>Box 6 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p> <p>This audiocassette is related to a folder of material titled "<a href="#">The Blink of an Eye</a>" in Box 2.</p>	1990
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091396953	<p>Ruth Jespersen reading <i>The Blink of an Eye</i> 1 Audiocassette 01:02:09 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm) There is a warble in the audio about halfway through the recording. <a href="#">[Aviary] ycalmss070839002091396953a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>The recording references the date as July 24, 1983.</p> <p>Box 6 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.</p> <p>This audiocassette is related to a folder of material titled "<a href="#">The Blink of an Eye</a>" in Box 2.</p>	1990
b. 2	"High Dudgeon", written with Michael O'Rourke, teleplay, typescript	undated
b. 2	Photocopies of newspaper columns by Jespersen, 1990-1993 3 Folders	undated

**3: July 1996 Acquisition, undated***3 linear feet (3 boxes)*

Former call number: Uncat ZA MS 490

Writings, typescript, various drafts. Includes novellas, plays, poetry and short stories. Titles include A Different Girl; Death and Windows; Helen, or The True Beginnings of our End; In Populous City Pent; and Testament.

b. 3 Photocopy of orange ring binder the following material was in

b. 3 Bibliographies

b. 3 A Piece of Scholarship

b. 3 Blue Nun

b. 3 A Memoir

b. 3 Happy Daze

b. 3 When Day is Done

b. 3 Stairs

b. 3 Pop

b. 3 Harry's Exceptional Kindness

b. 3 Epitaph

b. 3 After the War

b. 3 Yport

b. 3 The Buchsbaum Papers

b. 3 A Well-Earned Rebuff

b. 3 A Composition

b. 3 Photocopy of black ring binder the following material was in

b. 3 Helen, or The True Beginning of Our End

b. 3 Photocopy of red ring binder the following material was in

b. 3 In Populous City Pent p. 1-45

b. 3 In Populous City Pent p. 46-100

b. 3 In Populous City Pent p. 101-151

b. 3 In Populous City Pent p. 152-205

b. 3 In Populous City Pent p. 206-244

b. 3 In Populous City Pent p. 245-308

b. 3 Photocopy of red ring binder the following material was in



Photocopy of red ring binder the following material was in (continued)

b.3 Testament Chapters 1-4

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b.3 Testament Chapters 5-7

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b.3 Testament Chapters 8-10

---

b.3 Testament Chapters 11-15

---

b.3 Testament Chapters 16-Epilogue

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b.3 Photocopy of green ring binder the following material was in

b.3 A Name to Conjure With

---

b.3 Dora in Her Own Defense

---

b.3 The Yellow Silk Scarf

---

b.3 The Lifeguard

---

b.3 Semi-Private

---

b.3 Please Answer Soon

---

b.3 Pictures at an Exhibition

---

b.3 The Education of Martin

---

b.3 He

---

b.3 The Song of the Dress

---

b.3 Field Day

---

b.3 Grandchild

---

b.3 No Strings Attached

---

b.3 Epitaph

---

b.3 Shaggy Eyedrops

---

b.3 Chez Hernandez

---

b.3 Photocopy of green ring binder the following material was in

b.3 Larry Kramer, Esq. Waxes Fat

---

b.3 The Petition

---

b.3 Sybil

---

b.3 Escaping Miss Finch

---

b.3 Charlaque

---

b.3 Good Old Days in the Village

---

b.3 Bimbo

---

Photocopy of green ring binder the following material was in (continued)

- b.3 The Portrait of Mr. Bohak
- b.3 Bonanza
- b.3 What's a Man to Do?
- b.3 A Shot of Brandy
- b.3 The World of Marmaduke Chambers
- b.3 Loretta Ann Burbage Speaks Her Mind
- b.3 Mr. Hazeltine
- b.3 Three Years Down and Eighty to Go
- b.3 True Love Doth Pass Away
- b.3 We Spell Amusement with a Capital A
- b.3 Brunhilde: or Human Hate
- b.3 The Cellini Incident

b.3 Photocopy of olive green ring binder the following material was in

- b.3 A Father's Love
- b.3 Fair is Fair
- b.3 The Twelve Days of Christmas
- b.3 Folk Wisdom
- b.3 Sybil
- b.3 I, Siddhartha
- b.3 [In Memoriam Joe Singer \(1950-1993\)](#)
- b.3 Hymn to the Status Quo
- b.3 Yport
- b.3 Another Psychologist Named Lawrence
- b.3 Winifred
- b.3 A Likely Story
- b.3 Here Comes Norah
- b.3 Reba at Home
- b.3 Constantine's Misfortune

b.4 Photocopy of black ring binder the following material was in

- b.4 Subterranean Nightlife and Literary Scene

Photocopy of black ring binder the following material was in (continued)

b. 4	My Dinner with Grishkin
b. 4	The Magic Marker
b. 4	From the Library
b. 4	Hymn to the Status Quo
b. 4	A Smashing Exit
b. 4	The Bird of Dawning
b. 4	The Enigma Variations
b. 4	Out of Thine Own Mouth
b. 4	The Doctor Sproggins Company
b. 4	Humanity At Bay
b. 4	Family
b. 4	Tea and Comfortable Advice
b. 4	Buffcolored Birches and a Tearose Sky
b. 4	Out of Line
b. 4	Walter's Letter
b. 4	A Quiet Sunday (title page only)
b. 4	The Petition
b. 4	Photocopy of dark green ring binder the following material was in
b. 4	Abominations
b. 4	Benevolence
b. 4	A Piano Piece
b. 4	An Evening with Arlene Ardath
b. 4	Death of a Dog
b. 4	The Sleepwriter
b. 4	A Likely Story
b. 4	Disobedience
b. 4	The Girl Most Likely to Succeed
b. 4	Family
b. 4	A Multitude of Souls
b. 4	How Dare You

Photocopy of dark green ring binder the following material was i [...] (continued)

b. 4	Eidolon
b. 4	We're Going to the Country Now
b. 4	Mr. Loomis Makes an Offer
b. 4	The Healer
b. 4	The Baron
b. 4	The Musing in the Window
b. 4	Grishkin on the Phone
b. 4	Uncle Wembley's Book Party
b. 4	The Two Kinds of Writing
b. 4	Photocopy of white ring binder the following material was in
b. 4	Pop
b. 4	Constantine's Misfortune
b. 4	Play in novel In Populous City Pent
b. 4	Benevolence
b. 4	Sandwiched
b. 4	The Brigham Brittons <i>2 Folders</i>
b. 4	Photocopy of red ring binder the following material was in
b. 4	Gautier <i>2 Folders</i>
b. 4	Photocopy of brown ring binder the following material was in
b. 4	Dora in Her Own Defense
b. 4	The King and the Professor
b. 4	The Sketchbook of Americana Orville
b. 4	The Strange Ordeal of Edwin Banquo
b. 4	The False Step of Annalise
b. 4	The Cough
b. 4	Mildred
b. 4	The Supervisor
b. 4	Fontainebleu
b. 4	Grandchild

Photocopy of brown ring binder the following material was in (continued)

b. 4	Rhapsody in Balneal Rock
b. 4	Innocentia in Terra Mirabili
b. 4	At Mrs. Suwalki's
b. 4	The Timidity of Luriana Lurilee
b. 4	Fled Is That Music
b. 4	The Plant
b. 4	Beastliness at Beauvais
b. 4	Ils Ont Visite les Pays-Bas, Ils Rentrent a Terre Haute
b. 4	Innocenza Abroad Years Later
b. 4	<a href="#">In Mountainbrim Hospital</a>
b. 4	Poetry and Verse <i>2 Folders</i>
b. 4	Photocopy of navy ring binder
b. 3	Photocopy of white ring binder the following material was in
b. 5	A Chapter from Testament
b. 5	Pearl Button's Birthday Party
b. 5	As it says in Job: How forcible are right words!
b. 5	All Be as Before, Love
b. 5	The Double
b. 5	Apartment House, or What You Will
b. 5	Nellie
b. 5	Report of Mr. Glubb of the Bureau of Child Welfare
b. 5	The Robber Baroness
b. 5	Asterisk Politics: An Incendiary Tale
b. 5	Bonnie
b. 5	The Inkhornist
b. 5	Photocopy of white ring binder the following material was in
b. 5	Speranza
b. 5	Sandwiched
b. 5	Heart Attack
b. 5	Epitaph

Photocopy of white ring binder the following material was in (continued)

b. 5	De Gustibus
b. 5	<a href="#">Murder</a>
b. 5	The Witzig Tale
b. 5	Head of a Woman
b. 5	High Dudgeon
b. 5	The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness
b. 5	Madder Music and Stronger Wine
b. 5	A Joke
b. 5	Delilah Retires
b. 5	Twelfth Night
b. 5	From A to Z: Angelo and Zinaida
b. 5	No Strings Attached
b. 5	The Holy Grail
b. 5	About the Dedication Page
b. 5	Photocopy of blue denim ring binder the following material was in
b. 5	High Dudgeon
b. 5	Observances, Profane and Sacred
b. 5	Innocenza Abroad
b. 5	Bertie Brought to the Test
b. 5	The Happy Farmer
b. 5	<a href="#">Two Girls: A Chromatic Fantasy</a>
b. 5	Isabel for the Time Being
b. 5	Photocopy of white ring binder the following material was in
b. 5	Natasha
b. 5	Whatever Happened to Our Flower
b. 5	Children?
b. 5	Beneath the Moon
b. 5	Whim, Lose or Draw
b. 5	We Must Cultivate Our Garden
b. 5	Once, Twice, Three Times a Lady

Photocopy of white ring binder the following material was in (continued)

b. 5	At O'Houlihan's
b. 5	Some Journal Entries
b. 5	A Love Affair
b. 5	Coffee at Nedick's
b. 5	A Serious Disquisition on a Terribly Funny Subject
b. 5	The Mask
b. 5	Self-Portrait
b. 5	Me and Show Biz
b. 5	Confessions of a Dumb Blonde
b. 5	Happy Daze
b. 5	The Look
b. 5	<a href="#">We Must Speak by the Card, or Equivocation Will Undo Us</a>
b. 5	A Job with a Reputable Firm
b. 5	Threnody for Little Old Ladies
b. 5	Photocopy of blue denim ring binder the following material was in
b. 5	A Quiet Sunday
b. 5	At the Dunes
b. 5	Send Me a Person for Myself
b. 5	Never Seek to Tell Thy Love
b. 5	Hold Not My Western Heritage Against Me
b. 5	<a href="#">Gilliam Clicks</a>
b. 5	When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly
b. 5	Desperately Seeking Antonia
b. 5	Turnabout is Fair Play
b. 5	Parn Me
b. 5	Reparation
b. 5	One of the poems from Gautier in prose form
b. 5	Heaven Can Wait
b. 5	Ariel Beset
b. 5	Flying the Coop

Photocopy of blue denim ring binder the following material was i [...] (continued)

b. 5                    The Holy Grail

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b. 5                    How Did Youse Guys Know Us Broads Was Collitch Goils

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b. 5                    Departure

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b. 5                    Thirty Years Later

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b. 5                    Some Notes from My First Year of Widowhood

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b. 5                    Photocopy of blue ring binder the following material was in

b. 5                    [Death and Windows](#)

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b. 5                    A Different Girl, with Memorial Day (a novel by Frederick Dexter Berlin)

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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  
American poetry -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

### **Genres / Formats**

Audiovisual materials  
Scripts  
Sound recordings  
Television scripts

### **Occupations**

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century  
Poets -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Baily, Stephen  
Jespersen, Ruth  
Lyman, Phil  
Milhauser, Steven  
O'Rourke, Michael