

# Guide to the Peter Davison Papers

YCAL MSS 727



by Beinecke staff

2007-05-15

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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 727

**CREATOR:** Davison, Peter, 1928-2004

**TITLE:** Peter Davison papers

**DATES:** circa 1938-2005

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 15.21 linear feet (16 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Peter Davison Papers provide evidence of the career and personal life of author and editor Peter Davison. In addition to documenting Davison's professional and literary circles, the papers also provide insight into Davison's creative output, including his books of poetry (such as *The Breaking of the Day and Other Poems* and *Walking the Boundaries: Poems, 1957-1974*) and his autobiography ( *Half Remembered: A Personal History*). The papers are comprised of business and personal correspondence, writings, 1 audio compact disk, photographs, personal papers, and other papers by or relating to Peter Davison.

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

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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.davisonp>.

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

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Peter Davison, 2007.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 16 (CD): Restricted Fragile Material. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Peter Davison 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

Peter Davison 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 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 and merged into a single file 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 949.

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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## Peter Davison (1928-2004)

Davison was a poet and literary editor for the Atlantic Monthly Press and *Atlantic Monthly*. He was born on June 27, 1928 in New York City to Edward and Natalie Weiner Davison. He began his editorial career at Harcourt, Brace in New York after graduating from Harvard University in 1949. In 1956 Davison joined the Atlantic Monthly Press where he worked in several capacities, including executive editor, director, and senior editor, until 1985. From 1985 to 1998 Davison was the poetry editor for Houghton Mifflin.

Davison maintained a writing career in tandem with his career as a literary editor. He published several books of poetry in addition to his autobiography *Half Remembered: A Personal History* (1973). His books of poetry include: *The Breaking of the Day and Other Poems* (1964), *Walking the Boundaries: Poems, 1957-1974* (1974), and *Breathing Room: New Poems* (2000). Davison also edited *One of the Dangerous Trades: Essays on the Work and Workings of Poetry* (1991) and *The Fading Smile: Poets in Boston, 1955-1960, from Robert Frost to Robert Lowell to Sylvia Plath* (1994).

Davison married Jane Auchincloss Truslow, a writer, on March 7, 1959. They had two children: Edward Angus and Lesley Truslow. Following his first wife's death in 1981, Davison married the architect Joan Edelman Goody on August 11, 1984.

Davison died of pancreatic cancer on December 29, 2004 in Boston, Massachusetts.

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## Scope and Contents

The Peter Davison Papers provide evidence of the career and personal life of author and editor Peter Davison. In addition to documenting Davison's professional and literary circles, the papers also provide insight into Davison's creative output, including his books of poetry (such as *The Breaking of the Day and Other Poems* and *Walking the Boundaries: Poems, 1957-1974*) and his autobiography (*Half Remembered: A Personal History*). The papers are comprised of business and personal correspondence, writings, 1 audio compact disk, photographs, personal papers, and other papers by or relating to Peter Davison.

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## Arrangement

Organized into five series: I. Correspondence, 1941-2002. Series II. Personal and Family Papers, 1938-1950s. Series III. Professional Papers, 1954-1995. Series IV. Writings, 1957-2003. Series V. Other Papers, 1970s-2005.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1941-2002, undated

7 linear feet (7 boxes)

Series I contains Peter Davison's business and personal correspondence. Business correspondence is primarily comprised of Davison's editorial correspondence for the Atlantic Monthly Press. Family correspondence can also be found in Series II. Additional business correspondence, including Davison's work as a jury member for the Pulitzer Prize, is in Series III. Correspondence relating to specific writing projects is located in Series IV.

Series I is organized into two subseries: Business Correspondence and Personal Correspondence.

#### Business Correspondence

b.1	Alvarez, Beth	2002
b.1	Blount, Ray	1984
b.1	Bowen, Catherine Drinker	1974-1975
b.1	Coles, Robert <i>9 Folders</i>	1956-1983
b.1	Coles, Robert	1956-1983
b.1	Davison, Peter	
b.1	Fitzgerald, Frances <i>2 Folders</i>	1968, 1981
b.1	Ford, Jesse Hill <i>5 Folders</i>	1970-1983
b.1	Guillen, Jorge	1965-1972
b.1	Heat Moon, William Least <i>2 Folders</i>	1981-1983
b.1	Herge <i>2 Folders</i>	1982-1983
b.1	Ingatow, David <i>2 Folders</i>	1982-1983
b.1	Jones, Rodney	1983
b.1	Kennan, George F.	1960-1969
b.1	Matthews, William	1983
b.1	Moynihan, Daniel Patrick <i>4 Folders</i>	1978-1983
b.2	Mossman, James <i>2 Folders</i>	1960s-1971

## Business Correspondence (continued)

b. 2	O'Connor, Edwin <i>8 Folders</i>	1948-1981
b. 2	Porter, Katherine	1981
b. 2	Powers, J. F. [empty folder]	1970
b. 2	Priestley, J. B. <i>3 Folders</i>	1965-1972
b. 2	Randall, Clarence	1960s
b. 2	Reid, Alastair	1970s-1980s
b. 2	Russell, Bertrand	1966, 1970-1972
b. 2	Seferis, George <i>2 Folders</i>	1968-1973
b. 2	Starbuck, George	1982-1984
b. 2	Swenson, May <i>3 Folders</i>	
b. 2	Ustinov, Peter	1968
b. 2	Warner, William <i>3 Folders</i>	1982-1984
b. 2	Weeks, Edward	1983
b. 2	Wills, Garry <i>2 Folders</i>	1982-1983
b. 2	Zuckerman, Mortimer	1982-1983
b. 2	Various business correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	

## Personal Correspondence

## Arranged Chronologically

b. 3	Correspondence	1941
b. 3	Correspondence	1942-1943
b. 3	Correspondence	1944-1945
b. 3	Correspondence	1945-1949
b. 3	Correspondence	1949-1950
b. 3	Correspondence	1951-1953
b. 3	Correspondence	1955-1958
b. 3	Correspondence	1955-1959
b. 3	Correspondence	1958-1960

## Personal Correspondence &gt; Arranged Chronologically (continued)

b. 3	Various correspondents	1959-1961
b. 3	Letters: Teddie and Rose	1960s
b. 3	Correspondence	1970
b. 3	Correspondence	1970-1973
b. 3	Correspondence	1973-1974
b. 3	Correspondence	1974
b. 3	Correspondence	1976
b. 3	Correspondence	1977
b. 3	Correspondence	1978
b. 3	Correspondence	1979
b. 4	Correspondence	1980
b. 4	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1981
b. 4	Japan Trip	1982
b. 4	Correspondence	1982
b. 4	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1983
b. 4	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1984
b. 4	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1985
b. 4	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1986
b. 4	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1987
b. 4	Correspondence <i>3 Folders</i>	1988
b. 5	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1989
b. 5	Correspondence <i>3 Folders</i>	1990
b. 5	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1991
b. 5	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1992



## Personal Correspondence &gt; Arranged Chronologically (continued)

b. 5	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1994
b. 5	Correspondence <i>4 Folders</i>	1995
b. 5	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	1992-2000
b. 6	Correspondence <i>9 Folders</i>	1992-2000
b. 6	Correspondence <i>7 Folders</i>	1992-2000
b. 6	Correspondence <i>2 Folders</i>	2000-

## Arranged Alphabetically by Correspondent

b. 7	Allanbrook, Douglas	
b. 7	Brelis, Dean	1950-1955
b. 7	Davidson, Edward	
b. 7	Davidson, Edward - posthumous	
b. 7	Davidson, Lesley and Harriet Barry	1952
b. 7	Ford, Harry <i>5 Folders</i>	1966-1986
b. 7	Harvard University Press	
b. 7	Herzog, Fred	1960s
b. 7	Hite, G - Roman Letters	1971-1972
b. 7	Jerome, Judson, business correspondence	
b. 7	Jones, Howard M	
b. 7	Kazin, Alfred	
b. 7	Lindley, Frances	
b. 7	Matthews, William, business correspondence	
b. 7	Mayne, Richard	
b. 7	Merwin, William S. <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 7	Mowat, Claire	
b. 7	Perrin, Forrest	
b. 7	Plath, Sylvia	

## Personal Correspondence &gt; Arranged Alphabetically by Correspondent (continued)

b. 7	Pitts, Dudley	
b. 7	Priestley, J. B.	1970s
b. 7	Reid, Alastair	
b. 7	Schaffer, Peter	1950-1975
b. 7	Updike, John	
b. 7	Warren, Robert Penn	

**Series II: Personal and Family Papers, 1938-1950s, undated***1 linear foot (1 box)*

Series II contains personal and family papers, including correspondence, early writing projects, journals, and school papers.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 8	Family History Materials	
b. 8	Lazarus Herzog correspondence	
b. 8	Granny Weiner - personal correspondence	
b. 8	Madeline Kaliz (Hexter)	
b. 8	L. Blenkinsop correspondence	
b. 8	Various school papers - Boulder	1940s
b. 8	Various school papers	
b. 8	Journal	1938
b. 8	Various writings - "Juvenilia"	
b. 8	Writing	1947
b. 8	Writings - St. John's College	1949-1950
b. 8	"Senate page" papers and "Hearsay" prospectus	
b. 8	Drama, Harvard University	
b. 8	Personal file	Before 1949
b. 8	Personal file	1949-1950
b. 8	Army file <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 8	"Black Book" <i>2 Folders</i>	1949-1950
b. 8	Book reviews and jackets	1950s
b. 8	Various	

**Series III: Professional Papers, 1954-1995, undated***1 linear foot (1 box)*

Series III contains professional papers in addition to some personal papers. Included is printed material about Davison and correspondence relating to Davison's work as a jury member for the Pulitzer Prize.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 9	Employment - Harvard, California, R.I. School	1954-1962
b. 9	Music reviews	1959-[?]
b. 9	Villa Serbelloni, correspondence	1970s
b. 9	Rome	1971
b. 9	Articles	1972
b. 9	Rome <i>2 Folders</i>	1972
b. 9	Correspondence regarding writings	1984-1986
b. 9	Pulitzer Prize Correspondence	1984
b. 9	Articles about Peter Davison	1980s
b. 9	"The Boston TAB"	1992 February 18
b. 9	"National Geographic"	1994 January
b. 9	Writings on James Merrill	1995
b. 9	Printed material	
b. 9	Various papers	
b. 9	Historical Documents	
b. 9	Robert Frost House, business correspondence	
b. 9	Memorabilia <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 9	"Half Remembered" reviews, etc.	
b. 9	Various files	

**Series IV: Writings, 1957-2003, undated***5 linear feet (5 boxes)*

Series IV is comprised of drafts, proofs, and galleys relating to Davison's publications. The series also includes drafts and research relating to Davison's public appearances (such as readings and speeches). Correspondence relating to writing projects can be found in this series.

Series IV is organized into three subseries: Poetry and Nonfiction; Readings, Speeches, and Robert Frost Materials; and Reviews, Correspondence, and Publishing Papers.

## Poetry and Nonfiction

b. 10	Breaking of the Day - setting copy	1964
b. 10	Breaking of the Day - page proofs	1963 October 7
b. 10	Breaking of the Day - galleys	1963 August 28
b. 10	The City and the Island - setting copy	1966
b. 10	The City and the Island - page proofs	1966
b. 10	Pretending To Be Asleep - setting copy	1970
b. 10	Pretending To Be Asleep - first proof	1969 October 9
b. 10	Pretending To Be Asleep - second proof	1969 October 28
b. 10	Half Remembered - setting typescript <i>2 Folders</i>	1973 February 7
b. 10	Walking the Boundaries - setting typescript	undated
b. 10	The Dance of Hours - misc.	1973, 1977
b. 10	The Dance of Hours - setting typescript <i>2 Folders</i>	1984
b. 10	Praying Wrong - page proofs <i>2 Folders</i>	1984 Sept 5
b. 10	Barn Fever - notes	1980
b. 10	Barn Fever - typescript, corrected	undated
b. 10	Barn Fever - setting copy	undated
b. 10	Barn Fever - page proofs	1980
b. 10	The Great Ledge - typescript	1988
b. 10	The Great Ledge - typescript	1989
b. 10	The Great Ledge - setting typescript	1989
b. 10	The Great Ledge - author's proofs	1989
b. 10	The Great Ledge - printer's proofs, first	1989

## Poetry and Nonfiction (continued)

b. 10	The Great Ledge - printer's proofs, third	1989
b. 10	The Great Ledge - Designer's Mock Up	1989
b. 11	Voice in the Mountain - typescript, corrected by Robert Penn Warren	1977
b. 11	Voice in the Mountain - typescript, corrected	undated
b. 11	Voice in the Mountain - proofs, corrected	1977
b. 11	Walking the Boundaries, manuscript	
b. 11	Walking the Boundaries - duplicate proof, English	1973
b. 11	Discarded Poems	1949-1986
b. 11	"Cyclialbian"	1950
b. 11	"The Sea Horse"	1957
b. 11	Unpublished Articles	1960s
b. 11	"The Unfailed Writer"	
b. 11	Occasional Verse	
b. 11	Poems	1995-2000
b. 11	Unpublished writings?	
b. 11	Atlantic articles on poetry	
b. 11	Atlantic articles [by Peter Davison]	
b. 11	Travel piece on Olympus - never finished	
b. 11	American Heritage Articles	
b. 11	Lowell-Dickey article [empty]	
	Papers Relating to "Fading Smiles"	
b. 12	Lists for "Fading Smiles"	
b. 12	Booth Material	
b. 12	Davison Material	
b. 12	Donald Hall Material	
b. 12	Holmes Material	
b. 12	Hardwick Material	
b. 12	Kumin Material	
b. 12	Kunitz Material <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 12	Lowell Material	

## Poetry and Nonfiction &gt; Papers Relating to "Fading Smiles" (continued)

b. 12	MacLeish Material	
b. 12	Merwin Material	
b. 12	Sylvia Plath Material <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 12	Poets Theatre	
b. 12	Adrienne Rich Material	
b. 12	Anne Sexton Material	
b. 12	Sissman Material <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 12	Starbuck Material	
b. 12	Sweeney Material	
b. 12	Wilbur Material	
b. 12	Photographs <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 12	Negatives	
b. 12	Photographs <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 12	Fading Smile, page proofs for	
Readings, Speeches, and Robert Frost Materials		
b. 13	Speeches on publishing	
b. 13	Readings and introductions	1963-1983
b. 13	Readings	1983-1991
b. 13	Readings	1992-2003
b. 13	"Natural Enemies"	1971
b. 13	"The Real Voices of Modern Poetry"	
b. 13	"Madness in Modern Poetry"	
b. 13	"The Family"	
b. 13	"The City and the Island"	
b. 13	"Pity, Peace and Love"	
b. 13	"Apocalypse," Wheaton Graduation	1969
b. 13	Speeches at Smith College, Harvard University	
b. 13	Reading Schedule	2000

## Readings, Speeches, and Robert Frost Materials (continued)

b. 13	Thomas Hardy Reading	
b. 13	"Jupiter: What Poetry Does for Language"	
b. 13	"What Poetry Does to Language" <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 13	Emerson College Lectures	
b. 13	Baylor Lecture	
b. 13	"Versions and Veils"	
b. 13	"The Poet as Editor"	
b. 13	New England Monthly, Robert Frost essay	
b. 13	Atlantic Monthly, Robert Frost essay	
b. 13	Robert Frost Centennial Documentation	
b. 13	Robert Frost Centennial Clippings	
b. 13	Papers regarding Robert Frost	
b. 13	Robert Frost lecture <i>2 Folders</i>	1998
b. 13	Robert Frost speeches	
Reviews, Correspondence, and Publishing Papers		
b. 14	Reviews: General	
b. 14	"The Breaking of the Day" - comments	
b. 14	"The City and the Island" - reviews and comments	
b. 14	"Dark Houses," correspondence, etc	
b. 14	Reviews: "Barn Fever" and "Voice on Mountain"	
b. 14	"Barn Fever" - Atheneum correspondence and reviews	
b. 14	"The Great Ledge" - reviews, etc.	
b. 14	"Praying Wrong" - reviews <i>3 Folders</i>	
b. 14	"Walking the Boundaries" [Reviews, etc.] <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 14	"Walking the Boundaries" - copyrights	
b. 14	"A Voice in the Mountain" [Reviews, etc.]	
b. 14	"A Voice in the Mountain" - Atheneum correspondence	
b. 14	"Half Remembered" - Heinemann Publishers [correspondence, etc]	



## Reviews, Correspondence, and Publishing Papers (continued)

b. 14	"Half Remembered" - letters
b. 14	"Half Remembered" [revised edition correspondence, etc]
b. 14	"Pretending To Be Asleep" - comments
b. 14	"Fading Smile" - reviews, etc.
b. 14	"Fading Smile" - permissions
b. 14	"My Say" - correspondence, permissions etc.
b. 14	"The Poems of Peter Davison" - text and proofs
b. 14	Harper and Row [correspondence, etc]
b. 14	Russell and Volkening [correspondence etc.]
b. 14	University of Michigan Press
b. 14	Watershed Foundation Tape
b. 14	Permissions for Publications

**Series V: Other Papers, 1970s-2005, undated***1 linear foot (1 box)*

Series V contains business papers, personal papers, financial records, printed material, and other materials.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 15	Peter Davison Biographical Info	1970s
b. 15	Peter Davison Bio	2000
b. 15	Bio	2002
b. 15	Fellowships and Grants	
b. 15	Programs from Author Events	
b. 15	The White House	1980
b. 15	Events	
b. 15	Book and Author Dinners - Richmond, VA	
b. 15	Clippings by and about Peter Davison	
b. 15	Atlantic Monthly - History	
b. 15	Publishing History	
b. 15	Knopf correspondence, etc.	
b. 15	Knopf contracts	
b. 15	Knopf royalties	
b. 15	Knopf/Norton royalties	
b. 15	Knopf/Random House royalties	
b. 15	Yaddo	
b. 15	Transcripts of Interviews with Peter Davison	
b. 15	Peter Davison Memorials 2007-YCAL-7164-0001: Remembering Peter Davison, June 25, 2005 Computer disk is restricted. Copies of electronic files may be requested through Access Services	2004-2005
b. 15	"Alfred," Interview typescript	
b. 15	Photocopies of Doris Holmes papers	
b. 15	Various papers	
b. 15	Harvard 50th Reunion	
b. 15	Edward Davison POWs	
b. 15	Masefield, John - autograph letter, signed, to Edward Davison	undated

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b. 15	Peter Davison letter to Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library	1977
b. 15	Photograph of Mark Twain	undated

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## **Computer media**

*0.21 linear feet (1 box)*

- b. 16            Remembering Peter Davison June 25, 2005  
                  2007-ycal-7164-0001  
                  1 CD-R

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

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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  
Editors -- United States  
Publishers and publishing -- United States

### **Genres / Formats**

Born digital  
Electronic documents  
Photographs

### **Names**

Coles, Robert, 1929-  
Davison, Peter, 1928-2004  
Ford, Jesse Hill, 1928-1996  
O'Connor, Edwin  
Swenson, May, 1913-1989

### **Corporate Body**

Atlantic Monthly Press