

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the Frank Stanford Papers

YCAL MSS 295



by Jennifer Meehan and David Williams, Brooke McManus

2008. Revised: April 2023.

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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 295

CREATOR: Stanford, Frank, 1949-1978

TITLE: Frank Stanford papers

DATES: 1958-2011

BULK DATES: 1970-1993

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 7.5 linear feet (13 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of material created and accumulated by Frank Stanford, as well as material created and accumulated after Stanford's death by C. D. Wright in her role as co-executor of his estate and as editor of Lost Roads Publishers. Included are Stanford's writings, which comprise manuscripts and drafts of poems and prose, some of which are C. D. Wright's copies, and notebooks; correspondence received by Stanford from editors, publishers, and writers; correspondence relating to Stanford and Lost Roads Publishers received by C. D. Wright; personal and press business records; a small amount of photographs; printed material; an inscribed knife; and a plumb bob. The material documents Stanford's work as a poet and publisher, his involvement in filmmaking, aspects of the initial operation of Lost Roads Publishers, and the posthumous publication, reception, and study of Stanford's work.

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

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.stanford>.

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
■■■■ item barcode

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Forrest Gander and C. D. Wright, 2008, and purchased from C. D. Wright on the Alfred Z. Baker, Jr. Fund, 2012-2016.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 8 (computer disks) and Box 9 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Frank Stanford 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

Frank Stanford 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 organization. Descriptive information 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.

Associated Material

Related material can found in Lost Roads Publisher Records, Uncat MSS 938 and Uncat MSS 1286.

Frank Stanford (1948-1978)

Frank Stanford was born in southeast Mississippi in 1948. In the following year he was adopted by Dorothy Gilbert, and in 1952 relocated to Arkansas when Gilbert married Albert Franklin Stanford. Remembered as a bright and athletic child in his early youth, the young Frank Stanford was greatly affected by the knowledge of his adoption. He entered the University of Arkansas in 1967 as a student of Civil Engineering, but later on switched to study literature, and was well known in the Fayetteville literary community for his poetry. He wrote poems for the student literary magazine, *Preview*, and many of the early poems following his college years were published in journals such as *Field*, *Ironwood*, and *American Poetry Review*.

Stanford left college without earning a degree. In 1970 he met Irving Broughton, editor and publisher of Mill Mountain Press, who published Stanford's first book, *The Singing Knives*. Between 1970-76, Mill Mountain published five more of Stanford's books. Also in the early 70s, Broughton and Stanford made a documentary film about Stanford's work and life. The film, *It Wasn't a Dream it Was a Flood*, won the

Best Experimental Film Award at the West Coast Film Festival in 1975. The following year saw the birth of Stanford's own publishing company, Lost Roads Publishers. Lost Roads sought to "reclaim the landscape of American poetry" by publishing little known authors, whom the poet C.D. Wright, succeeding Stanford as editor, called the "the beautiful wild poets we grow from the road." In 1977, Lost Roads Publishers and Mill Mountain Press joint-published Stanford's epic poem, *The Battlefield Where the Moon Says I Love You*, a manuscript of over 15,000 lines of poetry that Stanford had been working on sporadically since his early teenage years.

Stanford was well aware of the unique sensitivity that marked him apart from others even in childhood. "When the rest of you / Were being children / I became a monk / To my own listening / Imagination." Elsewhere, Stanford speaks of Death, which he imagines as a fisherman in a boat: "Young as I am I / Hold light for this boat." Amongst Stanford's most powerful poems are his reflections on this shadow from which none return. Franz Wright called him "one of the great voices of Death." With uncanny insight and beauty, Stanford's poems often seek to portray and imagine Death, which was, in Wright's words, "his biggest love affair."

On June 3 1978, at the age of 29, Stanford took his own life in his home in Fayetteville, Arkansas. His chapbook *Crib Death* came out shortly afterwards. Lost Roads published more of his poems in *You* in 1979, and a collection of his short fiction *Conditions Uncertain And Likely To Pass Away* in 1990. The following year the University of Arkansas Press published *The Light the Dead See: Selected Poems of Frank Stanford*.

Biographical note prepared by Shu-Han Luo, Yale College '09.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of material created and accumulated by Frank Stanford, as well as material created and accumulated after Stanford's death by C. D. Wright in her role as co-executor of his estate and as editor of Lost Roads Publishers. Included are Stanford's writings, which comprise manuscripts and drafts of poems and prose, some of which are C. D. Wright's copies, and notebooks; correspondence received by Stanford from editors, publishers, and writers; correspondence relating to Stanford and Lost Roads Publishers received by C. D. Wright; personal and press business records; a small amount of photographs; printed material; audiovisual and computer media; an inscribed knife; and a plumb bob. The material documents Stanford's work as a poet and publisher, his involvement in filmmaking, aspects of the initial operation of Lost Roads Publishers, and the posthumous publication, reception, and study of Stanford's work.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence and Other Papers. II. Writings and Other Papers. III. October 2012 Acquisition. IV. June 2016 Acquisition.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence and other papers

(2 boxes)

Files are largely arranged in the order in which they were received.

b.1	Drawer 1 List	
b.1	Biographical material	
b.1	Correspondence between C. D. Wright and Carrie Rogers (Stanford's niece)	2000
b.1	Lists of File Drawers Contents	
b.1	2 Issues of "The Grapevine"	1977
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Babi, Jim	1972-1974
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Broughton, Irv <i>2 Folders</i>	1971-1973
b.1	Murray Shugars/FS Thesis	1998
b.1	Correspondence to C. D. Wright - Letters from Readers <i>2 Folders</i>	1978-1997
b.1	Bibliography/Bio Notes	
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford re: Submissions, solicitations, etc.	1971-1977
b.1	Correspondence to C. D. Wright - Carpenter, Bill	1988-1991
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Cuddihy, Michael	1973-1976, 1988
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Dugan, Alan	1971-1977
b.1	Correspondence, Fuhrmann, Nicholas	1979, 1991
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Ben Kimpel re: Battlefield	
b.1	Correspondence to C. D. Wright - Launius, Carl	1986-1987
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - McKernan, John	1973-1978
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Stafford, William	1975
b.1	Letters from Dorothy Stanford to C. D. Wright <i>2 Folders</i>	
b.1	Correspondence to Stanford - Walker, David	1973-1975, 1979
b.1	Richard Wilbur, Clipping	
b.1	Joan Williams to C.D. and Stanford	1989 February 17
b.1	Correspondence, Wright, Ernie	
b.2	re: work of FS	


b. 2	Stanford Reviews	
b. 2	Submissions, Publication Record	1978-1979
b. 2	Letters to Lost Roads Authors (from Stanford)	1977-1978
b. 2	Correspondence to C.D. Wright - Seluzicki, Charles, Rare Book Dealer	1981
b. 2	"Irv Brought Talks with Frank Stanford," typescript	1972-1973
b. 2	Miscellaneous	
b. 2	Awards (relating to various award competitions)	1975-1991
b. 2	Correspondence to Stanford, Films and Books	
b. 2	Film Information	
b. 2	Film Grant and "Gospel Bird"	1976
b. 2	South Africa and other politics	
b. 2	Lost Roads Press business	1974-1978
b. 2	1975 tax returns	
b. 2	Awards	
b. 2	Publishing Costs/Personal Business	1975-1979
b. 2	Surveying Business (Chason Tilex)	1974-1978
b. 2	The Grapevine obit issue	1978
b. 2	Stanford/Selected Poems/U. of Arkansas	1991-1993
b. 2	Obit/Elegy by Stan and Stokesbury	
b. 2	Obit/hakr/etc.	
b. 2	Correspondence re: work of Stanford	1983-1992
b. 2	June News Releases	1978
b. 2	Birth (information regarding Stanford's birth) <i>2 Folders</i>	

Series II: Writings and other papers*(4 boxes)*

Box 9 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Files are largely arranged in the order in which they were received.

b. 3	List Drawer 2	
b. 3	Field Talk	
b. 3	Grapevine (2 issues)	
b. 3	Extra Copies from uncollected poems	
b. 3	YOU (x2)	
b. 3	YOU x2	
b. 3	YOU x3	
b. 3	YOU	
b. 3	Conditions Uncertain and Likely to Pass Away: Stories of Frank Stanford <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1985
b. 3	Tales A-F	
b. 3	Tales H-M	
b. 3	Tales S-W	
b. 3	Letters to Fr. Jerome, re: translation of Bertolucci work	
b. 3	Poetry Fragment, Typed	
b. 3	Conditions Uncertain Galley	
b. 3	The Singing Knives	
b. 3	To Frank and C. D.	1975-1977
b. 3	Originals	
b. 3	Poems to Ginny's Admin	
b. 3	[Poetry as Process]	
b. 3	The Battlefield	
b. 3	To Ginny's Admin Stories and Poems <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 3	Prose Fragments	
b. 4	[notes and poems]	
b. 4	Uncollected	

b. 4	Approacheth the Ship...	
b. 4	Mad Dogs	
b. 4	Handwritten Notes - Fragments	
b. 4	Wounds	
b. 4	Smoking Grapevine	
b. 4	Automatic Co-pilot Adaptations and Translations	
b. 4	Poems, manuscripts	
b. 4	Last Panther in the Ozarks	
b. 4	Floor Extras	
b. 4	From Plain Songs	
b. 4	List Drawer 3	
b. 4	Printed Material 4 Folders	
b. 4	List Drawer 4	
b. 9,  39002140909608	Jazz Impressions 1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch tape; 7" reel 00:57:46 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm) The program is distorted at times. Audio, at times, sounds hollow or unclear.	1978 June 10
b. 4	Poster Ups 3 Folders	
b. 5	Poster Ups 2 Folders	
b. 5	Ephemera	
b. 9,  39002099369655	Untitled 1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch; diameter 5 inches This reel is completely blank. It has not been digitized. Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 9,  39002099369663	"A Lost Roads Crossing" (audiotape reel) 1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch; diameter 7 inches 00:53:22 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm) [Aviary] ycalmss029539002099369663.u.mp3 Contents include lyrics for: "Spell" by F. Stanford. Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	1978 October 23
b. 5	Land Surveyor Stamp	
b. 5	Photographs	

b. 5	St. Francis and the Wolf <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 5, ■■■ 39002141021023	Stanford - KUAF - Fayetteville <i>1 Audiocassette 00:12:14 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> The program starts and ends abruptly. Audio distortion, hum, and hiss are present. [Aviary] Stanford - KUAF - Fayetteville undated Audiovisual material: Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 5	Printed Material	
b. 5	Notebooks, YOU <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 5	Notebooks, Singing Knives <i>2 Folders</i>	
b. 5	Collected Poems by Alan Dugan, Annotated	
b. 5	The Singing Knives, C. D. Wright's original copy	
b. 5	Open Places, with letter from Stanford to Donald Justice inside	1972
b. 5	Manuscript items removed from books	

Series III: October 2012 acquisition, 1974-2000*0.5 linear feet (3 boxes)*

b. 6	Awards	1981, undated
b. 6	Decree of adoption documents, correspondence, and notes	
b. 6	Correspondence and event posters	
b. 6	Oxford American Editor Attila Berry's correspondence with C. D. Wright; proofs.	
b. 6	Photographs	1985-1986, undated
b. 6	Publications Publications, clippings, and photocopies containing Stanford's work.	1974-2000
b. 7 (Oversize)	Posters and photograph of an excavation	
	Restricted fragile	
b. 8	Computer media 3 CD-Rs CD-Rs contain Frank Stanford photographs. Restricted fragile material. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
b. 8	F Stanford 16 photos 2012-ycal-94-0001 <i>1 CD-R 5085024 bytes (5.09 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 8	F Stanford 3 pics + 3 stills from Bergman's (9 FS) and 1 of Level Construction 2012-ycal-94-0002 <i>1 CD-R 3099936 bytes (3.10 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 8	F Stanford 12 photos 2012-ycal-94-0003 <i>1 CD-R 8685936 bytes (8.69 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	

Series IV: June 2016 acquisition, 1958-2011, undated

2 linear feet (4 boxes)

This acquisition contains writings, correspondence, estate papers, books, and other materials by or relating to Frank Stanford. Included are original and photocopied drafts and notes for works such as *The Battlefield Where the Moon Says I Love You*, *YOU*, and *Conditions Uncertain and Likely to Pass Away*. Also present are a plumb bob in a leather case and an inscribed knife with a silver bird head attached to the hilt.

Files are largely arranged in the order in which they were received.

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 poetry -- 20th Century
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Publishers and publishing -- United States --
20th Century

Genres / Formats

Audiovisual materials
Born digital
Knives
Photographs
Plumb bobs

Names

Stanford, Frank, 1949-1978
Wright, C. D., 1949-2016

Corporate Body

Lost Roads Publishers

Contributors

Stanford, Frank, 1949-1978
Wright, C. D., 1949-2016