

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the John O'Hara Papers

YCAL MSS 729



by Tom Bolze

April 2013

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 729

CREATOR: O'Hara, John, 1905-1970

TITLE: John O'Hara papers

DATES: circa 1934-1970

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.04 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers document a portion of the creative process of writer John O'Hara, 1905-1970. They consist primarily of typed manuscript drafts, galley proofs, and page proofs of individual short stories, collections of stories, and novels, many with manuscript annotations. Some drafts of the collections include previously-printed stories excised from their original print source (often the *New Yorker*). The manuscript for "The Ewings" is a photocopy. There is also a small amount of correspondence between O'Hara, James T. Babb, and Robert Hawthorne Wylie. The papers span the range of much of O'Hara's career, from circa 1934 to circa 1970, but represent only a portion of his creative output.

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

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.ohara>.

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
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Most of the writings were gifts of John O'Hara in 1944 and 1945. The photocopy of "The Ewings" was a gift of the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1972. The correspondence from John O'Hara to James Babb was a gift of James T. Babb in 1962, while the correspondence from John O'Hara to Robert Wylie was a gift of Robert Hawthorne Wylie.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The John O'Hara 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

John O'Hara Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Little processing history is available for this legacy collection. Evidence suggests the collection may have received a basic level of processing, including arrangement, housing, and some description, not long after much of the material was donated by John O'Hara in 1944-1945. Subsequent gifts may simply have been added, with no significant change to the arrangement. At some point there may have been rehousing at the box level. Rehousing, slight modifications in arrangement, and fuller description were done in 2013.

As a rule, descriptive information found in the Collection Contents section is drawn in large part from a previously existing card catalog set in the Manuscripts Catalog (all pertinent bibliographical information has been retained) and from a survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are generally identical to those on folders in which the material was previously housed, with the exception of "Walter T. Carriman," which had the working title "Walter T. Janison" prior to publication.

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

John O'Hara, 1905-1970

John Henry O'Hara was an American writer born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania on January 31, 1905. He was the son of Patrick Henry O'Hara, a surgeon, and Katharine Elizabeth Delaney and was the oldest of eight children. O'Hara attended the Fordham Preparatory School, the Keystone State Normal School, and the Niagara Preparatory School but was dismissed from all three. His desire to attend Yale remained unrealized due to his father's death in 1925, after which O'Hara worked at a variety of jobs that led to journalism and, finally, a career as a writer of novels and short stories. His places of residence included New York, Hollywood, Long Island, and finally Princeton, New Jersey, where he died on April 11, 1970.

O'Hara had a short story first published in the *New Yorker* in 1928, but it was his 1934 novel *Appointment in Samarra* that was his first success. With individual short stories continuing to appear in popular periodicals, he published collections and novels such as *The Doctor's Son and Other Stories*, *Butterfield 8*, and *Pal Joey*. Although critical response was and remains mixed, O'Hara's work generally met with commercial success, and some of his efforts were adapted for the stage and screen.

O'Hara married three times, first in 1931 to Helen Ritchie Petit, which ended in divorce in 1933; then in 1937 to Belle Mulford Wylie, with whom he had one child before she passed away in 1954; and finally in 1955 to Katharine Barnes Bryan, who survived him.

Scope and Contents

The papers document a portion of the creative process of writer John O'Hara, 1905-1970. They consist primarily of typed manuscript drafts, galley proofs, and page proofs of individual short stories, collections of stories, and novels, many with manuscript annotations. Some drafts of the collections include previously-printed stories excised from their original print source (often the *New Yorker*). The manuscript for "The Ewings" is a photocopy. There is also a small amount of correspondence between O'Hara, James T. Babb, and Robert Hawthorne Wylie. The papers span the range of much of O'Hara's career, from circa 1934 to circa 1970, but represent only a portion of his creative output.

Arrangement

Organized into two series: Series I. Writings; and Series II: Correspondence. Series I is organized into two subseries: Short Stories; and Monographs.

Collection Contents

Series I: Writings, 1934–1970

1.04 linear feet (3 boxes)

SHORT STORIES

All files contain single typescript drafts with author's manuscript notations, with the exception of Mrs. Whitman, which contains two typescript drafts with author's manuscript notations.

b. 1, f. 1	Adventure on the Set	1934 October 14
b. 1, f. 2	Bread Alone	1939 August 17
b. 1, f. 3	Civilized	1943 October 7
b. 1, f. 4	Graven Image	1942 October 16
b. 1, f. 5	The Handler	undated
b. 1, f. 6	Joey and the Calcutta Club	1939 September 5
b. 1, f. 7	The Lieutenant	1943 September 14
b. 1, f. 8	The Magical Numbers	1939 February 17
b. 1, f. 9	Mrs. Whitman Alternate title: Ella M. Whitman	1945 January
b. 1, f. 10	The Next-to-Last Dance of the Season	1943 August 16
b. 1, f. 11	Nothing Missing	1939 April 3
b. 1, f. 12	Summer's Day	1942 August 6
b. 1, f. 13	Too Young	1939 July 21
b. 1, f. 14	Walter T. Carriman Alternate title: Walter T. Janison	1943 September 3
b. 1, f. 15	Where's the Game	undated
MONOGRAPHS		
b. 1, f. 16	Appointment in Samarra, corrected galley proofs	circa 1934
Butterfield 8		
All files contain single typescript drafts, with author's manuscript notations in varying frequency.		
b. 1, f. 17	First draft (incomplete)	undated
b. 1, f. 18	Intermediate draft (incomplete)	undated
b. 2, f. 19-20	Revised draft	1935 August 5

MONOGRAPHS (continued)

The Doctor's Son and Other Stories

b. 2, f. 21	Draft	undated
b. 2, f. 22	Galley proofs	undated
b. 2, f. 23	Page proofs	undated
b. 3, f. 24-25	The Ewings, setting typescript (photocopy)	1970 February 9
b. 3, f. 26	Pipe Night, draft	undated

Series II: Correspondence, 1956-1962

2 Folders

b. 3, f. 27	Babb, James T.	1956-1962
b. 3, f. 28	Wylie, Robert Hawthorne	1956-1962

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

Occupations

Authors

Names

Babb, James T. (James Tinkham), 1899-1968
O'Hara, John, 1905-1970
Wylie, Robert Hawthorne