

# Guide to the Mardette Perkins Papers

YCAL MSS 782



by Beinecke staff

October 2013

P. O. Box 208330  
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(203) 432-2977  
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<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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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 782

**CREATOR:** Perkins, Mardette

**TITLE:** Mardette Perkins papers

**DATES:** 1942-1996

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 6.22 linear feet (20 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers provide insight into the personal and professional life of Mardette Perkins, American actress and poet, and consist of correspondence, drafts of writings, clippings, ephemera, computer media, and audiovisual material dating from 1942 to 1996. Perkins' acting career is represented in photographs, clippings, ephemera, and a film of her work for television commercials. The papers contain drafts of Perkins' poetry, including an unpublished manuscript for her "Collected Poems, I," and recordings of her reading poetry. The papers also shed light on Perkins' experience of psychoanalysis, detailed in her journals from 1961 to 1976.

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

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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.perkins>.

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 Mardette Perkins, 1997-1999.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 11 (computer disks): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 19 (audiocassettes): Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 20 (film): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Mardette Perkins 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

Mardette Perkins 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 minimal organization. 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 initial processing.

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

This collection includes materials previously identified by the following call numbers: Uncat ZA MS 558, Uncat ZA MS 627, and Uncat ZA MS 633.

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## Mardette Perkins (1924-2002)

Mardette Perkins, American actress, was born Margaret Harriot Edwards to Rev. H. Boyd Edwards, Sr. and Margaret Edwards on November 24, 1924 in Little Rock, Arkansas. She attended St. Margaret's School in Waterbury, CT., Wellesley College (1942-1946), and the Yale School of Drama (1946-1948). She married Robert Wilder Perkins on January 31, 1959 with whom she had sons Charles and Morgan. She died on May 23, 2002.

Perkins appeared in stage productions of "The Man Who Came for Dinner" (Plymouth Theater, 1949) and "Heartbreak House" (Bleeker Street Theatre, 1950). Her work for television includes "The Chair" (Armstrong Circle Theatre, 1950), "The Seventh Veil" (Lucky Strike Theatre, 1950), "The Symbol" (Philco-Goodyear Television Playhouse, 1951), "Murder for Laura" (The Web), "In Small Packages (Trapped)", and "Jane Eyre" (Kraft Theatre, 1951), among others. Perkins also appeared on television in commercials for Borden's Coffee and General Electric.

## Scope and Contents

The papers provide insight into the personal and professional life of Mardette Perkins, American actress and poet, and consist of correspondence, drafts of writings, clippings, ephemera, computer media, and audiovisual material dating from 1942 to 1996. Perkins' acting career is represented in photographs, clippings, ephemera, and a film of her work for television commercials. The papers contain drafts of Perkins' poetry, including an unpublished manuscript for her "Collected Poems, I," and recordings of her reciting poetry. The papers also shed light on Perkins' experience of psychoanalysis, detailed in her journals from 1961 to 1976.

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## Arrangement

Organized into five series: I. Correspondence, 1948-1996. II. Writings, 1942-1996. III. Professional Papers, 1945-1966. IV. Personal Papers, 1948-1991. V. Audiovisual Material, 1961-1993.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I. Correspondence, 1948-1996

0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

The series contains personal and professional correspondence, dating from 1948 to 1981. Correspondents include Perkins' family members as well as Craig Biddle, a reverend at Perkins' church, with whom she fell in love. In her correspondence with curator Pat Willis at the Beinecke Library Perkins provides information about her life and family history.

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

b. 1	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Includes correspondence with curator Pat Willis and autobiographical notes describing Mardette Perkins' genealogy, professional career, writing, and personal life.	1973-1996
b. 1	Biddle, Craig 2 Folders	1973-1979
b. 1	Boyd, Jeffrey H. Includes notes and other material relating to Jeffrey H. Boyd's book, which Perkins provided feedback on.	1988, undated
b. 1	Fiddler, Andrew Includes notes and clippings.	1978-1980
b. 1	Straight, Ms. Outgoing letter in which Perkins requests a meeting with Straight regarding a part in production of "The Innocence."	circa 1950
b. 1	Family correspondence 2 Folders Includes correspondence with husband Robert W. Perkins, brother H. Boyd Edwards and family, Perkins' sons Charlie and Morgan Perkins, their school teachers, and various friends.	1976-1981
b. 2	Various correspondence 7 Folders Includes correspondence with friends, family and others, a project proposal for a playwrights' workshop, and letters to the Connecticut State Legislature regarding long term care insurance. Correspondents include: Gabriel J. Biafore, Mary Teresa Boyd, Robert Giaimo, Senator Mark H. Powers, Senator Philip S. Robertson, Ron Smoko, Ricky Weiser, and Frank Yulo.	1948-1979

**Series II. Writings, 1942-1996***3.34 linear feet (9 boxes)*

The series contains drafts, a computer disk, and other material pertaining to Perkins' poetry dating from 1942 to 1996.

Box 11 (computer disks): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 3	Early Poems, autograph manuscripts <i>3 Folders</i>	1942-1943
b. 3	Volume 1, autograph manuscripts, first drafts <i>2 Folders</i>	1967 July 10 - 1970 April 1
b. 4	Volume 2, autograph manuscripts, revisions <i>2 Folders</i>	1967 July 10 - 1970 April 1
b. 4	Volume 3a, autograph manuscripts, revisions <i>2 Folders</i>	1971
b. 4	Autograph manuscripts and typescripts, corrected Includes title page with working title "In Between (The End and the Beginning)."	1967-1974
b. 5	Typescripts, corrected, #1 - #3 <i>3 Folders</i> Includes audience reactions from poetry reading at Colby College (1971).	1973-1989
b. 5	Typescripts, corrected, includes some autograph manuscripts	1968-1972
b. 5	Typescripts, corrected, includes autograph manuscript  "Collected Poems, I"	1974-1984  1942-1974
b. 6	Typescripts, corrected, "revisions to back up 'M.S. Collected Poems' in Beinecke" <i>2 Folders</i>	1970-1994
b. 6	Typescripts, corrected, "originals and revisions to poems in M.S. at Beinecke"	1969-1994
b. 6	Typescripts, corrected, "early version, revision, for Beinecke"	1993-1994
b. 7	Autograph manuscripts and typescripts, corrected, "revision duplicates to back-up M.S. in Beinecke"	1971-1996
b. 7	Typescripts, corrected, "revisions to poems in m.s. at Beinecke"	1970-1993
b. 7	Autograph manuscripts and typescripts, corrected, "originals, revisions for M.S. Beinecke"	1980-1993
b. 7	Autograph manuscripts and typescripts, corrected, "back-up to m.s. in Beinecke"	1971-1982
b. 7	Autograph manuscript and typescripts, corrected, "revisions to back-up M.S. collected Poems in Beinecke"	1985-1993

## "Collected Poems, I" (continued)

b. 7	Typescripts, corrected, "revision and proofing to back-up m.s. collected Poems in Beinecke"	1990-1994
b. 7	Autograph manuscripts and typescripts, corrected, "first versions and early versions of poems, Phyllis Gibson typed for final M.S."	1993-1994
b. 7	Typescripts, corrected <i>3 Folders</i>	1993-1994
b. 8	Empty binders, "Collected Poems, I," 2nd set <i>3 Folders</i>	
b. 9	Typescript, corrected, with table of contents and alphabetical listing of poems	undated
b. 9	Typescript, 1-2 of 4 folders <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1994
b. 10	Typescript, 3-4 of 4 folders <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1994
	"Alphabetical List for Perkins' manuscript" <i>(2 computer disks)</i> Box 11 (computer disks): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.  Copies of electronic files are available through Access Services.  1997-ycal-0220-ae-0001-0002	[1999?]
b. 11	Alpha list Alphabetical order Mardette Perkins Poems 1997-ycal-0220-ae-0001 <i>1 3.5_floppy_disk</i>  Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
b. 11	Cormier policy/procedures Perkins Manuscript order 1997-ycal-0220-ae-0002 <i>1 3.5_floppy_disk</i>  Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
b. 10	Unidentified, outline and notes	undated



**Series III. Professional Papers, 1945-1966***0.21 linear feet (1 box)*

The series contains resumes, contacts, headshots and other photographs, clippings, and ephemera relating to Perkins' acting career, dating from 1945 to 1966.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 12	CV	undated
b. 12	Contracts	1948-1949
b. 12	Actor's Equity correspondence, membership cards, and other ephemera	1947-1964
b. 12	American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, correspondence, membership cards, and other ephemera	1952-1964
b. 12	Screen Actor's Guild, membership cards and receipts <i>2 Folders</i>	1954-1966
b. 12	Publicity photographs with CV on reverse side	undated
b. 12	<i>Dangerous Corner</i> , stage production program	1949
b. 12	<i>The Man who Came to Dinner</i> , photograph "Mardette Edwards, Don Peters, and Monty Woolley in a stage comedy scene from <i>The Man Who Came to Dinner</i> , starring Mr. Woolley in person."--note on reverse side.	1949
b. 12	<i>The Man Who Came to Dinner</i> , 3 stage production programs	1949
b. 12	Plymouth Drama Festival Alumni Association card	1945
	Clippings of stage productions in which Mardette Perkins appeared	
b. 12	<i>Another Part of the Forest</i>	1948
b. 12	<i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i>	undated
b. 12	<i>Captain Carvallo</i>	1952
b. 12	<i>Dangerous Corner</i>	1949
b. 12	<i>The Devil Passes</i>	undated
b. 12	<i>Heartbreak House</i>	1950
b. 12	<i>The Man Who Came to Dinner</i>	1949-1950
b. 12	<i>My Sister Eileen</i>	undated
b. 12	<i>Penny Wise</i>	undated
b. 12	<i>Personal Appearance</i>	undated
b. 12	<i>Ring Around the Moon</i>	undated
b. 12	<i>See How They Run</i>	undated

Clippings of stage productions in which Mardette Perkins appear [...] (continued)

b. 12

The Vagabond Players

1950 August 20

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**Series IV. Personal Papers, 1948-1991***1.46 linear feet (4 boxes)*

The series contains journals, photographs, printed material, clippings, and personal effects reflecting Perkins' personal life dating from 1948 to 1985. In her journals Perkins details her psychoanalysis with Dr. Altman. The journals are a window into Perkins' experience with anxiety and depression. Evidence of Perkins' affiliations with various universities and churches can be found in this series.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 13	Journals <i>3 Folders</i>	1961-1971
b. 14	Journals <i>7 Folders</i>	1973-1976, 1996
b. 15	Deborah Perkins Cooper, Memorial Service program	1979 July 24
b. 15	Helen Edmonds Perkins, Memorial Service program	1980 July 26
b. 15	Charles Perkins, school schedule, papers	1976-1977
b. 15	Certificate of Literacy from University of the State of New York	1950 October 14
b. 15	Personal Reading Lists	circa 1985
b. 15	Postage Stamps	undated
b. 15	Medication list, notebook	1979
b. 15	The Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre, catalogue	1957-1958
b. 15	Wellesley College, printed material for 20th, 35th, 40th and 49th reunions <i>4 Folders</i>	1966-1991
b. 16	St. Paul's Church, Richmond Virginia, notes, correspondence, newsletters, and sermons <i>3 Folders</i>	1976-1981
b. 16	<i>Rimbaud</i> by Yves Bonnefoy, annotated by Mardette Perkins	1973
b. 16	Clippings of Mardette Perkins	1948-1950
b. 16	Clippings collected by Mardette Perkins on theatre, religion, and other topics <i>5 Folders</i>	1978-1985
b. 17 (Oversize)	Wedding portrait of Mardette Perkins	1959
b. 17 (Oversize)	Canadian Pacific Railroad Map	[1949]
b. 18 (Oversize)	Crucifix, wood	undated

Series V. Audiovisual Material  
0.67 linear feet (2 boxes)

The series contains audio recordings, including Perkins reciting her poetry and commercials in which Perkins acted during the 1960s.

Box 19 (audiocassettes): Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 20 (film): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Not arranged in any particular order.

b. 19, ■■■■ 39002091394644 Mardette Perkins reciting her poetry (1 of 4) 1992-1993  
1 Audiocassette 00:44:19 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)

There is high background noise on the tape. At about 44:20, the audio is mono.  
[\[Aviary\] ycalmss078239002091394644a.u.mp3](#)

This audiocassette includes a list of contents. The audio of the first three poems are prior to Mardette Perkin's stroke (3/9/1992). A note on the tape reads: note difference in voice. The list of contents are provided below.

Side A / Side B

1. "Sonnet of the Sun" retitled "Persephone", 1945-1991
2. "Black Eruptions", 1990 March 31
3. "Song of the Rose", 1981 March - October
4. "Lost Generation" and "My Mother's Wedding Dress", 1992 October 21
5. "Mysterium Trum[?]", 1992 October 21
6. "Companions on the Journey", 1993 January 27
7. "Calligraphy in the Willow", 1993 May 20-23
8. "A Mother's Reflections and Variations on Her Son's Chinese [?]", 1993 May 20
9. "Bronze and Chocolate", 1984 January - 1985 February
10. "Full Moon", 1971 July 10
11. "Good Advice", 1974 January - 1985 March
12. "Serafina", 1990 August 15

Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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b. 19, ■■■■ 39002091394651 Mardette Perkins reciting her poetry (2 of 4) 1993 July  
1 Audiocassette 00:54:08 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)

[\[Aviary\] ycalmss078239002091394651a.u.mp3](#)

A list of contents are included below.

Side A / Side B

13. "Shadow of the Albatross", 1985 November 3
14. "Caress for the Blind Hour"
15. "Mated", 1989 October 13
16. "The Slave", 1985 February 13
17. "Pittsburgh - 1942", 1973 May 24
18. "Along the Housatonic: Journey Out of Madness", 1982 March 9
19. "The Ghost of Hamlet's Dream", 1974 December
20. "We Were Hungry and You Fed Us"

b. 20	Commercials of Mardette Perkins (1 16mm film)	circa 1961
	Contains television commercials in which Mardette Perkins appeared circa 1960's. Commercials include: All, Joy, Corn Flakes, Cashmere Liquid, White Cloud, Mrs. Barr, Vicks, Camay, Duncan Hines Cake Mix, Polaroid, apple sauce, and First Penn Bank.	
	(film) Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
b. 19, ■■■■ 39002091394669	Mardette Perkins reciting her poetry, "Companions on the Journey" (3 of 4) 1 Audiotape 00:04:01 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm) <a href="#">[Aviary] ycalmss078239002091394669.u.mp3</a>	1993 March 3
b. 19, ■■■■ 39002091394677	Mardette Perkins reciting her poetry, Tape III (4 of 4) 1 Audiotape 00:57:19 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm) <a href="#">[Aviary] ycalmss078239002091394677a.u.mp3</a>	1993 October 13 - 1994 February 2
	The contents of the cassette are included below.	
	27. "The Christmas Tree", 1982 January 28. "Reunion", 1985 November 29. "Siblings Arm in Arm", 1986 April 30. "Death Said Thomas Mann in Venice", 1993 November 31. "We Beseech Thee to Hear Us Good Lord", 1970 March	

## **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**

Actors -- United States  
Actors -- United States  
American literature -- 20th Century  
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Women and psychoanalysis  
Women authors

### **Genres / Formats**

Audiovisual materials  
Born digital  
Photographic prints  
Sound recordings

### **Occupations**

Poets -- United States

### **Names**

Perkins, Mardette