

# Guide to the Amy Groesbeck Papers

YCAL MSS 8



by Karen V. Peltier

April 1987

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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 8

**CREATOR:** Groesbeck, Amy

**TITLE:** Amy Groesbeck papers

**DATES:** 1904-1961 (inclusive)

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.75 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers contain poetry, drama, personal papers, and photographs documenting the life of Amy Groesbeck.

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

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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.groesbec>.

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  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Amy Groesbeck Papers may have been part of the Amy Bradish Groesbeck bequest to the Yale University Library on February 23, 1962.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

*Restricted Fragile Papers* in box 4 may only be consulted with permission of the appropriate curator. Preservation photocopies for reference use have been substituted in the main files.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Amy Groesbeck Papers are 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

Amy Groesbeck Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## AMY GROESBECK (1894-1961?)

Amy Bradish Groesbeck, the daughter of Effingham and Amy Scott Johnson of Bay Shore, Long Island, was born on June 21, 1894. She studied acting at the Boleslavsky School of Drama and married Herbert Groesbeck on May 21, 1918.

For the rest of her life she collected literature and wrote poetry and plays. From 1947-59 she also read and monitored Recordings for the Blind. Groesbeck was a member of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Actors' Equity, Poetry Society of America, and Daughters of Cincinnati. Her writings appeared in various magazines and newspapers, including *American Weave*, *Yankee*, *Saturday Review*, *Boston Post*, and *Columbus Citizen*. In 1958, House of Falmouth published *Tales Gay and Ghostly*, a vanity collection of her poetry, followed by *Gull Geometrics* in 1959.

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## Scope and Contents

The Amy Groesbeck Papers contain poetry, drama, personal papers, and photographs documenting the life of Amy Groesbeck, a minor poet, playwright, and actress. The papers span the dates 1904-1961.

The papers begin with nine folders of poetry. As many of the alphabetically arranged titles ("Coney Island," "Manhattan Sequence") suggest, Groesbeck's poems are about New York City where she lived. She also wrote about friends. Excerpts from "Songs for My Brother and Other Poems," for example, were later published in *Gerald Reynolds; a Memorial*, which Groesbeck co-edited. Three folders of correspondence follow the poetry and primarily contain rejection notices from magazines, newspapers, and publishers, but there are acceptances from *The Lyric*, *Quicksilver*, and *The West Indian Review* and a contract from House of Falmouth to publish *Gull Geometrics*.

Three plays complete the [Writings series](#): *From Dusk to Dawn*, *Gift at Parting*, and *The Next Step*. *From Dusk to Dawn* takes place in San Francisco during the 1880s and was Groesbeck's only play to be produced. Three folders accompanying the "Mellow Drama in Two Acts" contain programs, fliers, and publicity photographs. The Snarks, a New York women's club to which Groesbeck belonged, produced the play in 1955, followed by the Norton Gallery Players of Palm Beach, Florida in 1959.

Like many of her poems, *Gift at Parting* may have been an early creative writing assignment (Box 1, folder 8). The verse drama takes place in a prison ward on Blackwell's Island and is about the hatred between a nun and a dying woman. Harcourt Brace, Random House, and The MacMillan Company all rejected the play *The Next Step I*, a fantasy about race relations in the next world. Like *Gift at Parting*, it was never published or produced.

The [Other Papers Series](#) in Boxes 3-4 contains Groesbeck's collection of writings and letters by others as well as family photographs and an early journal. The series begins with a few odd letters including a July 16, 1959 letter from Fred Astaire to Seney Park. Groesbeck's personal correspondence with publishers

about individual plays and poems is housed in the *Writings* series. Early Groesbeck family photographs of New York, Mexico, and Europe are arranged in two folders (Box 3, folders 34-35). The papers also include Groesbeck's interesting account of her trip from New York to the west coast by train and car in the summer of 1914. She illustrated her bound journal with postcards and maps. Groesbeck's collection of poetry and prose from magazines and newspapers, such as *Time*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *New York Herald Tribune*, complete the series. Though her poetry clippings include a few famous poets such as Ogden Nash and Robert Frost, they are mostly of friends and minor poets. Jeannette Chappell, Ann Marx, and Memory McGonigal, for example, annotated their poems with personal messages. A collection of articles and essays taken from *Cosmopolitan* and *Vanity Fair* in the 1940s reflect Groesbeck's interest in poetry and war songs, and printed bulletins from St. George's Church, New York, reveal her religious concerns.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Writings, 1909-61

0.75 linear feet (2 boxes)

Boxes 1-2 hold Series I, *Writings*. It is divided into two sections, *Poetry* and *Drama*, each of which are arranged alphabetically by title.

#### POETRY

b. 1, f. 1	Notes	n.d.
b. 1, f. 2-9	Drafts, A-Z	1909-61, n.d.
b. 1, f. 10-12A	Correspondence	1950-61, n.d.
b. 1, f. 12B	Notebook with sketches	undated

#### DRAMA

##### *From Dusk to Dawn*

b. 1, f. 13-16	Drafts	1955, n.d.
b. 1, f. 17-19	Papers	1955-61

##### *Gift at Parting*

b. 2, f. 20	Notes	1939
b. 2, f. 21-26	Drafts	n.d.
b. 2, f. 27	Papers	1939-60

##### *The Next Step*

b. 2, f. 28-29	Prose drafts	n.d.
b. 2, f. 30	Papers	1949-57
b. 2, f. 31	Unidentified fragments	n.d.

**Series II: Other Papers, 1904-60***2 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Boxes 3-4 hold Series II, *Other Papers*, which includes manuscripts, photographs and printed material by other people. Groesbeck's collection of poetry clippings is arranged alphabetically by author, except for her oversize collection which is in its original order.

b. 3, f. 32	Correspondence <a href="#">See also: Writings, Box 1, folders 10-12, 17-19; Box 2, folder 27</a> <a href="#">See also: Writings, Box 1, folders 10-12, 17-19; Box 2, folder 30</a>	1948-59
b. 3, f. 33	Journal: "Western Trip"	1914
b. 3, f. 34-35	Photographs	1904, n.d.
	Printed Works	
b. 3, f. 36	Articles	1942-43, n.d.
b. 3, f. 37-42A	Poetry <a href="#">See also: Oversize, Box 4, folder 45</a>	1911-60, n.d.
b. 3, f. 43	Programs and Bulletins	1929-31, n.d.
b. 3, f. 44	Shorter Works	1930-55, n.d.
b. 4, f. 45	Oversize: poetry scrapbook	1929-41, n.d.
	Restricted Fragile Papers	
b. 4, f. 46	Box 2, folder 28	

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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**

Authors, American  
Poetry, Modern -- 20th Century

### **Geographic Names**

New York (N.Y.)

### **Genres / Formats**

Journals  
Plays  
Poems  
Scrapbooks

### **Occupations**

Authors

### **Names**

Groesbeck, Amy