

Guide to the Norvin Hein Papers

RG 310



Divinity Library staff

2019, 2021

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<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
409 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 432-5301
divinity.library@yale.edu
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 310

CREATOR: Hein, Norvin, 1914-2018

TITLE: Norvin Hein Papers

DATES: 1942-2018

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6 linear feet (14 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection provides an overview of Norvin Hein's long career as professor of comparative religion with a focus on Hinduism, serving on the Yale Divinity School and Religious Studies faculties for thirty-five years from 1950 until his retirement in 1985.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.310>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.310>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Norvin Hein family, 2018, 2020

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation

Norvin Hein Papers (RG 310), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical

Norvin Hein was born in 1914 in Ohio. He attended Wooster College, graduating in 1937. He was offered a teaching position in India following graduation, but since it would not begin for two years, he elected to attend Yale Divinity School. He interrupted his Bachelor of Divinity studies to take what was supposed to be a short-term position teaching English and religion in India, but World War II intervened. He ended up spending most of the war years in India, working for the Army YMCA and the crew of a U.S. Liberty Ship before serving as a chaplain's yeoman in a U.S. Maritime Service training station.

In 1945 Hein returned to Yale where he received his B.D. in 1946 and his Ph.D. in 1951. The religious practices that he had observed in India—religious street theater, especially—awakened him to an essential site-specific aspect of religion and forms of devotion that sprang from agrarian tradition. This became the focus of his dissertation and an eventual book, *The Miracle Plays of Mathura* (Yale, 1972).

Hein was appointed assistant professor at Yale in 1952, earning promotion to associate professor in 1958 and then full professor in 1975. From 1973 to 1976, Norvin was director of the S.T.M. program at YDS. He was Director of Graduate Studies in Yale's Department of Religious Studies from 1977 to 1985.

During the "Save the Quad" movement at Yale Divinity School in the late-1990s Hein played a crucial role in the successful effort to protect Sterling Divinity Quadrangle from demolition and keep YDS in its longtime home atop Prospect Hill. He did so by combing through legal documents pertaining to the bequest of John Sterling B.A. 1864, in which he discovered provisions that strengthened the Divinity School's case.

In addition to *The Miracle Plays of Mathura*, Hein authored and contributed to more than a dozen books and published more than two-dozen scholarly articles and reviews. Among his more enduring scholarly contributions was the 100-page section on Hinduism that he wrote for the well-known *Religions of the World textbook* (St. Martin's, 1983). Hein served as both Vice President and President of the American Society for the Study of Religion during the 1970s. He was a delegate and panelist at five different congresses of the International Association for the History of Religions.

Hein remained in the New Haven area following his retirement and continued his scholarly work, and his engagement at Yale and in the community. He died on April 29, 2018.

Scope and Contents

This collection provides a glimpse into the professional life of Yale Divinity School graduate and Yale professor of comparative religion Norvin Hein (1914-2018). The documents selected for inclusion in the collection serve to highlight the major emphases of Hein's career - his extensive correspondence with students and colleagues, his involvement at Yale both in teaching and in the "Save the Quad" movement of the late 1990s, his writings and scholarly research, his administrative contributions to Yale, and his involvement in community activities such as the Cooperative Consumers of New Haven group.

The correspondence in Series I consists of letters between Hein and colleagues in his field both in America and abroad, students, and colleagues and administration at YDS.

For additional materials related to the "Save the Quad" documentation in Series II, see Record Group 53, Yale Divinity School Memorabilia Collection.

Course-Related materials in Series III include articles used in classes, book lists, bibliographies, lecture notes, and syllabi for courses taught by Hein. The materials pertaining to courses Hein himself took include his personal student notes.

For additional writings by Hein, see Record Group 27, Yale Divinity School Faculty Writings and Publications, Box 11. For additional "Save the Quad" documentation see Record Group 53, Yale Divinity School Memorabilia Collection.

Series VII contains rare film footage of the 1942 wedding of Indira Nehru to Feroze Gandhi, taken by Norvin Hein. An accompanying script describes the scenes in the film.

Arrangement

The collection is organized in eight series:

Series I. Correspondence

Series II. "Save the Quad" Documentation

Series III. Course-Related Records

Series IV. YDS/Yale Administrative Records

Series V. Writings and Notes

Series VI. Subject Files

Series VII. Audio-Visual Material

Series VIII. Biographical Documentation

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Public addresses and clippings

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b. 5, f. 9	Connecticut Preservation News	1998
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Courses taken by Hein

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b. 9, f. 7	Alumni materials	

Series V: Writings and Notes

Scholarly articles and papers

b. 9, f. 8	"Thomas Hardy's Disbelief" in <i>Religion in Life</i> , Vol. XVI, Summer 1947; YDS Chapel sermons (typescript), 1952; "Early Foreign Observers at the Ras Lila" in <i>Festschrift Poddar</i> , 1953; "Protestant Views of Hinduism" (typescript 1956, revision 2012) Protestant Views of Hinduism, 1600-1825; Hardy's Disbelief	1947-2012
b. 9, f. 9	"Ram Lila" in <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> , Jul-Sep 1958; Catalogue for exhibitions in Yale University Library for meeting of American Oriental Society, 1960 Ram Lila	1958, 1960
b. 9, f. 10	"Hinduism" (encyclopedia entry), 1967; "Monotheism in the Bhagavadgita: A Stylistic Clue" in <i>Proceedings of International Congress for the History of Religions</i> , 1970; "The Ramcaritmanas in Mathura" (typescript), 1974	1967-1974
b. 9, f. 11	"Caitanya's Ecstasies and the Theology of the Name" in <i>Hinduism</i> ed. by Bardwell L. Smith, 1976; "Samadhi and Samadarsana, Mystical Illumination and Social Concern" (typescript), 1983	1976, 1983
b. 9, f. 12	"The Rise of the Cult of Gopala" (typescript, 3 drafts) Rise of the Cult of Gopala ms	1983-1985
b. 10, f. 1	"The Ramcaritmanas in the Life of Krsna-Devotees" (typescript), "Sarvabhutahite Ratah" (typescript), 1984; "The Gita Exegesis of Mahatma Gandhi" (typescript), 1985 Gita Exegesis of Mahatma Gandhi Ramcaritmanas in the Life of Krsna-Devotees	1984, 1985
b. 10, f. 2	"Epic Sarvabhutahite Ratah: A Byword of Non-Bhargava Editors" in <i>Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute</i> , 1986; "A Revolution in Krsnaism: the Cult of Gopala" in <i>History of Religions</i> , May 1986 Revolution in Krsnaism: the Cult of Gopala Epic Sarvabhutahite Ratah	1986
b. 10, f. 3	"Lila" in <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> , 1987; "Introduction to the 39th Session" in <i>IAVRI Bulletin: Re-Discovering Braj</i> , October, 1988	1987, 1988
b. 10, f. 4	"Kalayavana, A Key to Mathura's Cultural Self-Perception" in <i>Mathura - The Cultural Heritage</i> , ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan, 1989 (and typescript draft); Kalavayana	no date
b. 10, f. 5	Foreword to <i>The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan</i> by Steven Rosen, 1990	1990
b. 10, f. 6	"A Symbol in the Paintings of Josef Albers" (typescript), 2000; "Tagore's Burst-out into Reality" (typescript), 2003 Tagore's Burst-out into Reality	2000-2003
b. 10, f. 7	Foreword to <i>Dance of Divine Love</i> by Graham M. Schweig, 2005 Hein Foreword to Schweig	

Scholarly articles and papers (continued)

b. 10, f. 8	"Comments: Radha and Erotic Community"; "The Image of the Greek in Indian Literature"; "Samadhi and Samadarsana"; "Hindu Formulas for the Facilitation of Change"; Foreword to <i>Shri Vallabhacharya His Philosophy and Religion</i> by Jethalal G. Shah Hindu Formulas for the Facilitation of Change Samadhi and Samadarsana	No date
Related to book-length works		
b. 10, f. 9	Reviews of <i>Miracle Plays of Mathura</i>	1972–1976
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Talks and opinion pieces		
b. 10, f. 11	Miscellaneous Including, interviews with Yale Reports radio program; "Islamic Law on Holy War, an authoritative manual" (typescript), 2001, with cover letter to Sen. Christopher Dodd, 2008; "Wooster-in-India Men: How one got home 1943"; "Those Tasty Pork Sausages on a Traditional Farm", 2008; "The Art of Eastern Religions in Western Museums"	2001–2008
b. 10, f. 11a	"Britain's First War in Afghanistan"	2009
Book reviews by Hein		
b. 10, f. 12	Reviews of <i>Braj: Centre of Krishna Pilgrimage</i> by A. W. Entwistle and <i>Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotions in India</i> edited by Owen M. Lynch in <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>	1989, 1991
b. 10, f. 13	Review of <i>Journey through the Twelve Forests, an Encounter with Krishna</i> by David L. Haberman in	1995
Works about or in honor of Hein		
b. 13, f. 1	"Discovering Hidden Connections: A Volume of Essays on Hindu and Muslim India presented to Professor Norvin Hein by some of his grateful students"	
b. 13, f. 2	"Norvin Hein's life and contribution to the study of Rasa Lila" in <i>Vrindavan Today News</i>	2018
Notebooks		
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b. 14, f. 3	Bound notebooks labeled I, II, III, with handwritten notes in English and Hindi	no date
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Series VI: Subject Files

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b. 11, f. 5	Spiritual Unity and Social Equality	

Series VII: Audio-Visual Material

b. 12, f. 6	Film of wedding of Indira Gandhi RG310-0012-0006-2978285: 2024-02-29 [Aviary] RG310-0012-0006-2978285.mp4 50 ft. 10 mm. Kodachrome motion picture film shot by Hein.	1942
b. 12, f. 7	"The Wedding of Indira Nehru - A Film Script" by Norvin Hein (draft 1999, 2007, revised edition 2009,) "The Wedding of Indira Nehru - A Film Script" by Norvin Hein (2007, revised edition 2009)	
b. 12, f. 8	Correspondence and background information related to film, 2001-2018	2000-2018
b. 13, f. 8	Photographs of Hein	circa 1950, 1985, 2010

Series VIII: Biographical Documentation

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b. 13, f. 11	Description of Norvin Hein Collection of Press Prints held at Syracuse University - art prints collected while he was teaching in India	circa 1930s - 1943

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.

Occupations

Educators

Names

Hein, Norvin, 1914-2018

Corporate Body

Yale University. Divinity School