

Guide to the Dorothy Gray Papers

JWJ MSS 386



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August 2024

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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: JWJ MSS 386

CREATOR: Gray, Dorothy

TITLE: Dorothy Gray papers

DATES: 1890–1994

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4.17 linear feet (10 boxes)

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

SUMMARY: The Dorothy Gray papers consist of correspondence, photographic prints and negatives, photograph albums, musical scores, clippings, appointment books, and files created by and related to Dorothy Gray and her life in Hollywood as a child actress and talent manager. Included in the collection are family photographs going back to the late 19th century, as well as photographic prints and negatives of Gray and friends, pets, and trips she took around the world. A bulk of the collection documents Gray's romantic relationships with two women, Ann Hathaway and Kellie Greene, through letters and photographs.

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

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.dorothygray>.

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

Purchased from William Reese Co. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2022.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Dorothy Gray 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.

Preferred Citation

Dorothy Gray Papers. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit. These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Archival Description Unit Processing Manual.

Related Materials

Related material: Katherine Dunham collection (JWJ MSS 247).

Biographical / Historical

Dorothy Gray (born October 23, 1922), actress, talent manager, and assistant to Katherine Dunham, grew up in Los Angeles, CA. The niece of Charlie Chaplin, Gray became a child actress at a very young age, appearing in films as early as 1924. She was later cast in a number of Hollywood productions, including uncredited roles in *Symphony of Six Million* (1932), *Men in White* (1934), and *Rose-Marie* (1936). In the 1940s she started working with jazz musicians and stage performers in Hollywood as an assistant and manager. When Gray was nineteen, she met Katherine Dunham at the Paramount Theater in Los Angeles. The two formed a close bond that was "romantic, sisterly, and maternal" (Das 2017). Dorothy Gray managed Katherine Dunham's business and bookings in the United States until her death in 1976. From the 1950s onward Gray was in two long term romantic relationships with two women, Ann Hathaway and Kellie Greene. Dorothy Gray died May 9, 1976, in Los Angeles, California.

Scope and Contents

The Dorothy Gray papers span the years 1890-1994 and consist of correspondence, photographic prints and negatives, photograph albums, musical scores, clippings, appointment books, and files related to her life in Hollywood and her career as a talent manager, including scrapbooks following the careers of friends and associates. The collection also documents her family and childhood.

A bulk of the collection material relates to her relationships with her social circle in California during the years 1951-1968. Included are love letters Gray exchanged with pianist Kellie Greene and jazz singer Ann Hathaway as well as photographs of their travels, family, and pets.

Arrangement

Arranged into five series: Series I: Correspondence, 1951–1968 Series II: Scrapbooks and notebooks, circa 1960-1994 Series III: Photographs, 1890–1960 Series IV: Business materials, 1950–1969 Series V: Other materials, 1975.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1951–1968

Series I. Correspondence consists of letters and greeting cards received by Dorothy Gray. The letters touch on business matters related to professional life in Hollywood and with traveling performers, including one folder of letters from Katherine Dunham. The bulk of the letters document her romantic relationships with two women: Ann Hathaway and Kellie Greene.

Arranged alphabetically.

b. 1, f. 1	Ballard, Kate	1951
b. 1, f. 2	Dunham, Katherine	1957
b. 1, f. 3-6	Greene, Kellie	circa 1960-1968
b. 1, f. 7-10b. 2, f. 1	Hathaway, Ann	1955–1963
b. 2, f. 2	Lutyens, Edith	undated
b. 2, f. 3	General correspondence	1928–1968

Series II: Scrapbooks, circa 1960-1994

Series II. Scrapbooks contains three scrapbooks documenting Gray's personal and professional life, with one compiled posthumously. All three contain material related to and documenting clients, performances, and members of Gray's social circle in Hollywood and beyond. The material in the scrapbooks includes photographs, clippings, ephemera, playbills, notes, and xeroxed advertisements.

Arranged chronologically.

b. 2, f. 4	Kellie Greene	circa 1960-1963
b. 2, f. 5	Feather, Dixie Bells	circa 1984-1994
b. 3, f. 1-2	Stroke Activity Center Follies	undated

Series III: Photographs, 1890–1960

Series III. Photographs includes both photographic prints and negatives. Subjects of the photographs range from friends and family, travel photography, as well as many photographs of Gray's pets, specifically her dogs. There are professional, 8x10 headshots as well as smaller, black and white snapshots, largely documenting Gray's life in the 1940s and 1950s. Also included are photographs removed from a photograph album, including photographs of family and Gray's childhood.

Arranged chronologically.

	Photographs and negatives	1940–1959
b. 3, f. 3	Snapshots, dogs, portraits	circa 1940-1949
b. 3, f. 4	8 x 10 portraits	circa 1940-1960
b. 3, f. 5	Snapshots, portraits, family	1940–1970
b. 3, f. 6	Portraits, Ann Hathaway, dogs	1943
b. 3, f. 7	Dorothy Gray headshot, portraits	circa 1940-1949
b. 3, f. 8	Ann Hathaway in Louisville	circa 1940-1949
b. 3, f. 9	Horseback riding	circa 1940-1949
b. 3, f. 10	Dorothy Gray snapshots	circa 1940-1970
b. 3, f. 11	Ann Hathaway, dogs	1948
b. 4, f. 1	Vacation, Italy	circa 1950
b. 4, f. 2	Beach snapshots	1952
b. 4, f. 3	Color negatives of Lake Tahoe	1952
b. 4, f. 4	Ann Hathaway, Central Park, New York City	1952
b. 4, f. 5	Dorothy Gray with dogs	circa 1952
b. 4, f. 6	Ann Hathaway at home	circa 1952
b. 4, f. 7	Pictures with Edna	1953
b. 4, f. 8	Atlantic City	1953
b. 4, f. 9	Ann Hathaway, Louisville	1953
b. 4, f. 10	Dogs, Louisville	circa 1953
b. 4, f. 11	Beach snapshots	1955
b. 4, f. 12	Mini-albums, dogs	circa 1950-1959
b. 4, f. 13	Thelma's color negatives of Inside U.S.A.	undated
b. 4, f. 14	Sailor and Suzie	undated
b. 4, f. 15-17	Portraits	undated

Photographs and negatives (continued)

b. 4, f. 18	Christmas	undated
b. 4, f. 19	Snapshots, portraits	undated
b. 4, f. 20	Ann Hathaway, Arizona	undated
b. 4, f. 21	Family portraits	undated
b. 4, f. 22	Arizona	undated
b. 4, f. 23	Chicago, Illinois	undated
b. 4, f. 24	Cats, home	undated
b. 6	35mm rolls	undated
b. 11	Nitrate 35mm rolls	undated
b. 11	Nitrate negatives of a trip to Arizona	1950
b. 11	Nitrate negative of Pat Rainey	undated
	Photograph albums	1890–1960
b. 7	Family portraits	1890–1894
b. 8	Travel photography, family portraits	1905–1907
b. 5, f. 1	Childhood photo album	circa 1920s
b. 9	Ann Hathaway, portraits, dogs	1952–1955
b. 10	Ann Hathaway	1953–1960

Series IV: Business materials, 1950–1969

Series IV. Business materials consists of paper materials related to Gray's career as a business manager. Included in this series are appointment books, contact book, and notes, clippings, and ephemera documenting reviews or performances regarding or relevant to Gray's clients.

Arranged chronologically.

b. 5, f. 2	Contact book	undated
b. 5, f. 3	Appointment book	1957
b. 5, f. 4	Appointment book	1969
b. 5, f. 5	Notes, clippings, ephemera	circa 1950s

Series V: Other materials, 1975

b. 5, f. 6

Lock of Dorothy Gray's hair

1975

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

Jazz musicians
Lesbians
LGBTQ resource
Photography of dogs

Occupations

Actors -- United States -- 20th Century

Genres / Formats

Negatives (photographic) -- 20th Century
Photograph albums -- United States -- 20th Century
Photographic prints -- 20th Century

Names

Dunham, Katherine, 1909-2006

Acquired From

William Reese Co. , bookseller
Swann Galleries, Inc. , auctioneer