

Guide to the Lidiia Alekseeva Papers

GEN MSS 91



by Halyna Lobay

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 91

CREATOR: Alekseeva, Lidiía`

TITLE: Lidiía` Alekseeva papers

DATES: 1949-1955

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.42 linear feet (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: Russian

SUMMARY: The Lidiía` Alekseeva Papers consist of correspondence providing information about Alekseeva's literary career. There is also a book of poetry and essays.

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

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.lidiia>.

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

The Lidiia Alekseeva Papers were donated to Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library in 1971 by Aleksis Rannit, at that time curator of Slavic and East European Collections at Yale University.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Lidiia Alekseeva Papers. General Collection. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Slavic names, titles, and quotations in their original languages have been transliterated in accordance with Library of Congress guidelines.

LIDIIA ALEKSEEVA (1909-)

Lidiia Alekseevna Alekseeva, née Devel, poet, short-story writer, translator, and reviewer, was born in Dvinsk, Latvia, in 1909. Her father, Aleksei Viktorovich, was a Russian officer descended from a French émigré. The family lived in the Crimea, but in 1920 they left Russia for Belgrade. Alekseeva finished the Russian "gimnazium" (high school) and graduated from the Philosophical Faculty of Belgrade University in the field of Slavic philology. Afterwards, she taught Serbian language and literature in the Russian high school.

In 1944 Alekseeva left Yugoslavia, but her husband, the prose writer Ivannikov, stayed behind and died in Belgrade on September 7, 1968. In 1949 Alekseeva came to the United States. She worked in a factory and, for many years, was associated with the New York Public Library.

Alekseeva began to write poems at an early age and started to publish them in the thirties, first signing them with her maiden name but later using the pseudonym Alekseeva. She contributed to Russian periodicals such as *Nov'*, *Mech*, *Literaturnaia sreda*, *Grani*, *Novyi zhurnal*, *Mosty*, *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, and *Vozrozhdenie*, and to anthologies such as *Na zapade*, *Muza diaspor*y, and *Sodruzhestvo*.

Her first collection of poems appeared under the title *Lesnoe solntse* (Frankfurt, 1954). Other collections followed: *V puti* ([New York], 1959), *Prozrachnyi sled* (New York, 1964), *Vremia razluk* ([New York], 1971), and *Stikhi: izbranoe* (New York, 1980). She also translated the epic verse of the Croatian writer Ivan Gundulić into Russian, under the title *Slezy bludnogo syna* (Washington, D. C., 1965).

A. N. Neimirok, I. U. V. Ofrosimov, I. U. K. Terapiano, O. N. Anstei, Sergei M. Rafal'skii, T. Fessenko, B. A. Filippov, B. A. Nartsissov, G. Zabezhinskii, and E. Vasil'eva have reviewed Alekseeva's poetry.

Alekseeva herself also reviewed books, for example *Sinii mir* by Nonna Belavina, *Stikhi* by Oleg Il'inskii, *Uzelok* by A. Vasil'kovskaia, *TSvety na podokonnike* by K. Pestrovo, and others. She published them primarily in *Novyi zhurnal*.

Sources used: *Handbook of Russian Literature* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985); L. A. Foster, *Bibliografiia russkoi zarubezhnoi literatury, 1918-1968* (Boston Mass.: G. K. Hall, 1970); George Ivask, "Pokhvala rossiiskoi poezii", *Novyi zhurnal* 162 (March 1986): 136-38; Gleb Struve, *Russkaia literatura v izgnanii* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1984); *Sodruzhestvo* (Washington: V. Kamkin, 1986) p. 505.

Scope and Contents

The Lidiia Alekseeva Papers contain 232 incoming letters written by seven correspondents between 1949-55. They are alphabetically arranged by author in twelve folders, and then chronologically. All the letters are in Russian. There is also one letter from Ekaterina Tauber to Grigorii Borisovich Zabezhinskii.

After Lidiia Alekseevna Alekseeva arrived from Europe, she lived in New York, as did her friend Ol'ga Nikolaevna Anstei. In 1954 Ol'ga married Boris Andreevich Filippov and moved to Washington D. C., where he worked for the Voice of America and other literary institutions. The twelve letters written by Ol'ga, or Ol'ga and Boris, cover just one year, since Ol'ga soon returned to New York. They write about trivial family matters, literary business, and politics. Another six letters were written by Boris, who stayed in Washington and lived with his mother. They reflect his loneliness, overwork, and unhappy state of mind.

The next twenty-nine letters, written by Nina Grinevich, married Grebenshchikova, writing from East Germany between 1949 and 1954, reflect her difficult situation and poor health. She feels unhappy and lonely in the unfriendly surroundings, misses her countrymen, and longs to return home, but having a small child prevents them from making that move. The bright lights in her monotonous life are Alekseeva's poems, her avid reading, and news she receives of Russian literary figures. She does not understand Alekseeva's separation from her husband Mischa and asks for an explanation.

The next major correspondent is Dmitrii Iosifovich Klenovskii, a poet, essayist, and journalist. His constant complaints, doubts, and preoccupation, his wife's sicknesses, and his critical attitude toward others, are all reflected in his letters. He frequently mentions such prominent literary figures as Bunin, Berberova, Ivask, Rzhnevskii, Teffi, Struve, Ofrosimov, Terapiano, Neimirok, and Anstei. He received Alekseeva's poems for reading, but decided not to send her his because he did not want to provoke her criticism. Thinking of death, he gives her all the rights to publish, after he passes away, those poems in hands of people in America. They hope to emigrate, but his wife's poor health chains them firmly to the Old World.

IUrii Viktorovich Ofrosimov, an old friend of Alekseeva, writes from Switzerland, where he resides with his wife. The twenty-three letters in the collection, written between 1949 and 1954, describe the difficulties of everyday life and his wife Doris's health problems, which caused them to miss all opportunities to emigrate. Since they also touch his literary interests, many familiar names are mentioned. He likes Alekseeva's poems and encourages her to publish them. Ofrosimov also shows a keen interest in the fate of Alekseeva's husband. He suggests that she encourage Misha to begin to write again.

The collection contains twenty-seven letters from IUrii Viktorovich Neimirok, a friend from Yugoslavia who was a poet, story writer, critical essayist, and translator. These letters, spanning the years 1949-55, were written from West Germany. Neimirok is interested in Alekseeva's situation and tells her "to keep smiling and take it easy." He does not, however, apply the same rule to himself, complains about the difficult life of an emigrant, and allows mood changes to interfere with his writings. He often inquires about the news from Yugoslavia and discusses literary matters.

Another eighty-six letters are from one of Alekseeva's close friends from Yugoslavia, Ekaterina Tauber. They were written from southern France between 1949 and 1955, where she moved before World War II and where she married I. Starov. Tauber describes their hard life and struggle for survival, seldom mentioning joy and contentment. Tauber, the compiler and editor of a self-produced literary newsletter *Pereklichka*, also discusses literary matters. She received many contributions from friends and corresponded with others. As a result, she was well informed, always had some lively news to tell, and gives quotations from poems. The center of her interest is Mishel', Alekseeva's husband. One encounters such expressions as "Ochen' ego liubliu" (I love him very much), "on moia bol'shaia simpatii" (I like him very much), and "on -- nastoiashchii pisatel'" (he [is] a true writer). The last letters show their uncertain future--the existence of *Pereklichka* is in doubt--but Tauber starts a new job, a teaching position in Russian language at the Lycée Carnot in Cannes.

The Lidiia Alekseeva Papers provide insight into Alekseeva's life and generous spirit. The letters, written by major Russian émigré writers, add primary information to the history of post-World War II Russian émigré literature.

Collection Contents

Correspondence

INCOMING

b. 1, f. 1	Anstei, Ol'ga Nikolaevna Filippov, Boris Andreevich	1954-55, n.d.
b. 1, f. 2	Grinevich, Nina	1949-54
b. 1, f. 3-4	Klenovskii, Dmitrii I.	1951-55, n.d.
b. 1, f. 5	Neimirok, Aleksandr Nikolaevich	1949-[55?]
b. 1, f. 6	Ofrosimov, IUrii Viktorovich	1949-54, n.d.
b. 1, f. 7-12	Tauber, Ekaterina	1949-55

THIRD PARTY

b. 1, f. 13	Tauber, Ekaterina	1952
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Writings

b. 2, f. 14

Poetry and essays

1950-1953

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, Russian -- 20th Century
Poets, Russian -- 20th Century
Russians -- Foreign countries

Occupations

Authors

Names

Alekseeva, Lidiia
Ansteĭ, Ol'ga, 1912-1985
Filippov, Boris, 1905-1991
Grinevich, Nina, 1909-
Klenovskii, Dmitriĭ I., 1892-1976
Neĭmirok, A. (Aleksandr), 1911-1973
Rosimov, G.
Tauber, Ekaterina