

# Guide to the Cynthia Earl Kerman Papers Relating to The Lives of Jean Toomer

JWJ MSS 116



by Beinecke staff

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
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**CALL NUMBER:** JWJ MSS 116

**CREATOR:** Kerman, Cynthia Earl

**TITLE:** Cynthia Earl Kerman Papers Relating to *The Lives of Jean Toomer*

**DATES:** 1959-1982

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.73 linear feet (7 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Research files, including notes, manuscripts, printed material, photographs, and audio tapes compiled by Cynthia Earl Kerman in the process of writing *The Lives of Jean Toomer*.

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

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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.kerman>.

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  
■■■■     item barcode

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Cynthia Earl Kerman, 2000.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 6 (audiocassettes): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Cynthia Earl Kerman Papers Relating to The Lives of Jean Toomer 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

The Cynthia Earl Kerman Papers Relating to the Lives of Jean Toomer . 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 in 2014, including rehousing and in some instances minimal organization.

The finding aid for this collection is compiled from individual preliminary lists for each acquisition that were created at or around the time of receipt by the library. The preliminary lists were migrated to comply with current archival descriptive standards and merged into a single file in 2007-2008. As part of the migration, modifications were made to the formatting of individual lists; however, the content of the lists was neither modified nor verified.

As a rule, descriptive information found in the Collection Contents section is drawn in large part 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 call number Uncat MSS 62.

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## Cynthia Earl Kerman (1923-2012)

Cynthia Earl Kerman, biographer of Jean Toomer.

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## Scope and Contents

Research files, including notes, manuscripts, printed material, photographs, and audio tapes compiled by Cynthia Earl Kerman in the process of writing *The Lives of Jean Toomer*.

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## Arrangement

Organized into two groupings: July 2000 Acquisition and January 2013 Acquisition.

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## Collection Contents

### 1: July 2000 Acquisition

7 boxes

Box 6 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Organized into eight series: I. Biographical Research Files, 1923-1984. II. Notes and Copies of Writings by Toomer, 1949-1982. III. People Connected With Toomer, 1978-1987. IV. Interviews (Transcriptions), 1970-1983. V. Interviews (Audiocassettes), 1975-1983. VI. Chronological Notes, 1983-1995. VII. Unsorted Research Files, 1982-1983. VIII. Printed Material, 1966-1982.

	Series I: Biographical Research Files	1923-1984
b. 1, f. 1	Buckingham meeting	1923, 1962
b. 1, f. 2	Personal appreciations	1967-1978
b. 1, f. 3	Personality quirks	1980-1982, undated
b. 1, f. 4	Toomer photographs	undated
b. 1, f. 5	Toomer and race	undated
b. 1, f. 6	Writings about Toomer	1969-1984, undated
b. 1, f. 7	Criticisms of Toomer	undated
	Series II: Notes and Copies of Writings by Toomer	1949-1982
b. 1, f. 8	Alphabetical list with dates and Kerman's notes	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Bibliography and notes on Toomer	undated
	Toomer's autobiography	
b. 1, f. 10	Notes on relationship of segments	undated
b. 1, f. 11	Earth-Being introduction	undated
b. 1, f. 12	Books II and III, Earth-Being (from MCT collection)	1978
b. 1, f. 13	From Exile Into Being, version I	undated
b. 1, f. 14	From Exile Into Being, version II, part 1	undated
b. 2, f. 15	From Exile Into Being, version II, part 2	undated
b. 2, f. 16	Blue Meridian	1982, undated
b. 2, f. 17	First trip to Fontainebleau (1955-1956)	undated
b. 2, f. 18	The Flavor of Man	1949, 1974, 1979
b. 2, f. 19	Friends Intelligencer items (1943-1950)	undated

## Series II: Notes and Copies of Writings by Toomer (continued)

b. 2, f. 20	The Gallonwerps (1927-1928)	undated
b. 2, f. 21	An interpretation of Friends worship	1946-1947
b. 2, f. 22	Minor writing before 1932	undated
b. 2, f. 23	Lecturing and minor writing after 1932	undated
b. 2, f. 24	The Negro Emergent (1925)	undated
b. 2, f. 25	Portage potential	undated
b. 2, f. 26	Psychologic series (1937)	undated
b. 2, f. 27	Race problems and modern society (1928-1929)	undated
b. 2, f. 28	Notes on religion	undated
b. 2, f. 29	Remember and return and first statements	undated
b. 2, f. 30	Roads, people and principles	undated
b. 2, f. 31	Transatlantic	undated
b. 2, f. 32	Values and fictions	1975, undated
Series III: People Connected With Toomer		1978-1987
b. 2, f. 33	Morely Ayearst	1983
b. 2, f. 34	Douglas Campbell	1982
b. 2, f. 35	Chicago group	undated
b. 2, f. 36	Hart Crane	undated
b. 2, f. 37	Aaron Douglas and Katherine Mansfield	1980
b. 2, f. 38	Walter Driscoll	1981-1983
b. 2, f. 39	Waldo Frank	undated
b. 2, f. 40	Friends of Marjorie Content Toomer and Jean Toomer	1981-1987, undated
b. 2, f. 41	Zona Gale	1983, undated
b. 3, f. 42	Gurdjieff and Toomer	1982
b. 3, f. 43	Margery Latimer	undated
b. 3, f. 44	Meridel le Sueur	1982
b. 3, f. 45	Mabel Dodge Luhan	undated
b. 3, f. 46	Margo Latimer	1978, undated
b. 3, f. 47	Margaret Naumburg	undated
b. 3, f. 48	A. R. Orage	undated

## Series III: People Connected With Toomer (continued)

b. 3, f. 49	Emily Otis	undated
b. 3, f. 50	P. B. S. Pinchback	undated
b. 3, f. 51	Stieglitz and O'Keeffe	1986, undated
b. 3, f. 52	Edith and Paul Taylor	1983, undated
b. 3, f. 53	Nathan and Nina Toomer	undated
	Series IV: Interviews (Transcriptions)	1970-1983
	Box 6 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
b. 3, f. 54	Lewis Benson	1983
b. 3, f. 55	Frank and Lee Bjornsgaard	1978
b. 3, f. 56	Lin Davenport	1975, undated
b. 3, f. 57	Elizabeth and Georges Duval	1982
b. 3, f. 58	Sally Fell	1975
b. 3, f. 59	Marian Fuson	1975, 1983
b. 3, f. 60	Nancy Geiger	undated
b. 3, f. 61	Katherine Green	1975, undated
b. 3, f. 62	Charles Ingerman	1975
b. 3, f. 63	Mavis McIntosh	1982
b. 3, f. 64	Larry and Ruth Miller	1972-1975
b. 3, f. 65	Byron and Betty Morehouse	1982
b. 3, f. 66	Gorham Munson	1979, undated
b. 3, f. 67	Elizabeth Delza Munson	1978
b. 3, f. 68	Edith Passmore	1978
b. 3, f. 69	Dorothy Paxson	1975
b. 3, f. 70	Miryam Ralph (1953-1967)	1983
b. 3, f. 71	Susan Sandberg	1975, 1983
b. 3, f. 72	Douglas and Dorothy Steere	1975
b. 4, f. 73-78	Marjorie Content Toomer: 6 interviews <i>6 Folders</i>	1974-1983
b. 4, f. 79	Marjorie Content Toomer, Shockley interview	1970
b. 4, f. 80	Marjorie Content Toomer, references by others	undated

## Series IV: Interviews (Transcriptions) (continued)

b. 4, f. 81	Louise and William Welch	1982-1983
	Series V: Interviews (Audiocassettes)	1975-1983
	Box 6 (audiocassettes): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399338	Marjorie Toomer / Elise Boulding / Larry Miller <i>1 Audiocassette 01:41:15 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> There is static and high background noise on the tape. There is a speed issue toward the end of the recording. The program ends abruptly. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399338a.u.mp3</a>	1974 November 12 - 1975 January 23
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399361	Louise and William Welch (Tape III) / Elizabeth Delza Munson (Tape I) <i>1 Audiocassette 01:32:15 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> There is static and high background noise on the tape. The program ends abruptly. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399361a.u.mp3</a>	1982 June 25
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399346	Marjorie Toomer / Dorothy Paxson / Douglas and Dorothy Steere <i>1 Audiocassette 01:46:31 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> There is static and warbling during the program. There is high background noise on the tape. The program is distorted at times. There are tape speed issues at the beginning and end of the recording. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399346a.u.mp3</a>	1975 January 24
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399353	Louise and William Welch (Tape II) <i>1 Audiocassette 01:30:59 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> There is static and high background noise on the tape. The program is distorted at times. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399353a.u.mp3</a>	1982 June 25
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399312	Louise and William Welch (Tape I) <i>1 Audiocassette 02:05:00 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> There is static and high background noise on the tape. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399312a.u.mp3</a>	1982 June 25
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399304	Elizabeth Delza Munson (Tape II) <i>1 Audiocassette 00:55:41 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Program begins abruptly. Left channel drops and fades back at the beginning of the audio recording. Static is on the tape. Program is distorted at times and there is a high amount of hiss on the tape. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399304a.u.mp3</a>	1982 June 25
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399320	Margo Toomer Latimer <i>1 Audiocassette 01:53:02 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> There is high frequency background noise on the tape. The audio begins to degrade at about 01:20:00 and becomes unintelligible. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399320a.u.mp3</a>	undated
b. 6, ■■■■ 39002091399296	Sue Sandberg and MCT <i>1 Audiocassette 01:01:09 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Program begins and ends abruptly. There is static and a high amount of hiss on the tape. <a href="#">[Aviary] jwjmss011639002091399296a.u.mp3</a>	1983 March 20
	Series VI: Chronological Notes	1983-1995
b. 4, f. 82	Notes before 1921	1983-1995



## Series VI: Chronological Notes (continued)

b. 4, f. 83	Notes on 1922-1923	undated
b. 4, f. 84	Notes on Toomer's interpretation of 1926 experience	undated
b. 4, f. 85-87	Notes on 1929-1934 <i>3 Folders</i>	1983, 1992, undated
b. 4, f. 88	Marjorie Content Toomer, contemporary notes, 1936-37	undated
b. 4, f. 89	Notes on India trip, 1939	undated
b. 4, f. 90-93	Notes on 1940-1944 <i>4 Folders</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 94-100	Notes on 1945-1954 <i>7 Folders</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 101	Notes on Toomer's 1955 journal	undated
b. 5, f. 102-103	Notes on 1955-1967 <i>2 Folders</i>	undated
	Series VII: Unsorted Research Files	1982-1983
b. 5, f. 104	Assorted notes	1982-1983
b. 5, f. 105	Comments, Elizabeth Delza Munson	undated
b. 5, f. 106	Dates for Toomer	undated
b. 5, f. 107-108	Gurdjieff and Ouspensky references <i>2 Folders</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 109	Sources	undated
b. 5, f. 110	Krasny dissertation	undated
b. 5, f. 111	Mintz thesis	undated
	Series VIII: Printed Material	1966-1982
	Anderson, Margaret: <i>The Unknowable Gurdjieff</i>	1973
	Gurdjieff: <i>Views from the Real World</i>	1975
	Haskins, James: <i>Pinckney Benton Stewart</i>	1973
	Hulme, Kathryn: <i>Undiscovered Country. In Search of Gurdjieff</i>	1966
	<i>A Journal of Our Time</i>	1982 November 3
	Nicoll, Maurice: <i>Psychological Commentaries on the Teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky</i>	1957

**2: January 2013 Acquisition***1 box*

Arranged chronologically.

b. 7, f. 112	"The Jean Toomer Story" photograph album	undated
b. 7, f. 113	Correspondence with Marjorie Toomer	1979–1983
b. 7, f. 114	Transcription of interviews with Marjorie Toomer	1975–1983

## **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**

American literature -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Biographers -- United States  
Harlem Renaissance  
Modernism (Literature)  
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

### **Genres / Formats**

Audiocassettes -- United States -- 20th Century  
Audiovisual materials -- United States -- 20th Century  
Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Occupations**

Biographers -- United States -- 20th Century  
Poets -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Kerman, Cynthia Earl  
Kerman, Cynthia Earl (Lives of Jean Toomer)  
Toomer, Jean, 1894-1967  
Toomer, Marjorie, 1895-1984