



Guide to the Miriam Patchen Papers

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Collection number: MS 161

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Santa Cruz, California

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Processed by:
UCSC OAC Unit
Date Completed:
2004
Encoded by:
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Miriam Patchen papers

Date (inclusive): 1930-2000

Date (bulk): (bulk 1972-2000)

Collection number: MS 161

Creator: Patchen, Miriam

Extent: 4 boxes

Repository: University of California, Santa Cruz. University Library. Special Collections and Archives
Santa Cruz, California 95064

Abstract: This collection contains biographical material, correspondence, photographs, musical scores, audio recordings, a film and an artifact, documenting Miriam Patchen's promotion of her late husband's work.

Physical location: Stored offsite at NRLF: Advance notice is required for access to the papers.

Language: English

Access

Collection open for research

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Miriam Patchen papers. MS 161. Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Acquisition Information

Acquired 1975-2000

Biography

Miriam Patchen, wife of American novelist and poet Kenneth Patchen, peace activist, and longtime Palo Alto resident, died March 6, 2000 at the age of 86.

Born Sirkka Miriam Oikemus in Belmont, Massachusetts in September 28, 1914, Miriam, like her Finnish socialist parents, became a lifelong political activist. She joined the American Communist Party at age 7 and claimed to be the "youngest card-carrying member" of this party. She met Kenneth Patchen in 1933 and in June of 1934, they married. The Patchens moved to New York in 1935, where Kenneth's first book, *Before the Brave*, was published the following year. For the next thirty eight years of their marriage and through the creation of more than forty works of poetry and prose all dedicated "For Miriam", she was Patchen's "Muse" and complete partner in all the successes and hardships of their lives.

After the loss of her husband, Miriam diligently continued to campaign for poetry and for peace. She stood together with her later partner, the civil-rights activist, Laurent Franz on the corner of El Camino Real and Embarcadero Road every for 15 years holding a picket sign protesting American military intervention around the world. She was active in promoting her husband's poetry by taking part in readings and exhibits of Kenneth's work across the US and abroad; "Kenneth Patchen Literary Festival" held at the poet's home town Warren, Ohio between 1987-1989, the "Word, Image and Rhythms: a celebration of Kenneth Patchen" in London, 1998, and an exhibition of Patchen's silkscreen prints in Centro Studi Americani in Rome, 1999 etc. For the last two years of her life Miriam assisted Larry Smith on the biography, *Kenneth Patchen: rebel poet in America*. She was also featured in a documentary *Miriam Is Not Amused*, directed by Kim Roberts in 1998.

People who knew Miriam remember her as a woman of compassion, intelligence and wit, and one who was devoted to her causes and friends.

Scope and Content of Collection

Miriam Patchen papers are arranged into seven series; biographical material, correspondence, photographs, musical scores, audio recordings, film and artifact. Bulk of the material covers her local and international activities from 1972-2000 to promote her late husband's, literary work. Her activities included attending poetry readings, granting permissions to exhibit and publish Patchen's literary works, and establishing of Kenneth Patchen archive at UCSC Special Collections in 1975 and the further collaborative efforts with the institution.

The only items dating back to pre-1972 era are a memoir about Miriam's first meeting with Patchen, the courtship, and early years of marriage, and a handful of family photographs from 1920's-1950's. The largest series, biographical material and correspondence, includes more than half of the total content.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

Patchen, Miriam--Archives.

Authors, American--20th century.

Poets, American--20th century.

Genres and Forms of Materials

Correspondence

Photographs

Audio recordings

Film

Artifacts

Other Index Terms Related to this Collection

Williams, Jonathan

Patchen, Kenneth--1911-1972--Kenneth Patchen archive

Related Material

The Kenneth Patchen Archive at UCSC includes the following related collections:

[Identifier/Call Number: MS 160](#)

[Title: Kenneth Patchen papers,](#)

[Date: 1929-1989](#)

[Identifier/Call Number: MS 161](#)

[Title: Miriam Patchen papers,](#)

[Date: 1930-2000](#)

[Identifier/Call Number: MS 163](#)

[Title: Kathryn Winslow collection,](#)

Date: 1950-1988

Identifier/Call Number: MS 164

Title: Alan and Beatrice Parker collection.

Date: 1922-1969

Identifier/Call Number: MS 165

Title: James Boyer May correspondence.

Date: 1956-1972

Identifier/Call Number: MS 166

Title: Kenneth Patchen Festival records.

Date: 1927-1991

Identifier/Call Number: MS 167

Title: Chester Kessler papers.

Date: 1951-1952

Identifier/Call Number: MS 168

Title: Fred Wright correspondence.

Date: 1972-1990

Identifier/Call Number: MS 169

Title: Charles and Barbara Paine collection.

Date: 1957-1983

Identifier/Call Number: MS 170

Title: William M. Roth correspondence.

Date: 1941-1965

Identifier/Call Number: MS 172

Title: Peter Veres papers.

Date: 1973-1977

Identifier/Call Number: MS 173

Title: "Kenneth Patchen: Hurrah for Anything" film production records.

Date: 1982

Identifier/Call Number: MS 175

Title: William Plumley collection.

Date: 1942-1972

Identifier/Call Number: MS 176

Title: Tom and Rita Bottoms collection.

Date: 1946-1958

Identifier/Call Number: MS 177

Title: Johnny Wittwer papers.

Date: 1959

Collections in other institutions:

Identifier/Call Number: WTU00296

Title: Finding-Aid for the Patchen Papers.

Contributing Institution: Department of Special Collections, Olin Library, Washington University in St. Louis

Box-folder 1:1-18, 3:3	Biographical material 1972-2000 Physical Description: 19 folders, 1 notebook Series Scope and Content Summary Biographical Material consists of papers relating to the death of Miriam Patchen, clippings about Miriam, and promotional material documenting some of her domestic and international efforts to foster her late husband's work. These items are arranged chronologically. Included are Miriam's memoirs of the early years with Kenneth Patchen.
Box-folder 1:1	Obituaries (20 pp) 2000
Box-folder 1:2	Miriam's Memorial service invitation and program May 21, 2000
Box-folder 1:3	Elegies
Box-folder 1:4	Will April 2000
Box-folder 1:5	Laurent Frantz (1913-1998) papers; memorial program, article "Congressional Power to Enforce the 14th Amendment against private acts", and a clipping
Box-folder 1:6	City Lights Books royalty statements 1974
Box-folder 1:7	Work Inspired by Patchen: 1. "Beyond love there is no belief" by Marie Burton (6" x 7 1/2"); 2. "Miriam in her garden", by Barbara Gordon Paine (5" x 6")
Box-folder 1:8	Clippings about Miriam (13 pp) 1973-1997
Box 3	Memoirs 1933-1941; 22 manuscript pages of autobiographical account of Miriam's and Kenneth's early years together covering their first meeting in Boston Nov 13, 1933-Dec 14, 1941
Box-folder 1:9-18	Promotional activity post-Patchen; publicity, clippings, flyers etc. 1973-1996
Box-folder 1:9, 3:3	Group Theater Company performance "Hallelujah Anyway"; tour pamphlets and posters Scope and Content Note Note: In collaboration with Miriam Patchen, the group assembled the art and writings of Kenneth Patchen into two hour long production incorporating painted poem visuals, poetry-jazz, and a dramatic performance of selection from Patchen's poetry and prose
Box-folder 3:3	Kenneth Patchen Memorial, City Lights Poets' Theater; poster Feb 1972
Box-folder 1:10	San Francisco Art Institute Jan 12-Feb 11, 1973
Box-folder 1:11	KPFA; program calendar of Miriam interview/Patchen readings 1973-1974
Box-folder 1:12	University of North Dakota; exhibit catalog, publicity Mar 18-Apr 5, 1974
Box-folder 1:13	Smithsonian Institution "The Art of Poetry"; exhibit catalog Nov 1976-Jan 1977
Box-folder 1:14	Publication of "Argument of Innocence" by Peter Veres; book reviews 1978
Box-folder 1:15	San Jose College Art Gallery "Kenneth Patchen Graphic works"; poster and blank invitation Nov 30-Dec 15, 1982
Box-folder 3:3	Friends of the Patchens and Intersection "For Kenneth", poetry reading on the 10th year of Patchen's death; press release sheet, flyer, poster Jan 26, 1982
Box-folder 1:16	Documenta, Kessel, Germany, "Maler, Dichter, Pazifist, Visionar"; exhibit catalog 1983
Box-folder 1:17	Patchen Festival, Warren Ohio; exhibit catalog, clippings 1987-1990
Box 3	<i>Warmth In The Human Winter: selected love and picture poems of Kenneth Patchen.</i> Rain Press, San Francisco. Canvas cover hand painted by Charles Maden. This copy 1 of 75. (6 1/5" x 9 1/4") 1991
Box-folder 1:18	Misc clippings and publicity 1975-1996

Box-folder 1:19-2:23, 3:4-5	<p>Correspondence 1972-1998</p> <p>Physical Description: 35 folders</p> <p>Series Scope and Content Summary</p> <p>This series is organized into two subseries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outgoing correspondence, 1972-1998. • Incoming correspondence, 1972-1987.
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Box-folder 1:19-1:29	<p>Outgoing correspondence 1972-1998</p> <p>Physical Description: 10 folders</p> <p>Series Scope and Content Summary</p> <p>This subseries is organized by correspondent. Bulk of the it documents the establishment of the Kenneth Patchen Archive at UCSC and subsequent events that were administered by the University in collaboration with Miriam. In addition this series includes a detailed book list of Patchen's personal library as compiled by Miriam. Other letters of interest are Miriam's draft response to Anais Nin after reading of a false statement in a newspaper article, and replies to William Packard and Fred Wright.</p>
Box-folder 1:19 Box-folder 1:19 Box-folder 1:20 Box-folder 1:21 Box-folder 1:22	<p>City Lights Books; APCS Oct 31, 1989</p> <p>Alan CLODD; draft Apr 29, 1977</p> <p>Mr. KIRSCH; ALS [an account of Folkways recordings of Fables] Sep 7, 1978</p> <p>Richard MORGAN; APC Aug 4, [1970's]</p> <p>Anais NIN; draft "will you kindly stop your carrion...", [+ two clippings 1. "Anais Nin to give lecture", <i>Palo Alto Times</i>, Feb 4, 1972, 2. Miriam's corrective announcement "Studio sharing story false", (p. 23) in response to earlier statement by Nin] <i>Palo Alto Times</i> Feb 8, 1972</p>
Box-folder 1:23 Box-folder 1:24 Box-folder 1:25-28 Box-folder 1:25 Box-folder 1:26 Box-folder 1:27-28 Box-folder 1:29	<p>William PACKARD; 2 APCS and 2 ALS 1973-1975</p> <p>Larry SMITH; Draft [Apr, 1978]</p> <p>UCSC 1973-1998</p> <p>David HERON, University Librarian; 5 ALS and 2 APCS 1974-1992</p> <p>Lan DYSON, University Librarian; 2 ALS 1980 1998</p> <p>Rita BOTTOMS, Head of Special Collections; 18 ALS, 15 APCS, and 18 envelopes 1973-1998</p> <p>Fred WRIGHT; 4 ALS, APCS, 3 Christmas cards, 5 envelopes 1978-1980</p>
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Box-folder 2:1-23, 3:4-5	<p>Incoming correspondence 1972-1989</p> <p>Physical Description: 25 folders</p> <p>Series Scope and Content Summary</p> <p>This subseries is organized by correspondent. Of interest are letters send by Patchen biographers and critics James Schevill, Larry Smith, Peter Veres, and Richard Morgan. Presented in smaller amounts are letters from David Bedford and Jonathan Williams.</p>
Box-folder 2:1	<p>Marc ADRIAN (artist); 2 TLS [in regard to Documenta exhibit] 1986-1987</p> <p>Scope and Content Note</p> <p>Note: see also incoming letter from Dr. Nordhoff, Box 2:15</p>
Box-folder 2:2 Box-folder 2:3 Box-folder 3:4	<p>David BEDFORD (composer); 2 ALS 1977 1980</p> <p>Paul BOBB; ALS [attached with Memoirs, see box 3] Jul 6, 1933</p> <p>Gene DETRO; TLS + clipping "Patchen: A Fine Poet's Final Testament", and "Extensions", signed copy of booklet of poems by Detro Aug 26, 1972</p>
Box-folder 2:4	<p>Robert DUNKIN; ALS + clippings [Condemns Harold Norse comments about Kenneth Patchen] Nov 28, 1975</p>
Box-folder 2:5	<p>Lissa FISHER; 4 ALS and APCS 1977 1980</p> <p>Scope and Content Note</p> <p>Note: see also incoming letters from Richard Morgan, Box 2:13</p>

- Box-folder 2:6 **Gotham Book Mart and Gallery Inc.; TLS + 17 Polaroid shots of the Silkscreen and Painted Book Exhibit [see Box 3] Sep 16, 1982**
- Box-folder 2:7 **Henry W. HOUGH; TLS and a note Jan 1972**
- Box-folder 2:8-9 **Karl KEMPTON, (Kaldron, Rainbow Resin Press); TLS + serial issues of Kaldron, no. 2-6 (Jan 1977-summer 1978), NRG no.5 (1977) and signature pages from Western Poetry Review; features Kempton's typoglyphs 1977-1978**
- Box-folder 2:10 **Kent State University, Robert Bertholf; 2 TLS Apr-Jul 1975**
- Box-folder 2:11 **Marie MADURA; TLS Apr 4, 1973**
- Box-folder 2:12 **Hugo MANNING; 2 ALS and typescript copy "Kenneth Patchen of Love" 1973 1977**
- Box-folder 3:5 **Jack H. MOONING (Seminar Council, Montgomery); TLS + photocopies of Patchen poems with marginalia by him (4 pp) May 7, 1972**
- Box-folder 2:13 **Richard MORGAN; 30 TLS, 22 ALS, APCS, and Fwd letter from Morgan to Joel Climenhaga 1973-1980**
- Scope and Content Note
- Note: see also incoming letters from [Lissa Fisher](#), Box 2:5
- Box-folder 2:14 **Bob NEWTON; TLS, + signed copy of 40% to the Trade (1972) Oct 23, 1972**
- Box-folder 2:15 **Dr. NORDHOFF (Culture Adviser, City of Kassel, Germany); TLS, [in regards to Documenta Exhibit, see also Incoming corresp. Marc Adrian] Mar 18, 1987**
- Scope and Content Note
- Note: see also incoming letter from [Marc Adrian](#), Box 2:1
- Box-folder 2:16 **James SCHEVILL; TLS + typescript copy "Kenneth Patchen: The Search for Wonder and Joy" by Schevill (22 pp) May 1, [1973]**
- Box-folder 2:17 **The Scrimshaw Press; 3 TLS, 2 fwd letters, an invoice, book reviews and advertisements to *The Argument of Innocence* (12 pp) 1976-1977**
- Box-folder 2:18 **Larry SMITH; 2 TLS + clipping "Lake Erie Reflections", *Reporter* Apr 1974**
- Box-folder 2:19 **Peter VERES; 2 TLS Nov-Dec, 1974**
- Box-folder 2:20 **Jack WILLIAMS; TLS + portrait of Mr. Williams, promotional material for "With This Rose, I Thee Wake", dramatization of Kenneth Patchen's poetry presented by the Ensemble Theatre Company of Nashville at the Academy Theatre, Jan 1974. Music by Jack Eric Williams, script by C. B. Anderson and Karen Connell Hold. Feb 6, 1974**
- Box-folder 2:21 **Jonathan WILLIAMS; 3 TPCS 1980-1984**
- Box-folder 2:22 **Misc. incoming correspondence, A-Z; 8 TLS, 4 ALS, 2 newsletter, [includes TLS from William Packard, Jan 24, 1972] 1972-1989**
- Box-folder 2:23 **Fragments (1 pg)**
- Box-folder 3:6 **Scores 1972-1978**
- Physical Description: 1 folder
- Series Scope and Content Summary
- Consists of two scores signed to Miriam; a manuscript and a published work by David Bedford
- Box-folder 3:6 ***An Easy Decision*: for soprano and piano. David Bedford. UE 16034. Universal Edition: London. Text based on KP's "When we were here together". Signed copy "'Miriam with love and respect, Christmas 1980"; [Attached with Dec 2, 1980 letter from Bedford; see also Box 2:2] 1978**
- Box-folder 3:6 ***Wide Wide In the Rose's Side*: for soprano, organ, 3 violins, 4 trombones. David Bedford. Feb 1-2, 1972; manuscript, signed copy**
- Box-folder 3:1-2 **Photographs 1930s-1990s**
- Physical Description: 54 photographs
- Series Scope and Content Summary
- Arranged by size and by type. Bulk of the photos date to 1970s-1980s. Included are snap shots of Miriam as a child, her mother Sirkka Oikemus, companion Laurent Frantz, and formal portraits of Miriam.

Box-folder 3:2	8 1/2" x 12" (6 sheets in color); Miriam and Laurent under a billboard "For Miriam, The Sea Is Awash With Roses", and visiting Special Collections, UCSC [ca. 1990's]
Box-folder 3:2	8" x 10" (black and white); Portrait of Miriam and Mr. Sitwell [Patchen's black cat], unknown photographer, [ca. 1950]
Box-folder 3:2	8" x 8" (black and white); 4 Interior shots of Patchen's Palo Alto home with Miriam, unknown photographer [after 1972]
Box-folder 3:2	5" x 7":
Box-folder 3:2	Miriam, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Rita Bottoms in London (color) 1998
Box-folder 3:2	Miriam and Laurent Frantz protesting. Miriam is holding a sign "After NAFTA Clinton/Gore/Eshew - Your Silence = Death for Mexicans" (color) [ca. 1990]
Box-folder 3:2	Portrait of Miriam, head shot (black and white) [ca. 1930]
Box-folder 3:1	4" x 7":
Box-folder 3:1	Polaroids (18); Silkscreen and painted book exhibit, Gotham Book Mart (17) [attached with Incoming Sep 16, 1982 letter from Gotham], and Miriam and James Schevill at UCSC Special Collections (1) May 1, 1985
Box-folder 3:1	Color (13); includes snap shots of Miriam and her mother Sirkka Oikemus, and Laurent Frantz [1970s-1980s]
Box-folder 3:1	Black and white (9); includes snap shots of Miriam as a child (2), Miriam with Lars and her mother Sirkka Oikemus, and Miriam at a book signing of <i>What Shall We Do Without Us</i> [1920s]-1984
Box 4	Audio recordings 1982-1984 Physical Description: 6 cassette tapes Series Scope and Content Summary Consists of a recording of speeches given by Miriam Patchen and James Laughlin at UCSC Special Collections, Nov 14, 1984; and an interview "Miriam at Home" taped on Mar 10, 1982.
Box 4	Film 1977 Physical Description: 1 reel Series Scope and Content Summary Consists of one 16 mm color film titled <i>Hidden Tears</i> , directed by Eli Eliezer, 1977. The screenplay is based on Patchen's poem <i>Do the dead know what time it is?</i> Restricted access; FRAGILE.
Box 4	Artifact 1990 Physical Description: 1 item Series Scope and Content Summary Contains burgandy colored "Kenneth Patchen Coffee Shop" apron (size M), worn by Miriam at Kenneth Patchen Festival, Warren, Ohio, April 1990; included is a photocopied photograph of Miriam standing next to Fred Wright and wearing this apron.