
Guide to the William Plumley Collection

Collection number:

The University Library
Special Collections and Archives
University of California, Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz, California

Contact Information:

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Descriptive Summary

Title: William Plumley collection,

Date (inclusive): 1942-1972

Date (bulk): (Bulk 1956-1958)

Collection number: MS 175

Collector: Plumley, William

Extent: 2 boxes

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

Abstract: This collection contains correspondence from Kenneth and Miriam Patchen to Hortense Baer written between 1946-1972, and ephemera on Kenneth Patchen.

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

William Plumley Collection, MS 175. Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Acquisition Information

Acquired 1994.

Biographical Note

William Crawford Plumley, a scholar of modern American poetry and a published author, was born in Hamlin, West Virginia. From 1980 on, he has performed academic duties as a professor of English at University of Charleston, the former Morris Harvey College, in Charleston, West Virginia. He received an A.B. from Marshall University (1963), M. Ed. from Kent State University (1967), M.A. from Marshall University (1971), and Ph.D. on Appalachian studies from Union Graduate School, Ohio (1977).

He has written poetry and edited anthologies and articles on folklore, poetry and fiction, mainly focusing on the Appalachian literature and culture. His first set of personal poetry *Many Faces* was published in 1969 by Morris Harvey Press, followed by *Poems from the Hills, 1970* and *Poems from the Hills, 1971*. He has also made guest appearances as the Appalachian scholar on TV produced by Public Broadcasting Company.

Mainly publishing in the 1970's, his latest literary activity includes a book production, consisting of criticism on, poetry dedicated to, and an interview with American poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti (*Lawrence Ferlinghetti :in Search of Eros*, 1995). This project was inspired by the exhibition of Lawrence Ferlinghetti's drawings and his public reading produced by Plumley at the University of Charleston, West Virginia.

His literary interest also extends to collecting primary research material (manuscripts, letters, original art) and books by notable modern writers such as Patchen, Kerouac, Burroughs, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and Bukowski.

He has been an active member on the board of directors for Appalachian Heritage Foundation, Inc., and Mountain State Press (1977-) and holds a membership in American Poetry Society.

Scope and Contents Note

The William Plumley collection of Kenneth Patchen material was purchased through an auction in 1994. It consists of correspondence, annotated and typed letters from Kenneth and Miriam Patchen and printed material.

The correspondence consists mainly of autographed and typed letters from Kenneth and Miriam Patchen to their friend and occasional patron, Mrs. Hortense Baer. Three letters from Kenneth Patchen and over eighty letters written by Miriam Patchen provide an intimate glimpse into their lives from 1956-1958. The letters cover Patchen's jazz-poetry venture, medical affairs, financial strains and various moves around the Bay Area.

The printed material consists of picture-poem postcards, an exhibit catalog and clippings.

Indexing Terms

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

Subjects

Plumley, William--Archives

Patchen, Kenneth--1911-1972.

Poets, American--20th century

Other Index Terms Related to this Collection

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

Patchen, Miriam

Baer, Hortense

box-folder 1:1-79 Correspondence 1946-1972 (bulk 1956-1958)

2:1-15

Physical Description: 94 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series contains autographed (ALS) and typed (TLS) letters, and postcards (APCS) including envelopes [+env.] by Kenneth and Miriam Patchen to Hortense (Mrs. Walter) Baer. Envelopes are included [+ env.], where designated. Kenneth Patchen's letters contain a constant theme of need for money to continue efforts as a poet, where as Miriam, Patchen's wife, conveys details of Patchen's artistic triumphs, his pain & frustration over the back problems, financial strains, and other elements. Majority of the letters are written by Miriam. Material is grouped first by correspondent, then arranged chronologically identifying the first line in each letter.

- Box-folder 1:1-4 **Kenneth Patchen to Hortense Baer 1957-1958:**
- Box-folder 1:1 **ALS, "I mislaid the loan slips the day the 2nd one came..." [2 pp + env.] Mar 15, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:2 **A Info packet; 2 "Kenneth Patchen reads with the Chamber Jazz Sextet" brochures, and a reprint of a book review for "Hurrah for Anything" by John Holmes, New York Times + [env. postmarked Feb 18, 1958] Feb 2, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:3 **TLS, "Please forgive me for not acknowledging your prompt sending..." Jan 17, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:4 **ALS, "I am to conclude that if anything important comes..." [2 pp + clip+ env.] Jan 2, 1957**
- Box-folder 1:5-2:15 **Miriam Patchen to Hortense Baer 1946-1970:**
- Box-folder 1:5-11 **1960-70:**
- Box-folder 1:5 **ALS, "Just one of those funny little interim things..." n.d.**
- Box-folder 1:6 **ALS, "Shingles are a darned things. Hope they aren't near the eye..." [+ env.] Mar 1, 1972**
- Box-folder 1:7 **Season Greeting card, signed [+ env.] Dec 17, 1970**
- Box-folder 1:8 **ALS, "What a thrill we got today when Mr. Danese, in calling us..." [9 pp + env.] Nov 14, 1969**
- Box-folder 1:9 **Season Greeting card, signed with Patchen's poem *I have Lighted the Candles, Mary* Dec 1967**
- Box-folder 1:10 **APCS, "Miss you so - your letters were the life we had..." [post-Jul 1963]**
- Box-folder 1:11 **APCS, "Kenneth is entering the hospital Sunday for intensive testing..." Oct 19, 1961**
- Box-folder 1:12-32 **1958:**
- Box-folder 1:12 **Season Greeting card, signed; with *Two Poems for Christmas by Kenneth Patchen*, [+ signed insert & env.] Dec [1958]**
- Box-folder 1:13 **TLS, "Time has me but the ears. I leave the house at 8:30..." [+env.] Dec [10] 1958**
- Box-folder 1:14 **TLS, "Nothing very extraordinary is a-foot here, but I wanted to send..." [2 pp + env.] Oct 15, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:15 **TLS, "By now everything is only a glorious memory..." Oct 7, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:16 **TLS, "How wonderful that you got away, even though it carried..." Aug 9, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:17 **TLS, "So Kenneth is at home now for a while we believe..." Aug 2, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:18 **TLS, "The patient surely is not to be allowed to go to..." Jun 22, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:19 **TLS, "Just a moment between parents, wrappings..." [+ 2 comics, & env.] Jun 15, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:20 **TLS, "It was only selfishness on our parts to call you..." [pre-Jun 1958]**
- Box-folder 1:21 **TLS, "The letter which should have been in Wyncote by now..." [+ env.] May 27, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:22 **Flyer and brochure announcing "3 New Painted Books... *When We Where Here Together, Hurrah For Anything, Poemscapes*..." [+ env.] May 26, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:23 **TLS, "How wonderful to be home, even with all the everything feelings..." [2 pp + env.] May 5, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:24 **TLS, "Good heavens, good heavens, what are you people doing..." [+ env.] May 5 [1958]**
- Box-folder 1:25 **TLS, "How wonderful! What a remarkable, good girl you are!..." [+ env.] Apr 23, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:26 **TLS, "The day is sooft [misspelling] and warm like a late July day..." [2 pp + env.] Apr 20, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:27 **TLS, "It was with 'mixed feelings', as they say, that I read..." [2 pp + env.] Apr 14, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:28 **TLS, "The rain doesn't come down in Spain. That I know..." [2 pp + env.] Mar 21, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:29 **TLS, "A lull in the storm here, both figuratively and literally..." [2 pp + env.] Feb 18, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:30 **TLS, "What darlings to send the wire to Kenneth..." [+ env.] Feb 9, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:31 **TLS, "I've been back three days and haven't had a minute to myself..." [3 pp + env.] Jan 30, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:32 **ALS, "Everything is so 'hung-up' here- with my parents on my hands..." [+ env.] Jan 2, 1958**
- Box-folder 1:33-55 **1957:**
- Box-folder 1:33 **TLS, "Your Krey letter came Friday, and I firmly meant to get..." [+env.] Dec 22, 1957**
- Box-folder 1:34 **TLS, "Your letter came while I was at the house, where my folks..." [2 pp + env.] Dec 17, 1957**
- Box-folder 1:35 **TLS, "The turmoil and rush and stuff left me with a tremendous..." [+ env.] Dec 9, 1957**
- Box-folder 1:36 **TLS, "This is the way it is... and so time slips without making..." [2 pp + env.] Dec 3, 1957**

Box-folder 1:37	ALS, "Everything has been so swirly that I've been able only to spin..." [2 pp + env.] Nov 5, 1957
Box-folder 1:38	TLS, "As usual so many things happen that I am not at all sure..." [2 pp + env.] Oct 27, 1957
Box-folder 1:39	TLS, "Last night was Gala Opening. It was something not imaginable..." [2 pp + env.] Oct 7, 1957
Box-folder 1:40	ALS, "Again we're been a little self-absorbed..." [4 pp + env.] Oct 1, 1957
Box-folder 1:41	TLS, "Whether we're here, there, or flying, I don't know..." [+env.] Sep 4, 1957
Box-folder 1:42	ALS, "It's a long time since your wonderfully re-assuring call..." [2 pp + env.] Aug 4, 1957
Box-folder 1:43	TLS, "Have been unable to write you details of Kenneth's medical picture..." [2 pp + env.] Jul 18, 1957
Box-folder 1:44	APCS, "It is ulcer; how bad, how extensive we don't yet know!..." Jul 10, 1957
Box-folder 1:45	TLS, "It doesn't seem as if we should have something to say..." [+ env.] Jul 8, 1958
Box-folder 1:46	TLS, "What on earth is the matter with my so-called mind?..." Jun 11, 1957
Box-folder 1:47	TLS, "How on earth some people (meaning you) can maintain..." [2 pp + env.] Jun 6, 1957
Box-folder 1:48	TLS, "They came! What an incredible wealth of beauties!..." [+ env.] May 1, 1957
Box-folder 1:49	TLS, "Every day passes with my promises to myself..." [+ env.] Apr 12, 1957
Box-folder 1:50	TLS, "If you are interested in snails, giant gruesome creatures..." [2 pp + env.] Apr 12, 1957
Box-folder 1:51	TLS, "It seems months ago since you telephoned..." [2 pp + env.] Mar 21, 1957
Box-folder 1:52	TLS, "After such a fine letter from you, the time-lapse..." [+env.] Feb 2, [1957]
Box-folder 1:53	ALS, "This folded sheet has been traveling back and forth..." [2 pp + env.] Jan 13, 1957
Box-folder 1:54	TLS, "Did I really not write you last week? Came across this..." [post-1957]
Box-folder 1:55	TLS, "Are you trying to get into the news-item class..." [1957]
Box-folder 1:56-79	1956:
Box-folder 1:56	ALS, "First the dull, but more important 'stuff'..." [3 pp + env.] Nov 3, 1956
Box-folder 1:57	ALS, "Suez Canal, Far East, Ike/Dick/Adlai etc., not withstanding..." [+env.] Oct 14, 1956
Box-folder 1:58	ALS, "It was such a pleasure hearing you - and such a surprise..." [2 pp + env.] Sep 29, 1956
Box-folder 1:59	ALS, "Just a note in case I alarmed you..." [2 pp + env.] Sep 19, 1956
Box-folder 1:60	ALS, "Well, the suspense is over. You were completely correct..." [2 pp , hospital bill and Blue Cross Claim Department statement, + env.] Sep [17], 1956
Box-folder 1:61	ALS, "Kenneth walks! Garbo may talk, but Kenneth walks..." [5 pp + env.] Aug 28, 1956
Box-folder 1:62	ALS, "Kenneth's cast is off! Yesterday two of the doctor's..." [3 pp + env.] Aug 17, 1956
Box-folder 1:63	ALS, "Kenneth is home- came yesterday evening..." [2 pp + env. + 4x5 black & white photo of Palo Alto residence] Jul 23, 1956
Box-folder 1:64	ALS, "Fits and starts of letters to you since you called..." [2 pp + env.] Jul 17, 1956
Box-folder 1:65	ALS, "Kenneth is getting much better; the penicillin reaction..." [+ env.] Jul 11, 1956
Box-folder 1:66	ALS, "How good of you to come to the aid of the holing 'babes!'" [2 pp + env.] Jun 7, 1956
Box-folder 1:67	ALS, "Things are so confused - I never get the things done I should..." [3 pp + env.] Jun 6, 1956
Box-folder 1:68	ALS, "The fateful day has been set. Kenneth enters the hospital..." [+ env.] May 7, 1956
Box-folder 1:69	ALS, "It's very confusing: Kenneth says he didn't mail a letter to you..." [3 pp + env.] Apr 29, 1956
Box-folder 1:70	ALS, "At last! Today Kenneth spent some time with doctors, test, etc..." [2 pp + env.] Apr 20, 1956
Box-folder 1:71	ALS, "Kenneth has not been checked yet. The doctors apparently..." [2 pp + env.] Apr 2, 1956
Box-folder 1:72	ALS, "It's been a crazy week. And to sit down to write you..." [2 pp + env.] Mar 21, 1956
Box-folder 1:73	ALS, "What a mass of rushing through your call..." [2 pp + env.] Mar 15, 1956
Box-folder 1:74	ALS, "What fun to get the pictures! I like even the dreadful tummy..." [+ env.] Mar 12, 1956
Box-folder 1:75	APCS, "Moved Saturday; all in great confusion, but very pleasant..." Feb 28, 1956
Box-folder 1:76	ALS, "From the 1st our address will be 852 BRYANT ST, Palo Alto..." [2 pp + env.] Feb 20, 1956
Box-folder 1:77	ALS, "There are no words to express our feelings..." [3 pp + env.] Jan 30, 1956
Box-folder 1:78	ALS, "It hasn't been difficulties or negligence, really..." [2 pp + env.] Jan 13, 1956
Box-folder 1:79	Telegrams (2) May 31, 1956 & [Mar 21, 1956]
Box-folder 2:1-8	1950-55:
Box-folder 2:1	ALS, "Your letter is so truly incredible, so hard to absorb into a belief..." [2 pp + env.] Nov 21, 1955
Box-folder 2:2	ALS, "Your order for a portfolio came some time ago and was filled..." [3 pp + env.] Nov 21, 1955
Box-folder 2:3	ALS, "You see from this what has happened!..." [+ env.] Dec 5, 1951
Box-folder 2:4	ALS, "Kenneth is at home and has been back for three weeks..." [3 pp + env.] Apr 27, 1951
Box-folder 2:5	ALS, "How grateful I am to you for your letter!..." [2 pp + env.] Nov 8, 1951
Box-folder 2:6	ALS, "If only you can come here! We'd be so very happy..." [+ env.] Aug 2, 1951
Box-folder 2:7	ALS, "Your lovely letters, generosity and good wishes..." [2 pp + env.] Mar 19, 1951
Box-folder 2:8	ALS, "The matter weighs so heavily on our minds that..." [+env.] May 2, 1950
Box-folder 2:9-15	1946-49:
Box-folder 2:9	Season Greeting card, "How you knew that the 'Appassionata'..." [+ env.] Dec 28 1949
Box-folder 2:10	ALS, "What a nice letter! It made us feel so good..." [+ env.] Nov 26, 1949

Box-folder 2:11	ALS, "Your telegram just came. It is impossible to convey..." [+ env.] Oct 14, 1949
Box-folder 2:12	ALS, "This letter is so hard for me to write..." [includes 2 notes from H. Baer, 2 pp letter + env.] Oct 10, 1949
Box-folder 2:13	APCS, 'At last things are straightened out on Sleepers Awake, and..." Dec 14, 1946
Box-folder 2:14	ALS, "Thank you in deed for your order of a limited edition of Sleepers Awake..."[2 pp + env.] Jul 5, 1946
Box-folder 2:15	Empty envelopes (3), and a signed postcard "Just a spring-time 'Hello'"

box 2

Printed Material 1962-1972

Physical Description: 3 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series contains Kenneth Patchen's picture-poem postcards printed in black ink on various color papers by East Wind Printers, San Francisco; an exhibit catalog with a biographical sketch by Miriam, short chronology and a note by Richard Bowman; and a collection of obituaries on Kenneth Patchen.

Box-folder 2:16

Postcards: Drawind-Poem Series R and RS, complete sets of 7 cards each 1962

Box-folder 2:17

Exhibition catalog *Kenneth Patchen: Painter of Poems*, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. 1969

Box-folder 2:18

Newspaper clippings; obituaries 1972