

GARDINER, CHARLES WREY, 1901- Charles Wrey Gardiner papers, 1942-1967

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Gardiner, Charles Wrey, 1901-
Title: Charles Wrey Gardiner papers, 1942-1967
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 641
Extent: .5 linear ft. (1 box)
Abstract: Papers of English poet and author Charles Wrey Gardiner. Consists of correspondence and a small collection of personal papers and miscellaneous materials.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Source

Purchase, 1986.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Charles Wrey Gardiner papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Charles Wrey Gardiner, poet and author, was born in Plymouth, England in 1901. His father died when he was an infant, leaving Charles, an only child, to the care of his mother. After leaving college, Gardiner married his cousin Betty. Their marriage produced one daughter referred to as "Itty" in the letters and ended in divorce. Gardiner then journeyed to France where he met and

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wed his second wife Suzanne. Gardiner started to write during his ten years spent in France and also spent part of his time on his yacht in the Mediterranean. His second marriage ended in 1936 at which time he returned to England and began his literary career. Gardiner settled in Devon, England with his first wife and daughter. Near Devon he met E.M. Channing-Renton, owner and founder of the Channing Press. Gardiner's first autobiography, *The Colonies of Heaven*, and two collections of his poetry were published by the Channing Press. In 1939 Gardiner became assistant editor of the *Poetry Quarterly* published at Channing Press. When World War II began, E.M. Channing-Renton went back into the army and encouraged Gardiner to continue the *Poetry Quarterly*. Gardiner moved to Billericay, where his mother owned a house called "Grey Walls." There Gardiner began a small press and bookstore.

The first issue of the *Poetry Quarterly* was produced at Billericay in the spring of 1940. Late in 1940, the Grey Walls Press began. Gardiner ran the press, stressing in its publications the newer, more modern poets and writers. The Press later moved to London and then combined with the new Falcon Press, run by Peter Baker. The Grey Walls Press was at its peak from 1947 to 1950. Gardiner married his third wife, Cynthia Kortright, in 1947. Gardiner apparently had a number of children with Kortright, including "Simon" mentioned in the letters. Due to poor management by Peter Baker, the Falcon Press lost money and by 1949 was in debt. C. Wrey Gardiner was absent more and more frequently from the Press until in 1953 he ceased publication of the *Poetry Quarterly* and left for a sabbatical in North Africa. Upon Gardiner's return in 1954, he found the Falcon Press and therefore the Grey Walls Press in a hopeless financial situation at which time the Falcon Press ceased operation as did the Grey Walls Press. At some point after this, Gardiner became a landlord, divorced Cynthia Kortright, and still later married the widow of Julian Maclaren-Ross, Diana. C. Wrey Gardiner died 13 March 1981, a few years after Diana's death.

Gardiner's works include his four published autobiographies, *The Colonies of Heaven* (?1938), *The Once-Loved God* (1943), *The Dark Thorn* (1946), *The Answer to Life is No* (1960), and an unpublished autobiography, *The Octopus of Love*. Gardiner also wrote many works of poetry including *Sharp Scorpions* (1946), *The Chained Tree* (1941), *The Last Refuge* (1941), *The Gates of Silence* (1944), *Lament for Strings* (1947), *The Flowering Moment* (1949), and a recently published collection, *His Poems*, 1980.

Little is known about Cynthia Kortright. Apparently she was approximately twenty-five years younger than C. Wrey Gardiner and was a friend of his daughter by his first wife. Kortright's and Gardiner's marriage seemed rather tempestuous in later years and dissolved at some point which cannot be determined from these papers. No information has been found concerning Cynthia Kortright's later years.

Biographical Source: "Grey Walls Press" by Alan Smith, *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, September 1986, pp. 328-337 (photocopied and available on request); "Charles Wrey Gardiner: Poet, Editor, and Publisher," *The London Times*, 18 March 1981, p. 16. vols. 7-8 (obituary); and *Contemporary Authors*, vol. 103, p. 153 (1982, obituary).

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the papers of Charles Wrey Gardiner from 1946 to 1967. It is made up of 232 items including correspondence between Charles Wrey Gardiner and Cynthia Kortright, who became his third wife, and a variety of other materials.

The correspondence between Charles Wrey Gardiner and Cynthia Kortright spans the time period from 1942 to 1949 and includes some undated materials probably written after 1949. This part of the collection consists of seven folders of correspondence. The correspondence begins at the time Kortright and Gardiner began corresponding and ends sometime after their estrangement (though the exact date of that event is unknown). The bulk of this material dates from 1946 to 1949 during the time when Gardiner and Kortright began their love affair, were married, and had at least one child.

These letters chronicle the couple's on-going relationship, including their problems finding a time and place for their meetings. Some of the letters from 1947 discuss their problems with Kortright's pregnancy prior to their marriage, and subsequent letters reveal their marriage and the arrival of their child, Simon. Unfortunately, no letters in the collection discuss the marriage itself. Letters from after the marriage are less concerned with personal matters but focus more upon family arrangements and financial matters, Gardiner's work with The Grey Walls Press, and later problems after the closing of the Press.

C. Wrey Gardiner's letters to Cynthia Kortright are arranged chronologically in the first six folders. The seventh folder in Box 1 contains Cynthia Kortright's letters to Gardiner, two of which are dated, and many of which are undated but appear to be written after their separation and after the demise of the Grey Walls Press (1954). Unfortunately, little information can be gained from either Kortright's or Gardiner's letters concerning either their later married years, or their separation and subsequent settlement.

The majority of the material remaining in the last nine folders consists of correspondence addressed to C. Wrey Gardiner from assorted major and minor literary figures. Among the correspondents represented in the collection are Dame Edith Sitwell (one letter, 1960), noted English poet and writer; Muriel Spark (five letters, 1952, 1966 and undated), Scottish critic, novelist, and journalist; Colin Wilson (two letters, 1960), English experimental writer; Paul Scott (ten letters, 1958-1961, 1966 and undated), British literary critic, playwright, poet and author; and John Francis Alexander Heath-Stubbs (seven letters, 1962-1963 and undated), English poet, critic, and playwright.

The earlier letters contain some references to the Grey Walls Press and its activities. However, most correspondence only mentions the Grey Walls Press and little directly pertains to the operation of the press. Many of the letters, particularly the ones dating from the 1960's discuss events in C. Wrey Gardiner's life at that time, including his efforts to publish *The Answer to Life is No*, his fourth autobiographical novel. Also included are a number of miscellaneous notes and writings of C. Wrey Gardiner, his contract for the publication of *The Answer to Life is No*, and a note sent to a Miss Gardiner (possibly one of his daughters from his marriage to Cynthia Kortright).

This miscellaneous correspondence to CWG is arranged chronologically with undated correspondence located after this chronological sequence. Certain personal papers of C. Wrey Gardiner and miscellaneous material other than correspondence have been grouped separately at the end of the collection.

A small collection of books, magazines, and other materials were received with this material and are now housed and cataloged separately from this collection.

Arrangement Note

Arranged in chronological order.

Container List

Correspondence to Cynthia Kortright

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	1942 December - 1945 November (7 items)
1	2	1946 January - December (18 items)
1	3	1947 January - July (24 items)
1	4	1948 February - December (9 items)
1	5	1949 February - April (10 items)
1	6	undated (7 items)

Correspondence from Cynthia Kortright

1	7	1947 Mar and undated (7 items)
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Miscellaneous correspondence to Charles Wrey Gardiner

1	8	Correspondence, 1940-1949 (13 items)
1	9	Correspondence, 1950-1959 (44 items)
1	10	Correspondence, 1960-1969 (45 items)
1	11	Correspondence, undated, alphabetical (28 items)
1	12	Correspondence, handwritten drafts, undated (2 items)
1	13	"Grey Walls Press Book News" (typescript). undated (1 item)
1	14	Miscellaneous correspondence and collected items (includes Miss Gardiner correspondence) (8 items)
1	15	Personal writing and publishing projects. 1959 and undated. (17 items)
1	16	Writings: Poems and essay (5 items)
