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The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature**

**Guide to the  
John Updike Supplemental File from Lord John Press collection of papers  
1952-2005**

**Berg Coll m.b. Updike L67 1976**

**Processed by Jessie Barsin; edited by Isaac Gewirtz.  
Revised front matter and finding aid by Lyndsi Barnes in 2020.**

## Summary

**Creator:** Updike, John Hoyer, 1932-

**Title:** John Updike Supplemental File form Lord John Press collection of papers.

**Date:** 1952-2005.

**Size:** 0.42 linear feet (2 manuscript boxes).

**Source:** Purchased in 2017.

**Abstract:** The John Updike Supplemental File form Lord John Press collection of papers, 1952-2005, document the life and work of Pulitzer Prize-winning American novelist, poet, short-story writer, art critic, and literary critic John Hoyer Updike (1932-2009). The collection consists of correspondence, writings, and ephemera. The papers provide insight to Updike's professional and personal relationship with Herb Yellin (1935-2014), proprietor and founder, in 1976, of the Lord John Press.

**Access:** Restricted access.

**Preferred Citation:** [Author], [Identification of item], John Updike Supplemental File form Lord John Press collection of papers, The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

**Language of material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Jessie Barsin, under the direction of Isaac Gewirtz. Revised front matter and finding aid by Lyndsi Barnes in 2020.

## Creator History

John Updike was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, and spent his first years in nearby Shillington, a small town where his father was a high school science teacher. After graduating from Shillington High School he worked at the *Reading Eagle* newspaper, and received a tuition scholarship to Harvard University, where he majored in English. He graduated from Harvard in 1954, and in that same year sold a poem and a short story to *The New Yorker* magazine. Updike spent the following year in England, where he studied at Oxford's Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. He moved to New York City and became a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, where many of his poems, reviews and short stories appeared, but ultimately resided in Massachusetts for the rest of his life. In 1963, he received the National Book Award for his novel *The Centaur*, which was inspired by his childhood in Pennsylvania. Updike became the youngest person ever

elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and in 1968, his novel *Couples* became a national sensation with its portrayal of the complicated relationships among a set of young married couples in the suburbs. *Rabbit Is Rich*, published in 1981, received numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. He received a second Pulitzer Prize for *Rabbit at Rest* in 1991. Updike was one of three Americans to win a second Pulitzer Prize in the fiction category.

John Updike spent the last years of his life in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, in the same corner of New England where so much of his fiction is set. His last book was *The Widows of Eastwick* (2008), a sequel to his 1984 novel, *The Witches of Eastwick*. Updike died in 2009 at the age of 76.

## **Scope and Content Note**

For almost 30 years, John Updike (1932-2009) maintained a professional and personal relationship with Herb Yellin (1935-2014), proprietor and founder, in 1976, of the Lord John Press. Yellin published fine press editions of many of Updike's stories and poems. Their professional relationship soon developed into a warm friendship. Updike's letters combine the personal, literary, and professional, and reveal his appreciation of Yellin's careful attention to typographic excellence and book design. Even Updike's postcards are replete with substantive content, as are the letters. The galleys and proofs, as well as several typescripts, show Updike reworking his material and becoming deeply engaged in typographic and design decisions, as well as the commercial aspects of marketing fine press editions.

For the website Words Without End, Yellin wrote the following of his press, its name, and its connection to Updike: "The most asked question over the years has been how did I come up with Lord John Press as a name. Well, it was relatively simple. I work with yellow legal pads as a best friend and make lists of names or ideas until something jells. I listed the authors that I wanted to work with: Updike, Barth, Fowles, Gardner, Cheever, Hawkes and they were all named John so that was easy and then I added 'Lord' to marry Great Britain and America. It was like naming a child and now when I see Lord John Press in print, it is just like seeing my own name and I still get a rush when it appears in print or someone else's article. It was also a kind of homage to John Updike because one of the rooms in my home is devoted to his work."

## **John Updike Supplemental File form Lord John Press collection of papers, 1952-2005**

Series I: Works by John Updike

Series II: Ephemera

Series III: Letters by John and Martha Updike

## **John Updike Supplemental File form Lord John Press collection of papers, 1952-2005**

## Series I: Works by John Updike

Box 1, Folder 1: "The Beloved." Typescript with autograph emendations, [n.d.], 27 pages (27 leaves); "Concerts at Castle Hill." Proof with autograph emendations, 1963, 56 pages (29 leaves).

Box 1, Folder 2: Updike, John. T.l.s. to Herb Yellin, Jun. 25, 1987, 1 page (1 leaf); "Getting The Words Out." Typed manuscript with autograph emendations, [1978], 39 pages (39 leaves).

Box 1, Folder 3: "Humor in Fiction." Partial proof with autograph emendations, 2000, 7 pages (7 leaves); Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jul. 28, 2000, 1 page (1 leaf); "Humor in Fiction." Proof with autograph emendations, Jul. 28, 2000, 36 pages (36 leaves) with postage cancelled envelope; "Humor in Fiction." Proof of first page, 9 pages (9 leaves).

Box 1, Folder 4: "Humor in Fiction." Typescript partial draft with autograph emendations, [2000], 17 pages (17 leaves) with postage cancelled envelope; "Humor in Fiction;" Typescript with autograph emendations, [2000], 35 pages (35 leaves) with typed Foreward, 2 pages (2 leaves) and postage cancelled envelope; Updike, John. Photocopy of T.L.S., to Herb Yellin, Jul. 13, 2000, 1 page (1 leaf); "Humor in Fiction." Proof with autograph emendations, Jul 13, 2000, 41 pages (41 leaves).

Box 1, Folder 5: "Humor in Fiction." Proof with autograph emendations, [2000], 46 pages (46 leaves); "Humor in Fiction." Proof, Aug. 9, 2000, 40 pages (40 leaves). "Humor in Fiction." Proof, [2000], 42 pages (27 leaves). "Humor in Fiction." Proof, [2000], 10 pages (10 leaves).

Box 1, Folder 6: "A Soft Spring Night in Shillington." Typed manuscript, [1986], 43 pages (43 leaves); Yellin, Herb. A.L.S. to\_, May 18, 1986, 1 page; "A Soft Spring Night in Shillington." Proof, with autograph emendations, Apr. 22, 1986, 44 pages (44 leaves).

Box 2, Folder 1: (Poems by John Updike): "Mites." Typed copy, [1990], 2 pages (2 leaves); "Mites." Proof with autograph emendations, [1990], 1 page; "Sonnet to Human Grandeur;" Typed copy, [n.d.], 1 page; "Outliving One's Father." Autographed copy from John Updike to Herb Yellin, 2005, typed copy, 2 pages (1 leaf); "A Pear Like a Potato." Typed copy, [1986 ?], 2 pages (2 leaves); "A Pear Like a Potato." Galley with autograph emendations, Apr. 26, 1986, 1 page, with postage cancelled envelope; "Pillow" [1988 ?] and "Condo Moon" [1988]. Proof, with autograph emendations, 1 page. "Query." Autographed greeting card to Herb Yellin, Dec. 1974, 3 pages, 1 leaf; "The Lovelorn Astronomer." Autographed greeting card to Herb Yellin, 1978, 4 pages (1 leaf); Updike, John. Autographed drawing with unnamed poem to Herb Yellin, Dec. 1953, 2 pages (1 leaf); Updike, John. Autographed poem "Full forty years have flown, no less," to Herb Yellin, [n.d.], 1 page; Updike, John. Typed Foreward and Contents with autograph emendations, [n.d.], 3 pages (3 leaves); Updike, John. Galley of Foreword and Contents with autograph emendations, [n.d.], 1 page. "Overheard in Widener." From The New Yorker, Sep. 1951, 1 page; "How to Watch a Crew Race." From Harvard Lampoon, May, 1952, 1 page; "Professor Harlow Shapley Warbles the Praises of Natural Sciences 115." Oct. 1952, 1 page (1 leaf).

Box 2, Folder 2: "My head was whirling when I went." Poem, Dec, 1952, 1 page. "I Like to Sing Also." Poem, Feb., 1954, 1 page; "Ballade for Subway Sitters." Poem, Feb. 1954, 1 page; "With the River Charles." Poem, from the Harvard Lampoon, Apr. 1954, 1 page; "The world, my sons, is huge and hard and hot." Poem from the Harvard Lampoon, Jun. 1954, 1 page.

### *Short-Stories*

"The Indian." Autographed copy of short story by John Updike, 1963, 8 pages (2 leaves).

### *Articles*

"Hair-Line." Photocopy of magazine article, incomplete, Dec. 1953, 1 page; "The Child Bride." Photocopy of article, Fall-Winter 1979 – 1980, 1 page; "Q: How did he come to acquire this frivolously utilized acreage?" Photocopy of article, incomplete, 1 page.

### *Flyers*

"Notes from the Editors John Updike Marry Me A Romance." Flyer, 1976, 8 pages (1 leaf); "Couples: A Short Story by John Updike." Flyer, 1976, 1 page. "Sunday in Boston." Flyer, [n.d.], 4 pages (1 leaf). "A Month of Sundays." Flyer, [n.d.], 3 pages (1 leaf). "John Updike. An Oddly Lovely Day Alone." Flyer, [n.d.], 1 page. The Poetry Center. Flyer, Nov. 19, 1967, 1 page.

## **Series II: Ephemera**

Box 2, Folder 3: "Filmed Interview with John Updike." Typed copy of transcription of interview, 1966, 6 pages (6 leaves); Order of Marriage for John and Martha, Sep. 30, 1977, 4 pages (1 leaf). Black and white 10" x 8" photograph of John Updike.

## **Series III: Letters by John and Martha Updike**

Updike to Herb Yellin Updike, Martha. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 24, 1978, 1 page. Updike, Martha. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Feb. 14, 1980, 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jun. 8, 1986, 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Feb. 9, 2000, 2 pages, (2 leaves). Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jul. 20, 2000, 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, May 4, 2005, 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 2, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 2, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 2, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 2, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 6, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 8, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 12, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jan. 13, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Feb. 14, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Feb. 15, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. A.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Feb. 21, [n.y.], 1 page.

Box 2, Folder 4: Updike, John. A.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Feb. 29, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Mar. 6, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Mar. 7, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Mar. 23, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Mar. 30, [n.y.], 1 page; 15 T.L.S. Updike, John to \_\_; T.L.S. Updike, Martha to \_\_; Herb Yellin, Mar. 31, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Apr. 9, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Apr. 12, [n.y.], 2 pages (1 leaf). Herb Yellin, Apr. 22, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Apr. 29, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, May 7, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, May 9, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, May 9, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, May 21, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Jun. 1, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Jun. 2, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Jun. 9, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin, Jun. 11, [n.y.], 1 page; to Herb Yellin, Jun. 15, [n.y.], 2 pages (1 leaf). Herb Yellin, Jul. 14, 1 page. Herb Yellin, Jul. 27, [n.y.], 1 page. Herb Yellin with Martha Updike A.L.S. on reverse; Updike, John. T.N.S. to Herb Yellin, Aug. 4, [n.y.], 1 page; Updike, John. T.L.S. to Jul. 29, [n.y.], 2 pages (1 leaf).

Box 2, Folder 5: Updike, John. T.l.s. to Herb Yellin, Aug. 10, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.l.s. to Herb Yellin, Aug. 13, [n.y.], 1 page. Updike, John. T.l.s. to Herb Yellin, Aug. 12, [n.y.], 1 page.

Box 2, Folder 7: Related Letters, Thoen, Mary. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jun. 9, 1976, 1 page.  
Crowley, Eleanor, M. T.L.S. to Herb Yellin, Jun. 22, 1976, 1 page. Maltzman, Debra. T.L.S. to  
Herb Yellin, May 11, 1977, 1 page. Yellin, Herb. T.L. to Ms. Jones, [n.d.], 1 page.

32 postcards Dec. 14, 1973 - May 14, 1986.

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