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

Guide to the

William Targ papers concerning Henry Roth

1971-1983

Berg Coll 25822

Processed by Susan P. Waide, 2019.

Summary

Creator: Targ, William, 1907-

Title: William Targ papers concerning Henry Roth

Date: 1971-1983

Size: .21 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Purchased from Glenn Horowitz, 2019.

Abstract: William Targ (1907-1999) was an American author and editor, and the publisher of Targ Editions. His wife Roslyn Targ (died 2017) was a literary agent whose clients included American novelist Henry Roth (1906-1995), known for his autobiographical works *Call It Sleep* and the multi-volume *Mercy of a Rude Stream*. The William Targ papers concerning Henry Roth, 1971-1983, contain Roth's correspondence with the Targs (13 items), and Roth's typescript early drafts of portions of *Mercy of a Rude Stream*, sent to William Targ for his input as editor and friend. It appears that much of the narrative corresponds to episodes in *Requiem for Harlem*, the fourth volume of *Mercy of a Rude Stream*. Roth's letters, postcards, and notes, written from Albuquerque, New Mexico chiefly to William Targ, discuss his writing and health, with mention of family news. There is one note from William Targ to Roth dated 1979 December 26. The collection also includes a cancelled check in payment for the typescript final draft of *Call It Sleep*, and two typed notes signed by William Targ, one identifying the *Call It Sleep* typescript, the other listing Henry Roth materials owned by Targ and his wife.

Preferred citation: William Targ papers concerning Henry Roth, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English In English and Yiddish.

Processing note: Processed by Susan P. Waide, 2019.

Key Terms

Subjects

Authors and publishers -- United States -- Correspondence

Authors, American -- 20th century -- Correspondence
Jewish families -- New York (State) -- New York -- Fiction
Jews -- New York (State) -- New York -- Fiction

Occupations

Authors.
Editors.
Literary agents.

Geographic Names

Harlem (New York, N.Y.) -- Fiction

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Manuscripts for publication
Typescripts

Names

Roth, Henry
Roth, Henry
Targ, Roslyn
Targ, William, 1907-

Container List

Correspondence 1971-1983

Both correspondence and typescripts comprise typed ribbon and carbon copies, bearing Roth's typed and handwritten corrections and revisions. Enclosed drafts mentioned in several letters were separated from the correspondence at an earlier date.

- b. 1 f. 1 William Targ typed note signed to Henry Roth 1979 December 26
Targ's note (1 page), acknowledges Roth's message of December 17th, and encloses a check for \$1,000.00 from Targ Editions dated January 2, 1980. He says he will have "a nice box made for the Ms - something worthy of it." The note is accompanied by the cancelled check endorsed by Henry Roth. A typed note above his signature records full payment for the typescript of *Call It Sleep*.

Henry Roth to Roslyn Targ

- b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1971 May 12 (1 page with envelope.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1975 February 20 (2 pages (2 leaves))

Henry Roth to William Targ

- b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1974 November 12 (1 page with envelope.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1979 June 7 (2 pages (2 leaves).)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1979 August 1 (1 page.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed postcard signed 1979 December 17 (Typed postscript on address side.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed postcard signed 1980 January 3
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1980 April 23 (1 page (1 leaf, folded).)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1981 March 9 (1 page with large mailing envelope.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1981 April 2 (2 pages (1 leaf). Manuscript postscripts on verso.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed letter signed 1981 April 20 (1 page.)
b. 1 f. 1 Typed note signed 1983 August 16 (1 page with envelope.)
Addressed to Bill and "(Roz too, if she's about)." Describes an enclosed photograph, not present.

Typescript drafts of *Mercy of a Rude Stream* circa 1979-circa 1981

The physical grouping of the typescript portions is based on Roth's typed book/section numbers and pagination, as found clipped together, or as previously grouped by format (xerox copies). Pages within are in the order found. The original sequence of the portions in received order can be reconstituted as folder numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 5, 2, 8. Text is typed on one side unless noted otherwise.

- b. 1 f. 2 Book 2, Sections 8 and 9 circa 1980 July (18 leaves. Section 8 paginated 1*-11; Section 9 paginated 1-7 (re-numbered 12-18 in ink). Clipped together with an envelope postmarked July 29, 1980.)
b. 1 f. 3 Book 2, Section 14 circa 1979-circa 1981 (6 leaves. Paginated 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3, 4. Verso of page 1 (numbered 16) is crossed out.)
b. 1 f. 4 Book 2, Sections 15 and 16 circa 1979-circa 1981 (28 leaves. Paginated 1-25, including two page 2s, two page 4s, two page 9s. Page 1 has "Bk2 Sec 4" in typescript, the "4" revised in red ink [to 15?]. "Bk2 Sec. 15" is typed at the top of the second page 9, "Bk2 Sec 16" on page 17.)
b. 1 f. 5 Book 2, Section 17 circa 1979-circa 1981 (53 leaves, blank slip. Paginated 26-43, 44A, 45-48, 48A (with carbon copy), 48B, 49-73, 75-76. Page 76 is signed Henry Roth at end. A piece of cardboard found at end (discarded) is a possible indication of enclosure with letter of March 9, 1981.)
b. 1 f. 6 Book 2, Section 15 (6 leaves) circa 1979-circa 1981 (6 leaves. Pages 9, 10 and 3, each with carbon copy. These pages were clipped together.)

Typescript drafts of *Mercy of a Rude Stream* (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 7 **Unidentified (5 leaves)** circa 1979-circa 1981 (5 leaves and 1 blank leaf. Pages 18, 19 (with carbon), 4 and 5. Page 4 contains typed text from Book 2, Section 12, on verso, crossed out. Pages were clipped together.)
Contains references to Stephen Dedalus and Ireland; possibly the "Joyce musings" mentioned in Roth's letter of March 9, 1981.
- b. 1 f. 8 **Unidentified (xerox copies, 10 leaves)** circa 1979-circa 1981 (Xerox copies. 10 leaves. Paginated 7, [8-10], 11-15, 15A. This portion was followed by loose envelope postmarked March 9, 1981 (removed to Correspondence).)
Early draft ("Oh, my collegiate cousin....") corresponding in part to Part One, Section IX of *Requiem for Harlem* (2014).
- b. 1 f. 9 **William Targ notes regarding Henry Roth materials after 1979**
Typed note identifying the "final and original manuscript of *Call It Sleep* by Henry Roth," used for setting the book. Stamped Targ Editions and signed "Wm. Targ;" also, typed list, signed Wm. Targ, of property that William and Roslyn Targ received or purchased from Henry Roth, including the manuscript of *Call It Sleep*.