



# The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

## **Rosemary Woodruff Leary papers**

1935-2006 [bulk 1965-2002]

MssCol 23932

Compiled by Susan M. Kline, 2016.

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Leary, Rosemary Woodruff

**Title:** Rosemary Woodruff Leary papers

**Date:** 1935-2006 [bulk 1965-2002]

**Size:** 11.15 linear feet (24 boxes, 1 volume); 11.75 mb (48 computer files)

**Source:** Donated by Kate Woodruff, 2016.

**Abstract:** Rosemary Woodruff Leary (1935-2002), (also known as "Ro" and Sarah Woodruff), sought to educate people about the psychedelic experience. Woodruff lived for over twenty years as a fugitive for her role in assisting her husband, Dr. Timothy Leary, escape from prison in 1970. This collection documents her relationship with Leary and her twenty years as a fugitive through correspondence, photographs, ephemera, clippings, and drafts of her unpublished memoir, *A Magician's Daughter*.

### **Conditions Governing Access:**

Sound and video materials are unavailable pending digitization.

**Preferred citation:** Rosemary Woodruff Leary papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Susan M. Kline, 2016.

### **Creator History**

Rosemary Woodruff Leary (1935-2002), (also known as "Ro" and Sarah Woodruff), sought to educate people about the psychedelic experience. Woodruff lived for over twenty years as a fugitive for her role in assisting her husband, Dr. Timothy Leary, escape from prison in 1970.

Woodruff, born in St. Louis in 1935 to a carnival magician, was raised as a Baptist and dropped out of high school. After a brief marriage, she moved to New York City in the 1950s, where she began to experiment with hallucinogenic drugs and married a jazz musician. She held a variety of jobs, working

as a model, in television, and as a passenger agent for El Al Airlines.

Woodruff became involved with Timothy Leary after meeting him in 1965 and visiting the Millbrook estate in upstate New York where Leary lived and conducted his experimental research. They married in 1967 and during their marriage they were arrested and charged with several drug offenses. In December 1968 Woodruff was arrested in California; she was released on bail pending appeal but sentenced to six months in the Orange County jail, while Leary was imprisoned and faced significant jail time for a related offense.

The Weather Underground and Woodruff orchestrated Leary's 1970 escape from confinement. The couple fled to Algeria where for a time they lived with Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver at the Black Panther Embassy. The couple soon moved to Switzerland; however, Woodruff and Leary ended their relationship and separated. They ultimately divorced in 1976.

Despite the end of her relationship with Leary, Woodruff remained underground in Sicily, Afghanistan, Canada, and South America. The FBI offered Woodruff amnesty in exchange for the names of others involved with hallucinogenic drugs; however, Woodruff chose not to accept the deal. In 1976, she secretly returned to the United States, settling in Cape Cod before eventually moving back to California. After 24 years underground, living as "Sarah Woodruff," Woodruff turned herself in to California authorities and all charges against her were dropped.

After returning to the United States, Woodruff worked as an innkeeper. She also served as the executrix of Leary's estate. Woodruff died in Aptos, California on February 7, 2002, leaving behind an unpublished memoir, *The Magician's Daughter*.

## Scope and Content Note

The majority of the Rosemary Woodruff Leary papers are arranged in a loose chronological order. Files containing correspondence, photographs, writings, clippings, ephemera, notes, and other items from the 1960s and early 1970s document Woodruff's relationship with Timothy Leary, their extralegal affairs, and her life as a fugitive. Woodruff's time with Leary at the Millbrook Estate and in California; Woodruff's time in the Dutchess County Jail (New York); Leary's imprisonment, and Woodruff's life as a fugitive are well represented in these files. Some items are photocopies or reproductions of originals.

Letters exchanged with Leary, Woodruff's family, and John Schewel (who lived with Woodruff abroad), trace her personal relationships and involvement in the counterculture. Other incoming correspondence was written by friends including Judy Givens; associates, such as Ram Dass and Allen Ginsberg; and lawyers Michael Kennedy and Michael E. Tigar.

The collection provides scant insight into Woodruff's life in the United States in the 1980s; however, the 1990s and early 2000s are documented more extensively. These later files primarily contain personal letters and cards. Woodruff steadily corresponded with her good friend and roommate, Eleanor Dalton of Provincetown, Massachusetts, until Woodruff's death in 2002; multi-page letters from Dalton can be found in boxes 3 through 8.

Woodruff worked on her memoir, *The Magician's Daughter*, from the 1970s until the end of her life. The memoir is represented by typed drafts, notes, and other writings. Some files contain letters (originals and typed transcriptions) and other primary source material Woodruff used to chronicle her life story.

Photographs consist of many color and black and white printouts, though there are some original

snapshots taken throughout Woodruff's life. Several of the reproductions are of images taken in Afghanistan. A professional portrait of Woodruff in her El Al uniform is available. Both are in box 18.

Memorabilia and items pertaining to other aspects of Woodruff's life include a childhood scrapbook, Woodruff's World Service Authority passport, Ram Dass's United States passport, address books, astrological charts, Leary and Woodruff's marriage license, and a rare copy of the couple's psychedelic adaptation of the *Tao te Ching*, *In Tao We Trust*. Woodruff's calendars from 1973 to 2002 are available. Sometimes she wrote very brief diary-like accounts of her day-to-day activities in these calendars.

Sound and video recordings contain interviews, lectures, and raw footage for the *Ram Dass, Fierce Grace* documentary. Sound and video materials are unavailable pending digitization.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)  
Correspondence  
notes  
Photographs  
Printed ephemera  
Writings (documents)

### **Subjects**

Drugs -- Religious aspects  
Fugitives from justice -- United States -- 20th century  
LSD (Drug)  
Married people -- Drug use

### **Geographic Names**

Millbrook (N.Y.)

### **Names**

Leary, Timothy, 1920-1996  
League for Spiritual Discovery

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-12    **1941, 1960s-1971**  
Includes 1941 letter from Leary to his parents outlining why he wants to leave West Point; Woodruff's letters to her family; photocopies of letters written by Leary to Woodruff while he was in prison; Leary's time at Millbrook; photocopies of letters from John Lennon and Aldous Huxley; League for Spiritual Discovery; Holding Together; flyers and materials circulated as part of Leary's experiments and the 1965-1966 Psychedelic Sessions; Millbrook session notes; marriage certificate; photographs.
- er. 1    **1970s 1998**  
(121 Kilobytes (1 computer file))  
Transcripts of letters between Leary and Woodruff.
- b. 2 f. 1-15    **1970-1989**  
Allen Ginsberg letters; letters to Woodruff's family; time in Switzerland and Algeria; John Schewel; Joanna Harcourt-Smith; divorce. Copies of letters written by Leary to Woodruff.
- b. 3 f. 1-6    **1977-2002**
- b. 4 f. 1-7    **1991-1997**
- b. 5 f. 1-7    **1993-1996**
- b. 6 f. 1-6    **1995-1996**
- b. 7 f. 1    **1995-1999**  
Legal.
- b. 7 f. 2-7    **1996-1997**
- b. 8 f. 1-8    **1995-2002**  
Woodruff's memorial service and death certificate; letters from students who heard Woodruff speak; ephemera.
- b. 20    **Address Books**
- b. 9    **Astrology 1980s**
- b. 10 f. 1    **Astrology**  
Notebook.
- b. 10 f. 2    **Birth Certificate, Marriage Certificate**  
1955 marriage to Hubert Schwarts. Leary marriage certificate located in box 1. Death certificate located in box 8.
- Calendars**
- b. 24    **1973, 1977, 1980-1984, 1986-1987, 1989-1991, 1996-2001**  
One calendar contains astrological information. Two are *I Ching: Taoist Book of Days* (1977, 1982). Photographs were inserted into the 1977 calendar.
- b. 10 f. 3    **2001-2002**
- b. 10 f. 4-6    **Clippings 1963-1990s**
- b. 10 f. 7-10    **Court Papers 1970s**  
Photocopies.
- b. 11 f. 1-3    **Court Papers 1966, 1970s, 1994**  
Leary's original 1966 indictment papers. 1994 file relates to Woodruff being cleared of charges.
- b. 11 f. 4    **Dass, Ram 1991, 1993**
- b. 11 f. 5    **Frankel Gallery 1996**
- b. 11 f. 6    **"He and She" 1970?**  
Manuscript.
- b. 11 f. 7-8    ***In Tao We Trust* 1972**
- b. 11 f. 9    **Interviews by Nina [unidentified] 1970s**  
Includes interview with Bjorn [unidentified].

- b. 11 f. 10-11 Johnson, Joyce 1999-2001
- b. 11 f. 12 Kleefeld, Carolyn 1999-2001
- b. 11 f. 13 Leary Archives 1995  
Letter from Leary's archivist Michael Horowitz to Leary.
- b. 11 f. 14-15 Leary's FBI File 1999  
Includes legal bill received by Woodruff for FBI file requests.
- b. 11 f. 16 Leary's Star Trip  
Photocopy and original edited draft.
- b. 11 f. 17 Leary's Sutras circa 1960s  
Mimeograph copy of 49 sutras based on Book I of the *Tao Te Ching*.  
*The Magician's Daughter* 1970s-2000s  
Woodruff's memoir. Files contain drafts, notes, original correspondence (and typed transcripts) and other material from the time period covered in the chapters.
- b. 12 f. 1-12 Chapters 1-5, 9
- b. 13 f. 1-10 Chapters 5-8  
Includes synopsis.
- b. 14 f. 1-10 Chapters 9-12  
Includes book proposal.
- b. 15 f. 1-2 Chapters 1-11 1994
- b. 15 f. 3-16 Contracts, Notes, Source Material, Outline, Synopsis, Grant Request  
Some transcribed copies of Algiers letters. Photocopies of Leary and Ram Dass letters.
- b. 16 f. 1 Film Options and Book Offers 1980-2006
- b. 20 Notes on Index Cards
- er. 2 Various Chapters and Synopsis 1994, 1996-1997  
(549.7 Kilobytes (25 computer files))
- b. 16 f. 2 Mars, Brigitte circa 1990s  
Photos.
- b. 16 f. 3 Mars, Rainbeau circa 1996-1997
- b. 16 f. 4-6 Millbrook Estate 1990s, undated  
Photocopies of 1960s photographs; brochures; accounts of the raid on Millbrook written by Woodruff; photographs taken on a 1990s visit to Millbrook.
- b. 16 f. 7 Mind States Conference 2001
- b. 16 f. 8 *The Most Dangerous Man* 1998  
Correspondence.
- b. 16 f. 9-12 Notes and Notebooks 1960s-1990s  
One notepad contains journal entries by Woodruff on her relationship with Leary (written in the 1960s). Also one dream journal with nine entries (1990-1991). Handwritten draft by Leary "108 Memories of Our Current Incarnation" - written in 1970 while he was in the California State prison at San Luis Obispo.
- b. 17 f. 1-4 Notes and Notebooks 1960s-1990s  
One lists expenses (1960s?); another contains mostly Tarot information.
- b. 17 f. 5 Passports 1960s-1970s  
United States passport belonging to Ram Dass (Richard Alpert) and Woodruff's World Service Authority passport. Both bear visa stamps. Dass's passport is inscribed by Leary. Woodruff's passport, issued in 1972 in Switzerland, documents her travels from October 1975 to November 1976.
- b. 17 f. 6 Peyote Story 1980s-1990s  
Photographs

- Photographs (cont.)
- b. 19 f. 1-2 1940s-2002
    - b. 18 Afghanistan  
Color photocopies.
    - b. 18 El Al Employee Photo
    - er. 3 Scans 2001  
(11.29 Megabytes (2 computer files))  
Pre-1960s photo of Woodruff and photo of Woodruff and Leary in the desert.
  - b. 19 f. 3 *The Politics of PsychoPharmacology by Timothy Leary* 2001  
Uncorrected proof.
  - b. 19 f. 4 Di Prima, Diane 2001
  - b. 19 f. 5 *Psychedelic Review* 1971
  - b. 19 f. 6 Resumes 1990s
    - er. 4 Resumes 1991-1992, 1996  
(73.92 Kilobytes (20 computer files))
    - v. 1 Scrapbook 1935-1949  
School and religious mementos. Two programs from children's theater productions Woodruff was involved in.
  - b. 19 f. 7 Scrapbook  
Homemade book containing clippings and biographical information about U.S. presidents.
  - b. 19 f. 8 Timothy Leary Defense Fund
  - b. 19 f. 9-10 Unidentified Manuscripts circa 1990s  
*Busted* by Shaw [unidentified]; and another by Sherry [unidentified]. Full names of authors are unknown.
  - b. 19 f. 11-12 Miscellaneous
    - b. 20 Miscellaneous -- English Arabic Conversational Dictionary  
Signed by Woodruff as "Sarah Woodruff."
    - b. 21 Published Material  
*7x7* (San Francisco) October 2001; *"AT" Magazine* (Israel) 2000; *High Times* March 1979; *High Times* Supplement Special Timothy Leary Tribute; *Hot Lava Magazine* May 1996; *The LSD Story* by John Cashman; *New Scientist* 2001 June; *People* 1987 February 9; *Psychedelic Island Views* Volume 2, Number 2; *Playboy* September 1966, 1975 September, 1971 July.
    - b. 22 Published Material  
*Rolling Stone* 1970 October 1, 1996 July 11, 2001 March 1; *LIFE* 1966, March 26, 1972 November 17, 1972 December 8, 1979 December, 1990 July; *Globe* (tabloid) January 19, 1999; *LA Weekly* May 17, 1996; *OC Weekly* 2005 July 8-14; *The American Weekly*, December 16, 1962; *Argonaut* (San Francisco) January 1996.
    - b. 23 Published Material  
*LIFE* March 25, 1971; Miscellaneous newspapers including the *San Francisco Chronicle*.