

**The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Edward Albee
Papers, ca. 1945-1964**

**Chatham Ewing
January 1999**

Summary

Main Entry: Albee, Edward

Title: Edward Albee Papers, ca. 1945 - 1964

Size: .5 linear ft., 1 letter box

Restrictions: none

Source: Transfer from Theatre Division, 1968

Biographical Statement: Edward Albee, American author, dramatist, three time winner of the Pulitzer prize, and author of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*.

Description: Papers consists of numerous drafts of literary works in range of genres. The drafts, most of which date from 1940's and 1950's, pre-date Albee's fame.

Biographical Note

Edward F. Albee III was born March 12, 1928 in Washington D.C. The adopted son of Reed A. Albee (owner of a theatrical circuit) and Frances Cotter Albee, he was educated at Valley Forge Military Academy (1943-1944), Choate School (1944-1946), Trinity College (Hartford, Connecticut 1946-1947), and Columbia University (1949). His breakthrough dramatic work, *The Zoo Story*, was first performed in tandem with Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* in West Berlin in 1959. Career highlights range from his most famous work, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1962) to his three Pulitzer Prize for Drama winners, *A Delicate Balance* (1967), *Seascape* (1975), and *Three Tall Women* (1991).

Scope and Content Note

The small collection of Edward Albee papers (contained in a single box) contains both holograph and typescript manuscripts of dramas, essays, novels, operas, poems, and stories. In addition to the numerous genres, there is a wide range of completeness in the manuscripts - some of the manuscripts are quite fragmentary, others more finished, and still others are published. Albee wrote most of this material in the 1940s and the 1950s and so most of the material in the collection predates his emergence as a major American dramatist with the opening of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* in 1962. This particular collection of Albee's writing reflects his dedicated interest in exploring numerous genres as he developed his idiomatic approach to serious existential questions.

Related Material

Edward Albee scripts, 1949-1966.

Billy Rose Theater Collection

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

*T-MSS 1964-003

Collection consists entirely of scripts of original plays and adaptations from the early career of playwright Edward Albee. It includes typescripts and proofs, many with handwritten revisions, and in various versions. Plays included in the collection are *The Zoo Story*, *The Death of Bessie Smith*, *The American Dream*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Fam and Yam*, *Tiny Alice*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Box* and *Quotations From Chairman Mao*, and the adaptations: *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, *Malcolm*, *Everything in the Garden*, and a musical adaptation of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Also includes some unfinished and untitled manuscripts. The written permission of Albee is necessary for access to the collection. Further written permission is required to quote.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Drama n.d., 1 folder

One folder contains one fragmentary, untitled typescript of a play approximately four pages long.

Series II. Essays n.d., 10 folders

Some are published and some apparently are unpublished. All ten essays are typescript, some with a few holograph corrections. Subjects vary from contemporary literary discussion to what appears to be autobiography. This series is arranged alphabetically by title or first line.

Series III. Novels 1945 - 1948, 7 folders

The Flesh of Unbelievers, an unfinished novel of well over five hundred manuscript pages begun while Albee was at Choate School. The entire novel is written in holograph, some in a Choate School notebook (five folders, 1945-1948). This series also contains a typescript draft of an unfinished novel with a few holograph corrections, a portion of which was published in the July, 1959, *Esquire* (one folder). The final item in the series is a typescript draft with a few holograph corrections of an unfinished untitled novel (one folder, n.d.).

Series IV. Opera n.d., 3 folders

Drafts of librettos for three unfinished operas. The first is *The Actress*, which considers various times and incidents in the career and private life of Victoria Blessing. The second is a manuscript opera apparently titled *The P.H.L. Critic* which combines typescript and holograph. The third, a typescript with a few holograph corrections, is a fragmentary opera with a preface which begins "It seems to me that in a shortish concert-opera...".

Series V. Poetry October, 1949 - November 1956, 6 folders

Eighty-seven poems arranged alphabetically by title or first line. Some of the poems are holograph, some typescript.

Series VI. Short Stories n.d., 1 Folder

Two of the short stories in this series are entitled *The Car That Killed People*, and *Excelsior*. The third begins, "He stopped walking and closed his eyes. There was..." The stories are arranged alphabetically by title or first line. These are typescripts with a few holograph corrections.

Series VII. Miscellaneous Notes and Fragmentary Drafts n.d., 1 folder

Miscellaneous notes, incomplete drafts, etc. written in holograph on sheets removed from a notebook.

Series VIII. Ephemera n.d., 1 folder

General notes on the preparation of manuscripts from Coward-McCann, and a *New York Sun* column with a dialogue entitled *Who's Afraid of Edward Albee* by Edward Albee.

Container List

Series I. Drama

Folder Contents

1 "A bare stage, back and sides drapes..."

Series II. Essays

Folder Contents

2 "Albee on Albee"

3 "Before the publication of *Vertical and Horizontal*, her first publication, Lillian Ross..."

4 "It is, at this writing - April 1963 - exactly a year since *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* was created..."

5 "My paternal grandmother..."

6 *The New British Playwrights - A Form Sheet*

7 *The Pests of Summer*

8 "Quite a few years ago, just before the Second World War..."

9 "Several Sundays ago, on the front page of the Entertainment section of the newspaper..."

10 "With a new play of mine about to open..."

Series III. Novels

Folder Contents

11 *The Flesh of Unbelievers*, pgs. 1 - 153

12 *The Flesh of Unbelievers*, pgs. 154 - 253

13 *The Flesh of Unbelievers*, pgs. 254 - 353

14 *The Flesh of Unbelievers*, pgs. 354 - 453

15 *The Flesh of Unbelievers*, pgs. 454 - 538

16 *A Novel Beginning*, typescript with Albee holograph corrections. A portion of the draft appears in an included offprint from *Esquire*, July, 1959.

17 Untitled

Series IV. Opera

Folder Contents

- 18 “The libretto, *The Actress*, considers various times and incidents in the career and private life of Victoria Blessing.”
- 19 Ideas for *The P.H.L. Critic*
- 20 “It seems to me that in a shortish concert-opera...”

Series V. Poetry

Folder Contents

- 21 Advice to a Certain Young Man
Areas
At the Country Club
The Artist Who Designed You Had In Mind
Bar Fight
Birth
The Blind Street Singer
Casualty
The Coward
Credo: To Prevent Screaming
Crime of Passion
The Curse
- 22 Epitaph
European Poems: 1. With Paris in Mind
European Poems: 2. Letter From Florence
European Poems: 3. Lisbon
European Poems: 4. In Spain ----
For a Death Mask
For G.
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 1. Song of the Old King
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 2. Lament of the Princess to Her Knight Errant
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 3. Song of the Court Jester
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 4. Revery of the Kitchen Girl
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 5. Soliloquy of the Knight Errant
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 6. Song of the Queen Mother
From ‘Medieval Songs’: 7. Dirge of the Court Astronomer
Garden, Garden
Good Morning
Greensleeves

Series V. Poetry

Folder Contents

- 23 Hart Crane
He That Walked Beside Me to the Hill
In Reply to a Request (for G.R.S.)
In the Sense that Cities Build Themselves on Rivers
Incident
The Lady of Tearful Regret
Lament...on the death of my Paternal Grandmother
Lines to a friend, died young
The Lovers
The Lyre Lost
- 24 My Grandmother's House
Night at the Inn
The Night Sky -----Florence
Nocturne
Notes of Comfort and Instruction
Of a City
Old English
Old Man, Old Man
On Being in Love
"On the day of graduation the rain..."
The Poet at War
The Poet Near Thirty
The Pool
Portrait for A Dedication
Portrait --- From Goody's Bar
- 25 The Seasons
Second Portrait --- From Goody's Bar
A Selfish Woman
The Smile
Song for the Atomic Age
Song for Midnight
Song of a Certain Novice
Song of Us Still Sing
Sonnet
The Speculation
The Spy
The Storm
The Street
The Street Walker...and he came unto the city
A Suggestion

Series V. Poetry

Folder Contents

	The Suicide
	Summerhouse
26	Thesis
	Third Portrait --- From Goody's Bar
	Three Sonnets
	To A Maniac
	To Her
	Two Songs for a Little Girl
	Various Musics
	The Ways of Water
	"When I speak of love I do not mean..."
	When we are Forgotten of Each Other
	Winter Evening
	"The Woman: I have come her to search for something..."
	"You do not mean what you say (say)..."
	You have conquered sorrow who
	You Who Are Old
	Young Men With a Cause
	The Young Singer Visits His Doctor

Series VI. Short Stories

Folder Contents

27	<i>The Car That Killed People</i>
28	<i>Excelsior</i>
29	"He stopped walking and closed his eyes. There was..."

Series VII. Miscellaneous Notes and Fragmentary Drafts

Folder Contents

30	"Mother: (alone)' Good evening..."
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Series VIII. Ephemera

Folder Contents

31 General instructions to authors from Coward McCann

32 *Who's Afraid of Edward Albee* by Edward Albee. Sun Drama 22. (from the *New York Sun*).