

The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Section

Frances Kiernan
Papers 1976 - 1988

Compiled by Beth Kleber
September 1995

Title: Frances Kiernan Papers, 1976 - 1988

Size: 1 linear foot

Source: Gift of Frances Kiernan, November 10, 1994

Biographical Note: Frances Kiernan came to work for **The New Yorker** in 1966 and remained there, as a fiction editor, until 1987. Following her **New Yorker** tenure, Kiernan worked as a senior editor at Houghton Mifflin for two years. She continues to write on literary matters.

Description: Correspondence and manuscripts dating from 1976 to 1988 documenting Kiernan's career as a fiction editor at **The New Yorker**. The material is primarily from writers submitting manuscripts for publication or responding to editorial queries regarding manuscripts already accepted for publication. Also included are notes from Kiernan's **New Yorker** colleagues.

Biographical Note:

Frances June Landau Kiernan was born in Louisville, Kentucky in August of 1944. She was raised in New York City where she attended P.S. 87, Hunter College High School, and the Bronx High School of Science. She received a B.A. from Barnard College in 1966.

In September of 1966, Kiernan went to work for **The New Yorker** as the twentieth-floor receptionist. In December, she began to work for William Maxwell and Roger Angell in the fiction department. As a fiction editor, she edited such writers as Mark Helprin, Peter Taylor, Edna O'Brien, John Gardiner, Alice Adams, and Cynthia Ozick. Kiernan left **The New Yorker** in 1987 to become a senior editor at Houghton Mifflin. When editor Cork Smith, Kiernan's boss, was dismissed in 1989, Kiernan resigned in protest. She later wrote a cover story for Seven Days on what she perceived to be the dismal state of book publishing. She also wrote an article on The Group, which was published in **The New Yorker** in June of 1993. She continues to write on literary matters.

Kiernan married Howard A. Kiernan in 1967. She has no children.

Scope and Content:

The papers of Frances Kiernan span the years of 1976 to 1988 and document her career as a fiction editor at **The New Yorker**. The collection consists primarily of correspondence (approximately 550 items) from writers who were either submitting material for publication or responding to editorial queries; many of the letters are fairly informal in nature. Also present are notes to and from Kiernan's **New Yorker** colleagues discussing the merits of various submissions. In addition, the collection includes twenty-three fiction manuscripts (annotated by both Kiernan and the authors), some handwritten, some typed, and some in the form of galley proofs. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically solely by the first letter of the author's last name; the papers remain in the order in which Kiernan arranged them. The manuscripts are also in the same order in which they were received from Frances Kiernan.

While the collection contains letters and manuscripts from approximately sixty-five writers, the most extensive correspondence comes from the following people: Alice Adams, Alan Cheuse, Laura Furman, John Gardiner, Mark Helprin, John McGahern, W.S. Merwin, Edna O'Brien, Cynthia Ozick, Lore Segal, and Peter Taylor.

FRANCES KIERNAN PAPERS

LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS (letters received)

Box 1 Angell, Roger
 Adams, Alice
 Abrahams, William
 Andres, Katharine

 Bush, Geoffrey
 Bessie, Simon Michael
 Birstein, Ann

 Cooper, Henri
 Connell, Maureen
 Cullinan, Elizabeth
 Colwin, Laurie
 Cheuse, Alan
 Clark, Susan

 Dillon, Millicent
 Dew, Robb
 Dibbell, Carola

 Furman, Laura
 Flanner, Hildegarde
 Fisher, Alan

 Gardiner, John Rolfe
 Garcia Marquez, Gabriel
 Gray, Francine
 Geng, Veronica
 Glass, Joanna

 Hazzard, Shirley
 Helprin, Mark
 Hoyer, Linda Grace
 Henderson, Robert
 Hardwick, Elizabeth
 Hale, Nancy

 Jones, Judith

 Kauffman, Janet
 Keillor, Garrison
 Kingston, Maxine Hong
 Kramer, Larry

 Lee, Andrea
 Lopez, Barry
 Landecker, Heidi

Box 1 **LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS (letters received) (Cont'd)**

Lopate, Phillip

McGahern, John
MacKenzie, Rachel
Menaker, Daniel
Mankiewicz, Jane
Merwin, W.S.
Maxwell, William
McEwan, Ian
McGrath, Elizabeth
Moss, Howard

O'Brien, Edna
O'Neill, Kevin
Ozick, Cynthia

Page, Patricia
Petroski, Catherine
Pym, Barbara

Quinn, Alice

Robison, James

Sadoff, Ira
Silman, Roberta
Segal, Lore

Thurm, Marian Axelrod
Tuck, Liliane Emery
Trevor, William
Taylor, Peter

Vivante, Arturo

White, Wallace

LIST OF AUTHORS AND TITLES OF MANUSCRIPTS

Box 2 Helprin, Mark

Pillar of Fire
A Crooked Stick
The Night Class
Hava
Short stories published in Ellis Island:
 Letters From the Samantha
 A Vermont Tale
 The Schreuderspitze
Jessie Honey (section from novel)

Taylor, Peter

 The Gift of the Prodigal

Segal, Lore

 Burglars in the Flesh

Hardwick, Elizabeth

 Part 8 of novel [Sleepless Nights]

Andres, Katherine

 The Rest of the Story

O'Brien, Edna

 There's a Rose . . .
 Epitaph

Box 3 Gardiner, John

 A Crossing

Rhys, Jean

 Heat

Box 3 **LIST OF AUTHORS AND TITLES OF MANUSCRIPTS (Cont'd)**

Adams, Alice

 Disinheritance

Furman, Laura

 Lost Winter

Johnson, Joyce

 Launching Day, 1962

Ozick, Cynthia

 Rosa

Lee, Andrea

 New African
 Servant Problems
 In France