

**The New York Public Library - Stephen A. Schwarzman Building
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Guide to the

Phyllis Dain papers

1956-2001 (bulk 1973-1999)

MssCol 18397

Compiled by Lea Jordan, April 2011

Summary

Creator: Dain, Phyllis

Title: Phyllis Dain papers, 1956-2001 (bulk 1973-1999)

Size: 5.86 linear feet (13 boxes)

Source: Donated by Phyllis Dain, 2011

Abstract: Phyllis Dain is a Professor Emerita of Library Service at Columbia University. The Phyllis Dain papers consist of documents relating to her work as a library educator and historian, including the campaign to save the Columbia University Library School, her work on two histories of the New York Public Library, her professional papers, and speeches and writings.

Access: Advance notice required. Apply at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>.

Preferred citation: Phyllis Dain papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Creator history

Phyllis Dain is a Professor Emerita of Library Service at Columbia University. She was educated at Brooklyn College before earning her graduate degrees in U.S. History and Library Science at Columbia. She began work at the Columbia University Library in 1953 as a cataloger and began teaching library science courses in 1957. She has published dozens of books and articles regarding library history, including many about the New York Public Library. Her major publications include *The New York Public Library: A Universe of Knowledge* (2000), *Civic Space/Cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age* (1999), and *The New York Public Library: A History of Its Founding and Early Years* (1972).

Scope and content note

The Phyllis Dain papers consist of documents relating to her work as a library educator and historian, including the campaign to save the Columbia University Library School, her work on two histories of the New York Public Library (NYPL), her professional papers, and speeches and writings.

Dain's material regarding the closing of the Columbia University Library School is some of the most detailed. This section covers correspondence, proposals for relocating the school, efforts to save the program and the ultimate closing of the school in 1991. Documents reflect Columbia's budgetary crisis, a passionate campaign to save the school or have it continue in some form, and applications from other educational institutions offering to take the school from Columbia.

The New York Public Library materials include a chronology of NYPL history prepared by Dain, correspondence, notes, writings produced for the library, bibliography cards, and interviews. The correspondence relates to Dain's NYPL publications, including the first NYPL history and the projected second edition, as well as correspondence relating to Dain's *The New York Public Library: A Universe of Knowledge* (2000). Also included are NYPL Centennial celebration ideas, and correspondence with interviewees. Notes include handwritten notebooks and cards arranged by subject as well as small spiral notebooks regarding her NYPL research. The bibliography note cards include both items seen and not seen by Dain in the course of her research.

The interviews conducted by Dain span three decades, and are housed on 18 reel to reel tapes and 84 cassettes. Dain interviewed individuals between 1964 and 1989 for this project, some who had worked at the library as far back as 1927. Librarians, trustees, and library leaders were all included in her research. Individuals interviewed included trustees such as Mrs. Vincent Astor and Fredrick Burkhardt, library President Vartan Gregorian, and branch librarians such as Marion Small and Gladys Young Leslie - along with around 50 other individuals. There are written transcripts and notes for some of the interviews. Interview material also consists of signed confidentiality statements with varying conditions per time period, as well as interview correspondence. Recordings are currently closed.

Dain's professional papers consist of her own graduate school writings, course notes for her own time as a professor, and some limited professional correspondence.

Dain's speeches and writings include drafts of articles and presentations given at various library functions and conferences from 1980 to 1999, as well as materials and interview tapes for the book she co-authored with Molz, *Civic Space/Cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age*. There are 26 cassette tapes of interviews included with this material, taken between 1993 and 1996. Recordings are currently closed.

Arrangement

Alphabetical by subject

Key terms

Subjects

Library history and biography

Names

Dain, Phyllis

New York Public Library

Special formats

Interviews

Notebooks

Container list

- b.1 f.1-4 Columbia School of Library Science Closing , 1989-1992
- b.2 f.1-3 Columbia School of Library Science Closing, 1989-1992
 - New York Public Library
 - b.9 Bibliography Index Cards, 1966-1989
 - b.10 Bibliography Index Cards, 1966-1989
 - b.11 Bibliography Index Cards, 1966-1989
 - b.12 Bibliography Index Cards, 1966-1989
 - b.13 Bibliography Index Cards, 1966-1989
 - b.3 f.1-3 Correspondence, 1962-1999
 - b.3 f.4-6 History, undated
- b.4 f.1-10 Interview requests, notes and forms, 1970-1989
 - Interviews (Recordings are currently closed.)
- b.5 f.1-3 Writings, 1995, undated
 - Professional papers
 - b.6 f.1-4 Correspondence, 1991-2001
 - b.6 f.5 Council on Library Resources, 1973
 - b.6 f.6 Course Materials, undated
 - b.7 f.1-2 Course Materials, undated
 - b.7 f.3 Graduate School Papers, 1956-1960
- Writings and Speeches
 - Civic Space/Cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age*
- b.7 f.4-7 Interview paperwork, 1993-1996
 - Interviews (Recordings are currently closed.)
- b.8 f.1-6 Speeches, 1976-1985
- b.8 f.7-9 Writings and articles, 1977-1999