

**The New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Donald Vining Papers**  
**1926-1996**  
MssCol 3171

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September 2008**

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## Summary

<b>Main entry:</b>	Vining, Donald, 1917-1998
<b>Title:</b>	Donald Vining Papers, 1926-1996
<b>Size:</b>	3.5 linear feet (9 boxes)
<b>Source:</b>	Donated by Donald Vining, 1996
<b>Abstract:</b>	Donald Vining was the author of <i>A Gay Diary</i> and the founder of the Pepys Press. The collection, 1926-1996, includes correspondence, diaries, novels, play scripts, stories, and articles as well as a scrapbook and two videotaped interviews.
<b>Access:</b>	Advance notice required. Apply at < <a href="http://www.nypl.org/mssref">http://www.nypl.org/mssref</a> >
<b>Preferred citation:</b>	Donald Vining Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
<b>Special formats</b>	Diaries, Photographs, Scrapbook, Video recordings.

## **Related materials note**

Donald Crossley Vining Papers, 1926-1985. Manuscripts and Archives MS 524. Yale University Library.

Donald Vining Diaries, 1926-1939. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Donald Vining Diaries, Accession Number 10272, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Lester Q. Strong Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Includes an audiotaped interview with Vining

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## Biographical note

Donald Crossley Vining was the author of *A Gay Diary* and the founder and publisher of the Pepys Press. Born in 1917 in Benton, Pennsylvania, Vining was educated at West Chester State College, Pennsylvania and at Yale University's School of Drama. In the late 1940s, he published numerous one-act plays for amateurs. After working for thirty years in the Development Office of Teachers College, Columbia University, Vining retired in 1979 to begin a private publishing company, the Pepys Press. The Pepys Press published *A Gay Diary*, a chronicle of his life as a gay man before and after the Stonewall Riots, as well as a book of diaries from the Second World War, *American Diaries of World War II*, and other works. After retiring from publishing, Vining wrote a monthly column for *Diarist's Journal* and contributed to periodicals. He died in New York City in 1998.

## **Scope and content note**

The Donald Vining Papers consist of his correspondence, diaries, novels, play scripts, stories, articles, scrapbook, and two videotaped interviews. The correspondence contains personal correspondence with his lover, Richard Purinton, and business letters concerning his writing career. His writings include both published and unpublished fiction and nonfiction. His diaries include two of his original childhood diaries, 1926-1927, as well as typescripts of his diaries, 1926-1970, illustrated with photographs, that Vining called his "Diary Digests." Also in the collection is a scrapbook of press clippings and memorabilia.

## **Arrangement note**

The Donald Vining Papers are organized in the following series:

Series I. Correspondence, 1948-1996  
Series II. Writings  
Series III. Diaries  
Series IV. Scrapbook  
Series V. Video recordings

## Series descriptions and container list

### Series I. Correspondence, 1948-1996

The bulk of Vining's correspondence, 1950-1996, is arranged chronologically. Most of the correspondence concerns his writing career, including attempts to sell his writing, rejection and acceptance letters, and fan mail. Correspondents include the magazines the *Advocate*, *Gay Community News*, *InTouch for Men*, *First Hand Magazine*, *Mandate*, *Blueboy*, and *Diarist 's Journal*. Vining corresponded with various theater groups as well, such as the American Theatre Association, the Gay Theatre Alliance, the Stonewall Repertoire Theater and other small groups that were interested in producing his plays. There is correspondence with Doubleday concerning the publication of *The Gay Handbook* and with Crossing Press on the publication of *How Can You Come Out If You've Never Been In?* There is also correspondence with Yale University Library's Manuscripts and Archives department discussing the library's holdings of Vining's diaries and papers. Vining's personal correspondence, 1948-1954, 1980-1981, is primarily with his lover of forty years, Richard Purinton. The men wrote to each other often, especially when one or the other was traveling.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	1950-1951, n.d.
	2	1977, 1979, 1980-1982
	3	1983-1984
	4	1985-1986
	5	1987-1988
	6	1989-1990
	7	1991-1992
2	1	1993-1996
	2	Richard Purinton, 1948-1954, 1980-1981

## Series II. Writings, 1927-1994, n.d.

The writings are divided into eight subseries: Almanack de Gotham, novels, autobiographical notes, short stories, playscripts, writing ideas, first drafts and diaries. *Almanack de Gotham* is a compilation of Vining's musings on life in New York City. The autobiographical notes consist of a journal in which Vining writes on such topics as his parents' lives, his favorite foods, and his pets. The playscript *Antony and Cleopatra* (1958) is accompanied by correspondence between Vining, John Gutman of the Metropolitan Opera and composer, Samuel Barber concerning Vining's proposal that Barber write an opera based on the Shakespeare play using Vining's script as a libretto. Although Vining's idea and his script were rejected, the Met later commissioned Barber to write the opera *Antony and Cleopatra* for the opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. Also included is a series of plays written for the Yale University radio station (WICC) program *The Listener's Theater*. The early phase of Vining's writing is represented by his writing ideas and his first drafts. The writing ideas contain character sketches, plot ideas, and story outlines. Each notebook of first drafts contains an index listing the title, date written, and the date published or produced.

2	3	<b>IIA. Almanack de Gotham</b>
		<b>II.B. Novels</b>
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
2	4	The Holly Tree
	5	Indian Pudding
	6	The Unabashed II-V
	7	The Unabashed VI-X
3	1	<b>IIC. Autobiographical notes</b>
		<b>IID. Short stories</b>
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
3	2	Dahfy
	3	The End is not the Ending
	4	The Gifted Guernsey
		<b>IIE. Playscripts</b>
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
3	5	Antony and Cleopatra, 1958
	6	The Bird on Nellie's Hat, n.d.
	7	The Boswell Game, 1959
		Includes a rejection letter from Jacques Chambrun, Inc.
	8	Calico Cat, 1933 (bound with The Washington Parade, Drug Store Cowboy, and The Mad Man of Mars)
	9	The Devil's Deputy, n.d.
	10	Difference, 1927
--	--	Drug Store Cowboy, 1933 (bound with Calico Cat)
3	11	Early Peas, n.d.
	12	Easter Bonnet, 1934-1935
	13	Elinor, 1949
	14	Green Thumb Blues, n.d.
	15	The Heathen in the House, n.d.
	16	The Immortal Guffaw, n.d.
	17	Kin, n.d.
--	--	The Mad Man of Mars, 1933 (bound with Calico Cat)



3	18	Miracles in Milwaukee, n.d.
	19	Nijinsky, 1937-1938
4	1	Partings and Pairings, n.d.
	2	Partners, n.d.
	3	Pillory Green, 1958
	4	The Poor Dear, 1978
	5	The Sea Gull, n.d.
	6	Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax, n.d.
	7	Silver Spoon, Silver Cord, Silver Moon, Silver Threads, n.d.
	8	Sorrow and the Lalapaloozers, 1974
	9	Top Men, n.d.
	10	Twosomes, n.d.
	11	The Voyage of the Ark, n.d.
	12	Wampum, n.d.
--	--	The Washington Parade, 1933 (bound with Calico Cat)
4	13	Why=X2, n.d.
		Yale radio plays
	14	Custody of Caroline, n.d.
	15	Do Not Disturb, n.d.
	16	Escape from Silence, n.d.
	17	Flowers that Bloom in the Spring, 1940
	18	The Glove of the Nightingale, n.d.
	19	Pickets Inc., n.d.
	20	Success Story, 1939
	21	Twenty to One, 1940

## IIF. Writing ideas

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
5	1	1967-1977
	2	1980-1985
	3	undated

## IIG. First drafts

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
5	4	1976-1978
	5	1981-1984
	6	1984-1985
6	1	1984-1986
	2	1986-1988
	3	1988-1990
	4	1990-1994

### Series III. Diaries, 1926-1970, n.d.

Two volumes of Vining's original diaries, 1926 and 1927, are included in the collection. The 1926 diary contains entries about school and a small collection of recipes. Inserted is a photocopy of a photograph of Vining when he was eight years old. The 1927 volume consists of daily entries and Vining's early attempts at poetry.

The Diary Digests are typed transcripts of his original diaries, accompanied by photographs. Selections from these were published as *A Gay Diary* in 1979.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Vol</u>	
7	1	1926
	2	1927
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
7	1	Miscellaneous journal pages
		Diary digests
	2	Volume I, Part I, 1926-1938
	3	Volume I, Part II, 1938-1941
	4	Volume I, Part III, 1942-1949
	5	Volume II, Part I, 1945-1947
	6	Volume II, Part II, 1948-1950
	7	Volume II, Part III, 1951-1954
8	1	Volume III, Part I, 1955-1957
	2	Volume III, Part II, 1958-1960
	3	Volume III, Part III, 1961-1962
	4	Volume IV, Part I, 1963-1964
	5	Volume IV, Part II, 1965-1966
	6	Volume V, Part I, 1967-1968
	7	Volume V, Part II, 1969-1970

### 9 Series IV. Scrapbook

Includes newspaper clippings, ads for the Pepys Press, reviews of books and notices of Vining's readings.

### Series V. Video recordings, 1992, n.d.

<u>Unit ID</u>	
5512	The Steven Holt Show #98 with special guest Donald Vining, 1992
5513	Book Chat (David Rain interviews Donald Vining)