

**Gustav Davidson Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2001**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm97084137>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms003040>

Prepared by Karen Linn Femia

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2003  
Revised 2010 April

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Gustav Davidson Papers

**Span Dates:** 1909-1992

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1931-1971)

**ID No.:** MSS84137

**Creator:** Davidson, Gustav, 1895-1971

**Extent:** 8,000 items

**Extent:** 27 containers plus 1 oversize

**Extent:** 12 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm97084137>

**Summary:** Poet, writer, publisher, and secretary of the Poetry Society of America. Primarily writings and correspondence concerning Davidson's work in poetry, publishing, and research on angels.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Angoff, Charles, 1902-1979--Correspondence.

Auslander, Joseph, 1897-1965--Correspondence.

Davidson, Gustav, 1895-1971.

Decker, Clarence Raymond, 1904-1969--Correspondence.

Dorn, Alfred, 1929- --Correspondence.

Eastman, Max, 1883-1969--Correspondence.

Orlinsky, Harry M., 1908-1992--Correspondence.

Roethke, Theodore, 1908-1963--Correspondence.

Trattner, Ernest R. (Ernest Robert), 1898-1963--Correspondence.

Untermeyer, Louis, 1885-1977--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Poetry Society of America.

### Subjects

American poetry.

Angels.

Poetry--Societies, etc.

### Places

Oceania--Description and travel.

### Occupations

Authors.

Poets.

Publishers.

## Provenance

The papers of Gustav Davidson, poet, writer, publisher, and secretary of the Poetry Society of America, were given to the Library of Congress by Babette Bandler in 1997.

## Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Gustav Davidson in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Gustav Davidson are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Gustav Davidson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1895, Dec. 25	Born, Warsaw, Poland
1897	Family immigrated to the United States and settled in New York, N. Y.
1915	Published with Joseph Koven <i>Melmoth, the Wanderer; a Play in Five Acts</i> . Boston: The Poet Lore Co.
1917-1918	Founder and editor, <i>Madrigal Magazine</i>
1919	B.A., Columbia University, New York, N. Y.
1920	M.A., Columbia University, New York, N. Y.
1922-1923	Founder and editor, <i>Rhythmus Magazine</i>
1924	Published <i>A Half Century of Sonnets</i> . New York: N. L. Brown
1927-1929	Leader of the Australasian expedition to the South Seas
1929-1931	Book and music critic, editorial writer, and associate editor, <i>The Daily Mirror</i> , New York, N. Y.
1938-1939	Bibliographer in children's literature, Library of Congress
1940	Founded the Fine Editions Press
1942	Married Mollie Strauss
1942-1953	Founder and publisher, <i>The Poetry Chap-Book</i>
1945	Published <i>Thirst of the Antelope</i> . La Porte, Ind.: The Dierkes Press
1949-1965	Executive secretary, Poetry Society of America
1950	Published <i>Moment of Visitation</i> . Denver, Colo.: Alan Swallow
1965	Elected executive secretary emeritus, Poetry Society of America Published <i>Ambushed by Angels</i> . London: Outposts Publications
1967	Published <i>A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Angels</i> . New York: Free Press
1970	Published <i>All Things Are Holy</i> . Georgetown, Calif.: Dragon's Teeth Press
1971, Feb. 6	Died, New York, N. Y.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Gustav Davidson (1895-1971) span the years 1909-1992, with the bulk of the material dating from 1931 to 1971. The papers consist primarily of correspondence, writings, research material, and items related to the Poetry Society of America. The papers are organized in the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Personal Name File](#), [Writings](#), [Subject File](#), and [Oversize](#). The [Oversize](#) consists of scrapbooks of articles and reviews published in *The Daily Mirror*, 1931-1932.

The [General Correspondence](#) consists of miscellaneous personal and routine professional correspondence, primarily incoming.

The [Personal Name File](#) holds material Davidson collected concerning his frequent correspondents, personal friends, fellow poets, theological scholars, and professional associates. Correspondence with these individuals is located in this series, in addition to news clippings, writings, photographs, and printed matter. Notable correspondents include Charles Angoff, Joseph Auslander, Clarence Raymond Decker, Alfred Dorn, Max Eastman, Harry Meyer Orlinsky, Theodore Roethke, Ernest R. Trattner, and Louis Untermeyer.

The [Writings](#) series contains drafts and published copies of Davidson's writings as well as publicity, reviews, and correspondence with publishers. Davidson wrote in many genres: poetry, plays, reviews, newspaper columns, and academic writings primarily about angels. Included in the collection are annotated copies of books. A file labeled "Pseudonymous writings" contains items written by Davidson under the name W. Gordon Drake for the Free Thought publication *The Age of Reason Magazine*.

The [Subject File](#) is organized topically and includes biographical material, items pertaining to Davidson's "Fine Editions Press" and other publication projects, material from his youthful trips to the South Sea islands, research files, correspondence from various organizations and publications, photographs, and news clippings. Of particular note is a large file on the Poetry Society of America, an organization that Davidson served for many years. Poetry Society awards, dinners, trips, membership lists, publication projects, board meetings, and elections are documented in the file.

## Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [General Correspondence, 1926-1984](#)
- [Personal Name File, 1921-1992](#)
- [Writings, 1915-1981](#)
- [Subject File, 1909-1991](#)
- [Oversize, 1930-1932](#)

## Description of Series

<b>Container</b>	<b>Series</b>
BOX 1-2	<b><u>General Correspondence, 1926-1984</u></b> Miscellaneous correspondence with attachments. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 2-7	<b><u>Personal Name File, 1921-1992</u></b> Correspondence with writers and acquaintances and news clippings, photographs, and writings by and about them. Arranged alphabetically by name and chronologically therein.
BOX 7-15	<b><u>Writings, 1915-1981</u></b> Drafts, published copies, correspondence with publishers, publicity, and reviews of Davidson's articles, books, plays, poetry, reviews, and travel journals. Arranged alphabetically by type of writing and chronologically therein
BOX 15-27	<b><u>Subject File, 1909-1991</u></b> Correspondence, biographical material, financial matter, name and address lists, news clippings, miscellaneous writings, photographs, and research files on angels and religious topics. Arranged alphabetically.
BOX OV 1	<b><u>Oversize, 1930-1932</u></b> Scrapbooks. Described according to the series, container, and folder from which the items were removed.

# Container List

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>BOX 1-2</b>	<b>General Correspondence, 1926-1984</b> Miscellaneous correspondence with attachments. Arranged chronologically.
<b>BOX 1</b>	1926-1965 (12 folders)
<b>BOX 2</b>	1966-1977, 1984, undated (7 folders)
<b>BOX 2-7</b>	<b>Personal Name File, 1921-1992</b> Correspondence with writers and acquaintances and news clippings, photographs, and writings by and about them. Arranged alphabetically by name and chronologically therein.
<b>BOX 2</b>	Abbe, George, 1956-1964, undated Ames, Bernice, 1968-1976, undated Andrews, Marietta Minnigerode, 1927-1928, undated
<b>BOX 3</b>	Angoff, Charles, 1963-1970, undated Auslander, Joseph, 1932-1937, 1965 Ban, Eva, 1970-1978, undated Bernard, R. W., 1956 Buonocore, Michaelina, 1959-1960, 1974-1976, undated Chubb, Thomas Caldecot, 1960-1971, undated Clare, Patricia, 1968-1971, undated Comandini, Adele, 1956, 1968-1971, undated Corrado, Anne, 1970-1979, undated Cunningham, Basil ("Sterns"), 1963-1974, undated Davidson, Mollie 1944, 1955-1985, 1992, undated (4 folders) Davidson family, 1940, 1961-1969, undated Decker, Clarence Raymond, 1954-1969
<b>BOX 4</b>	Deford, Miriam Allen, 1958-1965 Dorn, Alfred, 1956-1980, 1987, undated (3 folders) Droutzkoy, Alexis, 1956-1969 Eastman, Max, and Eliena Krylenko, 1951-1962 Edgett, Edwin, 1938, undated Elise, 1933 Fay, Alice, 1929, undated Gaster, Theodor, 1956-1958 Gilbert-Read, Pat, 1962-1969 Ginsberg, Allen, 1958, 1965-1966, 1975

## Personal Name File, 1921-1992

### Container

### Contents

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	Ginsberg, Louis, 1943, 1965-1970, 1976, undated
	Gogarty, Oliver St. John, 1953-1957, undated
	Guli, Francesca, 1966-1971
	Haberly, Loyd, 1965-1971, undated
	Handley-Taylor, Geoffrey, 1959-1969, undated (2 folders)
	Hill, Hyacinthe, 1964-1974
	Josten, Werner, 1936
	Kay, Ernest, 1967-1972
BOX 5	Keith, Joseph Joel, 1948-1949, 1964
	Larson, Frank and Muriel, 1969-1970
	Lengyel, Cornel, 1967-1983, 1996, undated (3 folders)
	Lomer, Gerhard R., 1935, 1959-1967, undated
	Marx, Anne, 1959-1976, undated (2 folders)
	Masefield, John, 1921-1924, 1930-1934, undated
	Moore, Harry T., 1955-1957
	Morris, Harry, 1958-1963, undated
	Mullins, Helene, 1969-1976, undated
	Nash, Ogden, 1960
	Orlinsky, Harry Meyer 1941-1954
BOX 6	1955-1972, undated (6 folders)
	Palmer, Winthrop, 1958-1960, undated
	Peardon, Patricia, 1968-1970, undated
	Pearson, Norman Holmes, 1960-1964, 1980
	Peirse, Juanita, 1952, 1970-1971, undated
	Perry, J. Warren, 1965-1971
	Roethke, Theodore, 1950, 1959
BOX 7	Romano, Liboria, 1961-1979
	Salmi, Sylvia, and Herbert Solow, 1959, 1964-1971, undated
	Scholem, Gershom G., 1958
	Scovel, Myra, 1970-1974, undated
	Solomos, George, 1959-1966, undated
	Smith, Homer W., 1952-1956
	Steinman, David B., 1956-1958
	Stephens, Wade, 1968-1969
	Tall, Grace, 1965-1980, undated
	Trattner, Ernest R., 1954-1963, undated (2 folders)
	Tucker, Martin, 1970-1972
	Untermeyer, Louis, 1956-1961, undated
	Wagner, Charles A., 1945, 1957, 1969-1970, undated <i>For additional material see Containers 19-21, Poetry Society of America</i>
	West, Robert H., 1950-1958, undated

## Personal Name File, 1921-1992

### Container

### Contents

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Wheelock, John Hall, 1965, 1971  
Yuzon, Amado M., 1966-1972, undated  
(3 folders)

#### BOX 7-15

#### Writings, 1915-1981

Drafts, published copies, correspondence with publishers, publicity, and reviews of Davidson's articles, books, plays, poetry, reviews, and travel journals.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of writing and chronologically therein

#### BOX 7

#### Articles

#### Drafts

circa 1931-circa 1950

#### BOX 8

1960-1970, undated

(6 folders)

#### Published copies

1931-1932, 1939, 1946-1950, 1959-1964 *For additional material see Containers 27 and [OV I, Scrapbooks](#)*

(3 folders)

#### BOX 9

1965-1970, undated

#### Book reviews

Drafts, 1946-1949, undated

Published copies, 1932, 1943-1950, 1970, undated *For additional material see Containers 27 and [OV I, Scrapbooks](#)*

#### Books

#### *Ambushed by Angels*

Correspondence with publisher, 1965

Miscellany, 1965-1969, undated

Published and annotated copy, 1965

#### *A Dictionary of Angels*

Correspondence with publishers, 1961-1979, undated

(3 folders)

Draft, 1961, undated

Introduction and A-E entries

(4 folders)

#### BOX 10

F-Z entries

(6 folders)

Miscellany, 1961, 1969, undated

Publicity and reviews, 1967-1981, undated

(3 folders)

#### BOX 11

Published and annotated copy, 1967

#### “A Dictionary of Symbols”

Correspondence with publisher, 1968-1971

Draft, 1968-1969, undated

“The Golden Saga: A Novel of the Time of Leif Ericsson, Discoverer of America,”  
1952-1953, undated

(2 folders)

“El Gran Capitan: A Novel of the Time of Christopher Columbus, “ undated

Miscellaneous, 1926-1928, 1944-1951, 1970-1971, undated



## Writings, 1915-1981

Container	Contents
BOX 12	“Principalities and Powers,” 1958, undated “Root and Branch,” undated <i>The Thirst of the Antelope</i> , draft, 1940, undated Miscellany, circa 1940, 1959-1966, undated Newspaper columns for <i>The Daily Mirror</i> Book and music reviews, 1931-1932 <a href="#">See Containers 27</a> and <a href="#">OV I, Scrapbooks</a> “The Curiosity Shop,” 1931 “Toasts,” 1930-1931
BOX 13	Plays, 1924, 1933-1947, 1955-1964, undated (4 folders) Poetry Drafts 1918, 1938, 1949-1970, undated (5 folders)
BOX 14	Published copies, 1915, 1927-1929, 1937-1971, undated (4 folders) Pseudonymous writings under the name “W. Gordon Drake,” 1954-1959, undated <a href="#">See also Container 17, Free thought</a> (2 folders) Speeches, 1966-1970, undated Travel journals Europe, 1933, 1950 (2 folders)
BOX 15	Europe, 1965 Jamaica, 1969
BOX 15-27	<b>Subject File, 1909-1991</b> Correspondence, biographical material, financial matter, name and address lists, news clippings, miscellaneous writings, photographs, and research files on angels and religious topics. Arranged alphabetically.
BOX 15	Appointment calendar, 1969 Biographical material, 1944, circa 1953-1971, undated
BOX 16	Book collecting, 1955-1970, undated Certificates and diplomas, 1920, 1951-1969 Chapelbrook Foundation, 1968-1969, undated <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , 1968-1979, undated <i>Cimarron Review</i> , 1969-1970 Dominican Republic, 1951 Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford, N.J., 1963-1967, undated (2 folders) Fine Editions Press Correspondence, 1941-1943, 1964-1965 Miscellany, 1941-1960, undated News clippings and releases, 1942-1945, undated Scrapbook, circa 1940-circa 1945 <i>The Second Voice</i> by Anne Marx, 1963, undated

## Subject File, 1909-1991

Container	Contents
BOX 17	Free thought, 1944, 1954-1960, undated <i>See also Container 14, Pseudonymous writings under name "W. Gordon Drake"</i> <i>Humanist</i> , 1958-1964 Keats, John, grave site in Rome, Italy, 1950-1955 Library of Congress, 1938-1939, 1948-1952, undated Miscellany, circa 1929-circa 1984 Names and addresses Booklets, circa 1950-circa 1970, undated (2 folders)
BOX 18	Card files, undated
BOX 19	Lists, 1959-1961, undated New Harmony, Ind., 1958-1964, 1971, undated New York Poetry Forum, 1970-1975, undated <i>New York Times</i> , 1943, 1959, 1969, undated News clippings, 1924, 1934-1974, undated <i>Newsweek</i> , 1967 Notes, undated (2 folders) Onteora Central School poetry project, Boiceville, N.Y., 1964 Pacific Islands, 1928-1933, undated Photographs, circa 1910-circa 1970 <i>Poet Lore</i> , 1945, 1964-1970, undated Poetry, miscellaneous, circa 1950-circa 1971 Poetry readings, 1942, 1969-1971, undated
BOX 20	Poetry Society of America Awards Citations, 1950-1965 Correspondence, 1949-1970 Miscellany, 1959-1985, undated Press releases, 1946-1967, undated Board meetings, 1958-1971, undated Events, 1943-1978, 1985-1991, undated (3 folders) Financial material, 1950, 1961-1970, 1988, undated
BOX 21	General correspondence, 1940-1978, undated (3 folders) Membership lists, 1948, 1967-1970, undated Miscellany, circa 1950-circa 1975 News clippings, 1946-1973, undated (2 folders) "Poetry in Crystal" (exhibit), 1961-1963, undated Poetry workshop, 1970-1971 Publication projects <i>Edward Arlington Robinson: A Centenary Memoir-Anthology</i> , 1970-1971, undated
BOX 22	<i>In Fealty to Apollo</i> , 1950-1957, undated Miscellaneous, 1944-1946, 1956-1960, undated

## Subject File, 1909-1991

### Container

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	Permissions file, 1959 (4 folders)
	Trip to Greece
	Correspondence, 1956-1958 (3 folders)
BOX 23	Miscellany, circa 1956-circa 1958 News clippings, 1957-1963, undated Photographs, 1957[?] Publishing, 1917-1922 <i>For additional material see Container 16, Fine Editions Press; See Containers 21-22, Publication projects, Poetry Society of America</i> Research file Angels Notes, circa 1950-circa 1965 (2 folders)
BOX 24	Pictorial material, circa 1950-circa 1965 Writings, 1951-1969, undated (3 folders)
BOX 25	Religious history Annotated books 1911, 1929-1944, 1951-1953, undated (7 volumes)
BOX 26	1954-1961, undated (5 volumes)
BOX 27	Miscellany, circa 1940-circa 1965 Signs and symbols, circa 1965-circa 1971 Scrapbooks, 1908-1924, 1931-1932 <i>See also Oversize</i> Septuagint Bible, 1954-1955 Social security, 1909-1913, 1950, 1966, undated
BOX OV 1	<b>Oversize, 1930-1932</b> Scrapbooks. Described according to the series, container, and folder from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Subject File Scrapbooks, 1931-1932 ( <i>Container 27</i> )