

Gerald Carson Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm82015255>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007052>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2007
Revised 2023 March

Collection Summary

Title: Gerald Carson Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1854-1989

Bulk Dates: 1944-1985

ID No.: MSS15255

Creator: Carson, Gerald

Extent: 950 items

Extent: 6 containers

Extent: 3 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82015255>

Summary: Author, social historian, and advertising executive. Correspondence, writings, speeches, research files, and scrapbooks documenting Carson's activities in advertising and writing American social history.

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

Blondin, 1824-1897.

Carson, Gerald.

Subjects

Advertising.

Social history.

Places

United States--History.

Occupations

Advertising executives.

Authors.

Historians.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Gerald Carson, advertising executive, social historian, and author, were given to the Library of Congress by Carson and his wife, Lettie Gay Carson, from 1954 to 1990.

Processing History

The Gerald Carson papers were arranged and described by Bradley E. Gernand in 1991. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Related Material

Other Gerald Carson papers are located in the New York Public Library and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Gerald Carson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Gerald Carson 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, Gerald Carson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1899, July 6	Born, Carrollton, Ill.
1921	A.B., University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.
1922	M.A., University of Illinois
1922-1923	Reporter, <i>New York Herald</i>
1923	Married Lettie Gay
1923-1927	Writer, Calkins & Holden, Inc.
1928-1929	Employed by J. Walter Thompson Co.
1929-1932	Employed by Batton, Barton, Durstine & Osborn
1932-1940	Vice president, William Esty & Co.
1940-1947	Vice president and copy director, Benton & Bowles
1947-1951	Vice president and director, Kenyon & Eckhardt
1954	Recipient of the Award of Merit, American Association of State and Local History Recipient of the Dunning Prize, American Historical Association. Published <i>The Old Country Store</i>
1957-1976	Published <i>Cornflake Crusade</i>
1960	Published <i>The Roguish World of Dr. Brinkley</i>
1961	Published <i>One for a Man, Two for a Horse</i>
1963	Published <i>The Social History of Bourbon</i>
1964-1976	Member, advertising board, <i>American Heritage</i> magazine
1966	Published <i>The Polite Americans</i>
1969	Member, usage panel, <i>American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language</i>
1972	Published <i>Men, Beasts and Gods: A History of Cruelty and Kindness to Animals</i>
1977	Published <i>The Golden Egg: The Personal Income Tax, Where it Came From, How it Grew</i>
1978	Published <i>A Good Day at Saratoga</i>
1983	Published <i>The Dentist and the Empress: The Adventures of Dr. Tom Evans in Gas-lit Paris</i>
1989, Dec. 4	Died, Langhorne, Pa.

Scope and Content Note

Gerald Hewes Carson (1899-1989), a native of Illinois and graduate of the state university in Urbana, moved to New York in 1922 to found a broad and successful career in the mass media. Beginning as a reporter for the *New York Herald*, Carson

soon left journalism for the advertising field, in which he rose eventually to become an executive in the nation's leading advertising agencies of the day. Decades later, he traded advertising for the world of historical scholarship and authored ten books and many articles concerning various aspects of American social history.

Carson's papers in the Library of Congress span the years 1854-1989, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1944-1985. The material is organized in three series: [Correspondence](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), and [Miscellany](#). Comprised of correspondence, writings, speeches, lectures, scrapbooks, and research material, the collection chiefly reflects his work as an author and social historian. A group of scrapbooks in the Miscellany series documents his career in the advertising world as well as various milestones in his later career as social historian. A printed letter from 1866 by acrobat Jean François Gravelet Blondin is in the Speeches and Writings series.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1944-1980](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1854-1989](#)
- [Miscellany, 1884-1980](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-2	<p><u>Correspondence, 1944-1980</u></p> <p>Letters to and from business associates and friends concerning research for and publication of Carson's articles and books.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by title of work and thereunder by year, month, and day.</p>
BOX 2-3	<p><u>Speeches and Writings, 1854-1989</u></p> <p>Articles, student theses, speeches and lectures, and research material.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and thereunder by title or topic.</p>
BOX 3-6	<p><u>Miscellany, 1884-1980</u></p> <p>Scrapbooks containing clippings, letters, reviews, and programs pertaining to Carson's work.</p> <p>Also financial records, biographical material, and miscellaneous clippings.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-2	<p>Correspondence, 1944-1980</p> <p>Letters to and from business associates and friends concerning research for and publication of Carson's articles and books. Arranged alphabetically by title of work and thereunder by year, month, and day.</p>
BOX 1	"Animal Welfare: An Aspect of Nineteenth Century Reform," 1971-1972
BOX 1	"Book Agents," 1954-1958
BOX 1	<i>Cornflake Crusade</i> , 1944-1979
BOX 1	<i>The Golden Egg...</i> , 1974-1977
BOX 1	"Hot Meals from Cold Bricks--the Birdseye Story," 1976-1978 (3 folders)
BOX 1	"Jefferson Davis's Camel Corps," 1979-1980
BOX 1	<i>Men, Beasts and Gods</i> , 1973-1976
BOX 1	Miscellaneous, 1959-1979
BOX 1	<i>The Old Country Store</i> , 1967-1980
BOX 1	<i>The Roguish World of Dr. Brinkley</i> , 1960-1976
BOX 2	"The Siege of Paris," 1977-1978
BOX 2	"They Knew What They Liked," 1961
BOX 2	Trademarks, 1976-1977
BOX 2	"Who Put the Borax in Dr. Wiley's Butter?" 1972
BOX 2	"A Yankee 'Tarzan' in the Maine Woods," 1969-1979
BOX 2-3	<p>Speeches and Writings, 1854-1989</p> <p>Articles, student theses, speeches and lectures, and research material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and thereunder by title or topic.</p>
BOX 2	Research material
BOX 2	"Bird-in-Hand," 1976-1978, undated
BOX 2	Blondin, Jean François Gravelet, 1854-1866, 1972-1989, undated
BOX 2	Guckenheimer Band, 1964, undated
BOX 2	MacGilvra, Boo, 1978-1983, undated
BOX 2	McFadden, Bernarr [sic], 1955, undated
BOX 2	Odd-ball clubs in America, 1952, 1961-1968, 1982, undated
BOX 2	Twain, Mark, at Niagara Falls, 1971-1976
BOX 2	"The Two Graves of Marshall Ney," 1956-1961, 1972-1975, 1983-1985
BOX 3	Speeches and lectures
BOX 3	"Animal Welfare: An Aspect of Nineteenth Century Reform," 1972
BOX 3	"Bourbon and Branch....," 1972
BOX 3	"Bourbon, the Star-Spangled Bank," 1963
BOX 3	Taxation 1969
BOX 3	"Watermelon Armies and Whiskey Boys," undated
BOX 3	Writings

Speeches and Writings, 1854-1989

Container	Contents
BOX 3	"Anthology of Twelve Sonnets of Daniel, Drayton, Spenser, and Sidney," circa 1921
BOX 3	"Bruce Weirick: The Playboy of the College World," (article), circa 1920
BOX 3	"Frederic Harrison," (A.B. thesis), 1922
BOX 3	"Walter Pater," (B.A. thesis), 1921
BOX 3	Untitled piece (possible title: "The Story of the Most Wonderful Baby and the Oog-Who-Growled"), (short story), circa 1921
BOX 3-6	Miscellany, 1884-1980 Scrapbooks containing clippings, letters, reviews, and programs pertaining to Carson's work. Also financial records, biographical material, and miscellaneous clippings. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 3	Biographical material and clippings file, 1917-1980
BOX 3	Christmas card ideas, 1884, undated
BOX 3	Financial accounts
BOX 3	"A Yankee 'Tarzan' in the Maine Woods," 1978-1979
BOX 3	"The Old Country Store," 1965-1977
BOX 4	Scrapbooks
BOX 4	1923-1947
BOX 4	1953-1954
BOX 5	1954-1960
BOX 5	1960
BOX 5	1960-1961
BOX 6	1961-1966
BOX 6	1963-1980
BOX 6	1966-1980