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Cornell Woolrich papers 4079630

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 14, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Woolrich, Cornell, 1903-1968
Title:	Cornell Woolrich papers
ID:	4079630
ID:	MS#1379
Date [inclusive]:	1958-1964
Physical Description:	2 linear feet 4 document boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection contains primarily articles and manuscripts by the crime writer Cornell Woolrich.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Cornell Woolrich papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Cornell George Hopley-Woolrich was born on December 14, 1903 in New York City to Genero and Claire (né Attalic) Hopley-Woolrich. In 1907 the family moved to Mexico and Genero and Claire divorced soon after. Cornell stayed with his father in Mexico for the duration of his childhood. As a teenager, he returned to the United States and lived with his mother, his aunt, and his grandfather on West 113th street. Cornell attended DeWitt Clinton High School and went on to attend Columbia University. He would have graduated in 1925, but dropped out his senior year.

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Biographical / Historical

Upon leaving school, Woolrich had a brief marriage to Gloria (Violet Virginia) Blackton. Woolrich befriended Blackton and her sister, Marion. After a few short dates, they married on December 6, 1930. A month later, Woolrich disappeared. While he was gone Gloria Blackton discovered his diary and realized that he had been having daily affairs with men throughout their marriage. She quickly divorced him. Woolrich moved back in with his mother and lived with her in the Hotel Marseilles until she died in 1957.

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Biographical / Historical

Although he was a guarded and mysterious individual, Woolrich was also a prolific author writing crime and suspense novels and short stories. Many of his works were adapted into films, radio and television plays. He is perhaps most known for his 1942 short story "It Had to be Murder" which was adapted into the Hitchcock directed classic, Rear Window. Woolrich also wrote under the pen name of William Irish.

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Biographical / Historical

He continued to write his whole life, however, he became even more of a recluse after his mother died. Woolrich stayed in his hotel room until he died in 1968. There is very little information about his personal life and the information that exists may or may not be true. Woolrich wrote an autobiography (unpublished), yet he sensationalized much of it and in some cases fabricated complete parts of it.

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Summary

The bulk of the collection consists of drafts of articles, manuscripts, and plays. There is also a small amount of correspondence and personal items. Items in the collection include: "Blues of

a Lifetime" (unfinished autobiography); "Cover Charge" (play); "Hotel Room" (novel); "I Was Waiting for You" (collection of short stories); "Into the Night" (novel); "The Loser" (unfinished novel); "Night Has a Thousand Eyes" (novel); "Somebody Else's Life" (television play); "Waltz Into Darkness" (novel); "Wardrobe Trunk" (radio play); and miscellaneous fragments, some incomplete.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. xml document instance created by Lea Osborne. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2009-06-26 2010-07-13 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located on-site.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Manuscripts: Source of acquisition--Woolrich, Cornell. Method of acquisition--Bequest; Date of acquisition--1971. Accession number--M-1971.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Method of acquisition--Purchase; Date of acquisition--2010.

Ownership and Custodial History

Bequest of Cornell Woolrich, 1971 & 1972.

Ownership and Custodial History

Purchase, 2010.

Processing Information

Manuscripts Entered in AMC 12/05/1990.

Processing Information

Papers processed Lea Osborne 2010 July.

Processing Information

Papers cataloged Lea Osborne 2010 July.

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Processing Information

Box 4 added by Patrick Lawlor 2020 November

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Related Materials

Selected Related Material at Columbia

[Frederic Dannay Papers, 1920-1982](#) Columbia University, Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Controlled Access Headings

- Crime writing
- Detective and mystery stories
- Gay authors
- Recluses as authors
- Scripts (documents)
- Authors
- Irish, William, 1903-1968
- Woolrich, Cornell, 1903-1968

Collection Inventory

Series I: Subject Files, 1934-1968

Scope and Contents

This small series holds correspondence between Cornell Woolrich and his friend William Thailing. The letters span the bulk of Woolrich's life. Of interest are several cancelled checks made out to Woolrich as payment for twelve stories, including his first story in a pulp magazine.

Title/Description	Instances	
Checks, 1934-1940	box 1	folder 1
Correspondence, 1952-1958, 1968, 1952-1958, 1968	box 1	folder 2
Last Will and Testament, 1961-1965	box 1	folder 3
Dodd, Mead, and Co. Correspondence and Contracts, 1956-1958	box 1	

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Series II: Writings, 1937-1960**Scope and Contents**

Series II contains drafts of several novels, plays, and a run of short stories. There are also portions of Woolrich's unpublished "autobiography."

Title/Description	Instances	
<i>Blues of a Lifetime</i>		
"Remington Portable NC69411," undated	box 1	folder 4
"The Poor Girl," undated	box 1	folder 5
"Even God Felt the Depression" and "President Eisenhower's Speech," undated	box 1	folder 6
"The Maid Who Played the Races," undated (notes), undated	box 1	folder 7
Cover Charge, undated (play), undated	box 1	folder 8
<i>Hotel Room</i> , undated <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 9 to 10
<i>I Was Waiting for You</i>		
"I Was Waiting for You," undated	box 1	folder 11
"New York Blues" and "Two Lives," undated	box 1	folder 12
<i>Into the Night</i> --Notes, 1950s	box 2	folder 1
<i>Into the Night</i> --Draft, 1950s	box 2	folder 2
<i>King Features Syndicated Articles</i>		
"The Murderer's Story," 1937	box 2	folder 3
"Endicott's Girl," 1938	box 2	folder 4
"Murder Does Its Homework," 1941	box 2	folder 5
"Double-Life," 1943	box 2	folder 6
"Death Wins the Sweepstakes," 1947 October 6	box 2	folder 7
"Mystery in Room 913," 1947 October 13	box 2	folder 8
"Death Holds the Downbeat," 1947 November	box 2	folder 9
"Accessory to Murder," 1948	box 2	folder 10
"The Case of the Body in Grant's Tomb," 1949 January	box 2	folder 11
"Case of the Lying Son," 1949 November	box 2	folder 12
"Murder before the Camera," 1955	box 2	folder 13
"Murder in the Dark Blue Night," 1956	box 2	folder 14

"The Corpse in the Statue of Liberty," 1957	box 2	folder 15
<i>The Loser</i> , undated	box 2	folder 16
Miscellaneous Fragments, undated	box 2	folder 17
<i>The Moon of Montezuma</i> , [1949-1960]	box 2	folder 18
<i>Night Has a Thousand Eyes--Part I</i> , 1940s	box 3	folder 1
<i>Night Has a Thousand Eyes--Part II</i> , 1940s	box 3	folder 2
<i>Nine Nights in a New York Hotel</i> . Printed book, with holograph corrections. New York, late 1950s	box 4	
<u>Physical Description</u> : 1 volume		

Scope and Contents

This is Cornell Woolrich's own copy of *Hotel Room*, as published by Random House in 1958, with his manuscript changes to the book. Acquired with the book are typescripts of two new stories that Woolrich intended to have included in a new, never published edition: Episode 2, "The Fiancee without Future (1900)," and Episode 3, "The Fault-Finder (1915)." Woolrich changed the title of the book and the titles of each chapter, created a new table of contents with the two new stories, and changed "Cornell Woolrich" to "William Irish," one of his pseudonyms. The Random House publication does not include two of the stories listed in the typescript shown below: Chapter 7, "The Night of May 12th, 1935," and Chapter 8, "The Night of September 20th, 1937."

Somebody Else's Life, 1958 (television play), 1958	box 3	folder 3
Wardrobe Trunk, 1958 (radio play), 1958	box 3	folder 4
<i>Waltz into Darkness</i>		
Part I, 1940s	box 3	folder 5
Part II, 1940s	box 3	folder 6
Part III, 1940s	box 3	folder 7

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