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Bennett Cerf papers 4079659

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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:	Cerf, Bennett, 1898-1971
Title:	Bennett Cerf papers
ID:	4079659
ID:	MS#0206
Date [inclusive]:	1898-1977
Physical Description:	52 linear feet 71 boxes 45 volumes 22 oversized items
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

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

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Biographical / Historical

Author & publisher. Columbia A.B. 1919; Litt.B. 1920.

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Summary

Correspondence, manuscripts, memorabilia, photographs, phonograph and tape recordings, and printed files. Included are Cerf's personal correspondence files, 1929-1945, and the diaries and scrapbooks which he maintained from his school days throughout his active career. The diaries, in date-book format, contain terse notes on Cerf's meetings with authors and friends, on his travels and publishing activities; the scrapbooks contain correspondence

and photographs, as well as memorabilia and printed items, and were annotated by Cerf and his wife, Phyllis Fraser Cerf Wagner. Also in the collection are manuscripts and proofs for Cerf's books including "The Laugh's on Me""Treasury of Atrocious Puns""The Sound of Laughter""Stories to Make You Feel Better", and "At Random: the Reminiscences of Bennett Cerf", which was edited by Phyllis Cerf Wagner and Albert Erskine, 1977. The papers also include condolence letters written at the time of Cerf's death, photographs and photo albums, certificates and awards, and miscellaneous printed material, including Random House and Modern Library catalogues. Among the major correspondents are: Truman Capote, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Edna Ferber, Moss Hart, J. Edgar Hoover, Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon B. Johnson, John Lindsay, Joshua Logan, John O'Hara, Jacqueline Onassis, Richard Rodgers, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Gertrude Stein, Adlai Stevenson, Harry Truman, and Robert Penn Warren

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Arrangement

Selected materials cataloged; remainder arranged.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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

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Revision Description

File created. XML document instance created by Catherine C. Ricciardi EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. Links to digitized material added 2009-07-07 2012-11-28 2019-05-20 2020-03-05

Restrictions on Access

The following boxes are located off-site: Boxes 3-75. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Wagner, Phyllis Cerf. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1975. Accession number--M-1975.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

12 letters to & from M.H. Sherwood: Source of acquisition--2293B. Method of acquisition--Purchase; Date of acquisition--10/09/1998. Accession number--M-98-10-09.

Ownership and Custodial History

Gift of Phyllis Cerf Wagner and the Cerf Foundation, 1975, 1978-1981 (yearly), 1983& 1984; Gift of Random House, 1988.

Processing Information

Processed 12/--/1988.

Processing Information

12 letters to & from M.H. Sherwood Cataloged HR 10/15/1998.

Conditions Governing Access

Unique time-based media items have been reformatted and are available onsite via links in the container list. Commercial materials are not routinely digitized.

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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Controlled Access Headings

- Editors
- Literature
- Publishers and publishing
- Albums (books)
- Articles
- Audiocassettes
- Awards
- Bookplates
- Certificates
- Diaries
- Illustrations
- Lectures
- Memoirs
- Notebooks
- Passports
- Phonograph records
- Photographs
- Proofs (printed matter)
- Scrapbooks
- Speeches (documents)
- Tape recordings
- Authors, American
- Sound recordings
- Adams, Samuel Hopkins, 1871-1958
- Annenberg, Walter H., 1908-2002
- Astaire, Fred
- Auchincloss, Louis
- Baldwin, Faith, 1893-1978
- Baruch, Bernard M. (Bernard Mannes), 1870-1965
- Baxter, Anne
- Benny, Jack, 1894-1974
- Berlin, Irving, 1888-1989
- Bliven, Bruce, 1916-2002
- Bow, Clara, 1905-1965

- Bradley, Omar Nelson, 1893-1981
- Cabell, James Branch, 1879-1958
- Canfield, Cass, 1897-1986
- Capote, Truman, 1924-1984
- Cerf, Christopher
- Cooke, Alistair, 1908-2004
- Cousins, Norman
- Dewey, Thomas E (Thomas Edmund), 1902-1971
- Dreiser, Theodore, 1871-1945
- Eban, Abba Solomon, 1915-2002
- Fadiman, Clifton, 1904-1999
- Faulkner, William, 1897-1962
- Ferber, Edna, 1887-1968
- Fisher, Dorothy Canfield, 1879-1958
- Flower, Desmond, 1907-1997
- Fontaine, Joan, 1917-2013
- Gershwin, George, 1898-1937
- Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983
- Gingrich, Arnold
- Goldwyn, Samuel, Jr., 1926-2015
- Green, Martyn, 1899-1975
- Gruening, Ernest, 1887-1974
- Harriman, W. Averell (William Averell), 1891-1986
- Hart, Moss, 1904-1961
- Hemingway, Ernest, 1899-1961
- Hersey, John, 1914-1993
- Hitchcock, Alfred, 1899-1980
- Hoover, J. Edgar (John Edgar), 1895-1972
- Humphrey, Hubert H. (Hubert Horatio), 1911-1978
- Hurlock, Madeline, 1899-1989
- Huxley, Aldous, 1894-1963
- Ingersoll, Ralph, 1900-1985
- Javits, Jacob K. (Jacob Koppel), 1904-1986
- Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973
- Jones, James, 1921-1977
- Jovanovich, William
- Kennedy, Edward M. (Edward Moore), 1932-2009
- Kent, Rockwell, 1882-1971
- Kerr, Jean
- Knopf, Alfred A., 1892-1984
- Koch, Ed, 1924-2013
- Kollek, Teddy, 1911-2007
- Lefkowitz, Louis J.
- Lindsay, John V. (John Vliet)
- Logan, Joshua
- Loos, Anita, 1893-1981
- McBride, Mary Margaret, 1899-1976

- McFee, William, 1881-1966
- Machen, Arthur, 1863-1947
- McKuen, Rod
- Malraux, André, 1901-1976
- Maugham, W. Somerset (William Somerset), 1874-1965
- Mencken, H. L. (Henry Louis), 1880-1956
- Merrick, David
- Michener, James A (James Albert), 1907-1997
- Morley, Christopher, 1890-1957
- Nash, Ogden, 1902-1971
- Nathan, George Jean, 1882-1958
- O'Flaherty, Liam, 1896-1984
- O'Hara, John, 1905-1970
- Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929-1994
- Paley, William S (William Samuel), 1901-1990
- Robinson, Edwin Arlington, 1869-1935
- Rodgers, Richard, 1902-1979
- Rockefeller, Nelson A. (Nelson Aldrich), 1908-1979
- Roosevelt, Franklin D (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945
- Roth, Philip
- Rusk, Dean, 1909-1994
- Russell, Rosalind
- Schiff, Dorothy, 1903-1989
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr (Arthur Meier), 1917-2007
- Schulberg, Budd
- Sevareid, Eric, 1912-1992
- Shaw, Irwin, 1913-1984
- Slesinger, Tess, 1905-1945
- Stein, Gertrude, 1874-1946
- Steinbeck, John, 1902-1968
- Stevenson, Adlai E (Adlai Ewing), 1900-1965
- Styron, William, 1925-2006
- Tracy, Honor, 1915-
- Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972
- Updike, John
- Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964
- Fraser, Phyllis, 1911-2006
- Wallace, Henry A (Henry Agard), 1888-1965
- Warren, Robert Penn, 1905-1989
- Weidman, Jerome, 1913-1998
- White, E. B (Elwyn Brooks), 1899-1985
- Wiesel, Elie, 1928-2016
- Williams, G. Mennen, 1911-1988
- Willkie, Wendell L (Wendell Lewis), 1892-1944
- Woollcott, Alexander, 1887-1943
- Wynn, Ed, 1886-1966

- Random House (Firm)

Collection Inventory

Series I: Cataloged Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances
Adams, Samuel Hopkins	box 1
Addams, Charles	box 1
Anderson, Robert	box 1
Annenberg, Walter	box 1
Astaire, Fred	box 1
Auchincloss, Louis	box 1
Baldwin, Faith	box 1
Baruch, Bernard M.	box 1
Baskerville, Charles	box 1
Baxter, Anne	box 1
Beer, Thomas	box 1
Benny, Jack	box 1
Berlin, Irving	box 1
Black, Hugo L.	box 1
Bliven, Bruce	box 1
Bow, Clara	box 1
Bradley, Omar N	box 1
Cabell, James Branch	box 1
Canby, Henry Seidel	box 1
Canfield, Cass	box 1
Capote, Truman	box 1
Cerf, Bennett A.	box 1
Cerf, Christopher	box 1
Cerf, Jonathan	box 1
Cooke, Alistair	box 1
Coppard, A. E.	box 1

Cousins, Norman	box 1
Crawford, Joan	box 1
Darrow, Whitney, Jr.	box 1
Dewey, Thomas E.	box 1
Douglas, Norman	box 1
Dreiser, Theodore	box 1
Early, Stephen	box 1
Eban, Abba	box 1
Eisenhower, Dwight David	box 1
Ervine, St. John	box 1
Fadiman, Clifton	box 1
Farley, Walter	box 1
Farrar, John	box 1
Faulkner, Estelle (Mrs. William)	box 1
Faulkner, William	box 1
Ferber, Edna	box 1
Fisher, Dorothy Canfield	box 1
Flower, Desmond.	box 1
Fontaine, Joan	box 1
Furness, Betty	box 1
Geisel, Theodor Seuss	box 1
Gershwin, George	box 1
Gershwin, Ira	box 1
Gingrich, Arnold	box 1
Goldwyn, Samuel, Jr.	box 1
Goodson, Mark	box 1
Grace, Princess of Monaco	box 1
Green, Martyn	box 1
Gruening, Ernest	box 1
Harcourt, Alfred	box 1
Harriman, William Averell	box 1
Hart, Moss	box 1

Hemingway, Ernest	box 1
Hersey, John	box 1
Hitchcock, Alfred	box 1
Hobson, Laura	box 1
Hogan, Frank Smithwick	box 1
Hoover, John Edgar	box 1
Humphrey, Hubert Horatio	box 1
Huxley, Aldous L.	box 1
Ingersoll, Ralph	box 2
Javits, Jacob K.	box 2
Johnson, Claudia Alta Taylor (Mrs. L.B.)	box 2
Johnson, Lyndon Baines	box 2
Jones, James	box 2
Jovanovich, William	box 2
Kraing, Kenneth B.	box 2
Kennedy, Edward M.	box 2
Kent, Rockwell	box 2
Kerr, Jean	box 2
Kiplinger, Willard Monroe	box 2
Knopf, Alfred A.	box 2
Knopf, Helen	box 2
Kober, Arthur	box 2
Koch, Edward I.	box 2
Kollek, Theodore	box 2
Lefkowitz, Louis J.	box 2
Lindsay, John Vliet	box 2
Lindsay, Mary (Mrs. John V.)	box 2
Logan, Joshua	box 2
Loos, Anita	box 2
McBride, Mary Margaret	box 2
McFee, William	box 2
McGovern, George	box 2

Machen, Arthur	box 2
McKuen, Rod	box 2
Malraux, André	box 2
Maugham, William Somerset	box 2
Mencken, Henry Louis	box 2
Merrick, David	box 2
Michener, James A.	box 2
Morley, Christopher	box 2
Nash, Ogden	box 2
Nathan, George Jean	box 2
O'Flaherty, Liam	box 2
O'Hara, John	box 2
Onassis, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy	box 2
Paley, William S.	box 2
Robinson, Edwin Arlington	box 2
Rockefeller, Margaretta F.M. (Mrs. N.A.)	box 2
Rockefeller, Nelson A.	box 2
Rodgers, Dorothy (Mrs. Richard)	box 2
Rodgers, Richard	box 2
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano	box 2
Roth, Philip	box 2
Rusk, Dean	box 2
Russell, Rosalind	box 2
Schiff, Dorothy	box 2
Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr.	box 2
Schulberg, Budd	box 2
Sevareid, Eric	box 2
Shaw, Irwin	box 2
Sherwood, M.H.C.	box 2
Simon, Richard L.	box 2
Slesinger, Tess	box 2
Stein, Gertrude	box 2

Steinbeck, John	box 2
Stettinius, Edward R., Jr.	box 2
Stevenson, Adlai E.	box 2
Styron, William and Rose	box 2
Sulzberger, Arthur Ochs	box 2
Tracy, Honor	box 2
Truman, Harry S.	box 2
Tunney, James Joseph	box 2
Updike, John	box 2
Van Vechten, Carl	box 2
Wagner, Phyllis F.C.	box 2
Wallace, Henry Agard	box 2
Warren, Robert Penn	box 2
Weidman, Jerome	box 2
White, Elwyn Brooks	box 2
Wiesel, Elie	box 2
Williams, G. Mennen	box 2
Willkie, Wendell L.	box 2
Woollcott, Alexander	box 2
Wynn, Ed	box 2

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Series II: Cataloged Manuscripts, Photographs, and Art

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Benson, Sally	box 2
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Dwiggins, William Addison	box 2
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Furness, Betty	box 2
Geisel, Theodor Seuss	box 2
Gooden, Stephen	box 2

Haas, Robert	box 2
Hollister, Paul	box 2
Hoover, John Edgar	box 2
Kent, Rockwell	box 2
Lawrence, David Herbert	box 2
Leighton, Clare	box 2
Lindsay, Howard	box 2
Losch, Tilly	box 2
McFee, William	box 2
Mdrley, Christopher	box 2
Richards, Ceri	box 2
Robinson, Edwin Arlington	box 2
Shaw, George Bernard	box 2
Sinatra, Frank	box 2
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Item removed to box 74	
Stephens, James	box 2
Stevenson, Adlai	box 2
Van Loon, Hendrik Willem	box 2
Van Vechten, Carl	box 2
Weston, Edward	box 2
Woolsey, John Munro	box 2

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Series III: Arranged Materials

Title/Description	Instances
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"November 22"	box 74
"Frank Sinatra: A Man and His Music"	box 74

Scope and Contents

(Limited Edition)

Scope and Contents

Item was originally in box 02

"Let's Talk About Writers with Bennett Cerf"	box 74
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1916-1917	box 36
1917-1919	box 36
1918-1933	box 36
Condolence Letters	
Record of Letters	
<u>Physical Description:</u> (1 Volume)	
A-D	box 8
E-L	box 9
M-Z	box 10
Condolence Message from Random House, Inc. concerning the death of Bennett Cerf	box 64
Bennett Cerf interviewed by Arnold Michaelis, June 20, 1963	box 25
<u>Creator:</u> Michaelis, Arnold	
<u>Physical Description:</u> 1 audiocassettes	
<u>Digital Object:</u> Bennett Cerf interviewed by Arnold Michaelis, June 20, 1963	
Scope and Contents	
Interview from "View from the Top," WOR-TV	
Lecture Schedules, 1949-1971	box 31
Manuscripts and Proofs	
Diaries	
1915-1949	box 11
1950-1971	box 12
Notebooks and Passports	box 12
<i>The Laugh's on Me</i>	box 13
<i>The Laugh's on Me</i>	box 14

<i>Treasury of Atrocious Puns</i>	box 14
<i>The Sound of Laughter</i>	box 15
<i>The Sound of Laughter</i>	box 16
<i>The Sound of Laughter</i>	box 17
<i>Stories to Make You Feel Better</i>	box 18
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Typed Manuscript (t.ms.)	box 19
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Typed Manuscript (t.ms.)	
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Photographs and Illustrations for the Book	box 22
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Vest Pocket of Anecdotes	box 24
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Oral History Memoir, Columbia University.

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

These corrected drafts and final copies of Cerf Oral History, formerly in boxes 26-28 of the collection, has been withdrawn from the Cerf Papers and returned to the Columbia University Center for Oral History.

Available as Reminiscences of Bennett Alfred Cerf,
1968 at [https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/catalog/
cul:zgmsbcc4mz](https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/catalog/cul:zgmsbcc4mz)

Related Materials:

Related Materials

<https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/15684324>

Personal Papers	
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1943-1945	box 6
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Articles by Cerf	box 40
Articles by Cerf	box 41
Bookplates of Bennett Cerf	box 62
Books by Cerf	box 42
Books by Cerf	box 43
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Books by Cerf	box 45
Books by Cerf	box 46
Books by Cerf	box 47
Books by Phyllis Cerf Wagner	box 48

Books from the Library of Bennett Cerf	box 49
Books from the Library of Bennett Cerf	box 50
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Books from the Library of Bennett Cerf	box 54
Books from the Library of Bennett Cerf	box 55
Columbia University; Miscellaneous	box 61
Inscribed Copy of <i>The Look Book</i>	box 75
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Leighton, Clare <i>The Return of the Native</i> , 1929	box 63
Woodcuts; one of 30 numbered sets of 12 prints, signed; illustrations for Thomas Hardy, <i>The Return of the Native</i> , (New York: Harper Brothers, 1929)	box 63
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Random House and Modern Library Catalogues	box 57
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1968 January -1971, 1968	box 73
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Wagner, Phyllis Cerf et al. <i>Charlotte, Isabelle, Phyllis and Susan's New York</i> . New York.	box 30

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Series IV: Oversized Materials

Title/Description	Instances
Academic Gown	box Flat Box 294
Charcoal portrait of Bennett Cerf by René Bouchet Digital Object: Charcoal portrait of Bennett Cerf by René Bouchet	box Flat Box 293
Condolence message from Random House, Inc. concerning the death of Bennett Cerf	box Flat Box 296
Honorary Degree Awards	box Flat Box 296
Manuscripts and Proofs-- <i>At Random, the Reminiscences of Bennett A. Cerf, 1977</i>	box Flat Box 295
Scope and Contents (Page proofs, photographs, end-paper)	
Photographs (Oversized)	
Bennett Cerf in front of the Random House building (photograph by Ray Shorr)	box Flat Box 295
Bennett Cerf with Marilyn Monroe	box Flat Box 295
Bennett Cerf in office	box Flat Box 295
Bennett Cerf in office with Secretary Paulene Kreeswork Freidnear	box Flat Box 295
Bennett Cerf at desk	box Flat Box 295
David Klopper, Robert Hoas, and Bennett Cerf	

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	box Flat Box 295
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Photograph of Bennett Cerf in office	box Flat Box 293
Bennett Cerf in office (Photograph by Ray Shorr)	box Flat Box 296
James Silverman, Robert Berstein, Bennett Cerf, and Lyndon Johnson	box Flat Box 296
Photograph of sign, "Sioux City Welcomes Bennett Cerf"	box Flat Box 296
Bennett Cerf in office with children's books	box Flat Box 296
Bennett Cerf (as younger man)	box Flat Box 296
Other Miscellaneous Photographs	box Flat Box 296
John O'Hara (Photograph by Phyllis Cerf)	box Flat Box 296
Photostat reproduction of front page of "New York Times" 1898 May 25, 1898	box Flat Box 293
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