



# ArchivesSpace

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## National Story Project records 7268954

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 13, 2025.  
Description is written in: English.

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  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Auster, Paul, 1947-
<b>Title:</b>	National Story Project records
<b>ID:</b>	7268954
<b>ID:</b>	MS#1559
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1998-2002
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 linear feet 6 record storage cartons
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	A collection of over 5,000 true short stories written as submissions for National Public Radio's (NPR) National Story Project, which was a segment on Weekend All Things Considered. The National Story Project was created and supervised by American author, Paul Auster.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); National Story Project Archive; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

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The National Story project began in 1999 after American author, Paul Auster, read a selection from his novel *Timbuktu* on NPR's *Weekend All Things Considered*. Auster was asked to return to the program by its then host, Daniel Zwerdling, to perform another reading at a future date. Auster answered with the conditional response that he would be willing to return, but only if he could read other people's stories and not just his own.

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## Biographical / Historical

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The National Story Project began taking submissions from listeners in 1999 October through both e-mail and mail. The guidelines for the stories were that they had to be no more than three pages in length and that the submissions relayed a true event. The selected stories would then be edited or rewritten, if needed, by Auster and his team. The National Story Project aired on Weekend All Things Considered the first Saturday of each month from 1999 November until 2001 July and during that time received over 5,000 submissions from all over the United States on a wide variety of topics and from people of varying ages, gender and backgrounds.

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## Biographical / Historical

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After the National Story Project ended, Auster selected his favorite submissions and compiled them for a book entitled *I Thought My Father Was God: And Other True Tales from NPR's National Story Project*. The collection was published in 2002 by Picador, a Macmillan Publishing imprint.

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## Summary

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This collection contains over 5,000 submissions to the National Story Project, a program that aired from 1999 November until 2001 July on National Public Radio's Weekend All Things Considered. The collection primarily contains printed e-mail submissions and letters received through the mail. In addition to the stories, some participants sent cassette tapes or CDs of themselves reading their stories or performing music to accompany the submission. Also included are books, photographs, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and other materials either meant to verify their submission as true, add context to their submission, or to show other formats that their submissions had appeared in previously.

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## Arrangement

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This collection is arranged in 2 series.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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

### Revision Description

xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2011-05-25 2019-05-20

### Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. 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.

### Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Source of acquisition--Paul Auster. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--11/30/2002.

### **Processing Information**

Papers processed Ellen Reece, Pratt 2011 5/24/2011.

### **Processing Information**

Finding aid written Ellen Reece, Pratt 2011 04/15/2011.

### **Accrual**

No additional material expected

### **Accruals**

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact [rbml@columbia.edu](mailto:rbml@columbia.edu) for more information.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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- Oral history
- Storytelling
- United States -- Biography -- Anecdotes
- United States -- Social life and customs -- 20th century -- Anecdotes
- Short stories
- Weekend all things considered (Radio program)
- Auster, Paul, 1947-
- National Public Radio (U.S.)
- National Story Project (U.S.)

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## **Collection Inventory**

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**Series I: E-mail Submissions to the National Story Project, 1998-2001**

**Scope and Contents**

This subseries contains print outs of National Story Project submissions that were entered electronically through e-mail.

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>
1998-1999 December	box 1
1999 December-2000 August	box 2
2000 August-2001 August, Undated, 2000, Undated	box 3

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**Series II: Mailed Submissions to the National Story Project, 1999-2002****Scope and Contents**

This subseries contains National Story Project submissions that were entered by mail. These submissions contain stories as well as accompanying materials such as audio cassette tapes, CDs, photographs, newspapers, magazines, and other types of materials.

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>
1999	box 4
2000 January-July	box 5
2000 August-2002 July	box 6
Undated	box 6

NPR Internal Correspondence

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