

Harry Mathews and Terry Southern featured in the Maggie Paley Archive

The Maggie Paley Archive contains items collected by native New Yorker Maggie Paley while living and working in New York City, especially during the '60s through the '80s. Her active social and work life reflected many of the cultural currents of the times. She is a novelist, essayist and journalist who has written on subjects ranging from rock and roll stars to penises. Her active social circle included many writers, poets and composers who were part of the New York School as well as *The Paris Review* literary set, and included relationships with people such as George Plimpton, Terry Southern, Ned Rorem, Judith Crist, Tina Barney, Rachel Hadas, Kenward Elmslie, Jill Kremenz, Kurt Vonnegut, Lewis Lapham, Morris Golde, William Pène du Bois, Larry Bensky, Maxine Grofsky, and Harry Mathews.



Jill Kremenz photograph of Maggie Paley and Terry Southern, with actor and Norman Mailer associate, Bernard "Buzz" Farber, sticking his head in the frame. The photo was taken by Kremenz at a party at George Plimpton's apartment, June 21, 1967.

Biography

Maggie Paley is a native New Yorker. Her work and social life often intersect and mingle. Since the 1960s she has been actively involved in the publishing world where she worked closely with George Plimpton on *The Paris Review* and other projects (she has been continuously associated with *The Paris Review* in various capacities since 1963). During that time she also met and developed close relationships with the writers Terry Southern and Harry Mathews. As a vital part of the New York social scene, Maggie was also known for both attending and throwing parties. In addition to her work

at *The Paris Review*, she was Managing Editor of *Status* (1966–67); Associate Articles Editor at *Saturday Evening Post* (1967–69), where she hired and worked with writers, including Lewis Lapham and Marshall McLuhan; Assistant Editor at *Life* (1967–1972), reporting and writing entertainment stories about stars such as Laura Nyro, Blind Faith, Elliott Gould, Candice Bergen, David Cassidy; and a writer for *Time* (1972).

Maggie's social circle also included many writers, artists, composers and supporters of the New York School, including Kenward Elmslie, Joe Brainard, Bill Berkson, Ned Rorem, David Amram and Morris Golde.

Maggie first met Harry Mathews at a 1982 Larry Rivers Marlborough Gallery exhibition opening. Among other things discussed that evening was his connection with the French Oulipo group. In an email, Maggie remembers "And I think it was then that he also mentioned Georges Perec's novel, *La Disparition [A Void]*, which was written in French without the letter "e." It hadn't occurred to me until then that a writer could play with text, making rules for him/herself in a way that could enliven the process and bypass self-censorship, and still create a readable book. The first chapter of [my novel] *Bad Manners* was written as a try-out for an etiquette column for *Vogue*, where I was then a Contributing Writer. Neither that chapter nor the book would have been written if not for my friendship with Harry."

According to Paley, "Terry Southern loved my novel, *Bad Manners*; he said it reminded him of Henry Green, who was one of his major inspirations, and whom he interviewed for *The Paris Review* in 1958. He also said he'd like to write the screenplay for *Bad Manners* if it was sold to the movies. It was not sold to the movies, and instead he wrote his own telephone movie, *The Telephone*, which starred Whoopi Goldberg and was a flop."

In addition to her novel, *Bad Manners* (edited by Terry Southern's first wife Carol Southern; Clarkson N. Potter, 1985), Maggie Paley has also written *In One Door*, a play about Edith Wharton (commissioned and produced by Shakespeare & Co, Lenox, Mass., 1985); a chapbook of sestinas, *Elephant* (The Groundwater Press, 1990); and the nonfiction *The Book of the Penis* (edited by Ira Siverberg; Grove Press, 1999).

Paley's writing has also appeared in many other publications including *BOMB* (online), *The Paris Review*, *The Saint Ann's Review*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Mudfish*, *New Observations*, and *Bookforum*. She currently resides in her apartment in Greenwich Village.

Selected Highlights from the Archive

Harry Mathews

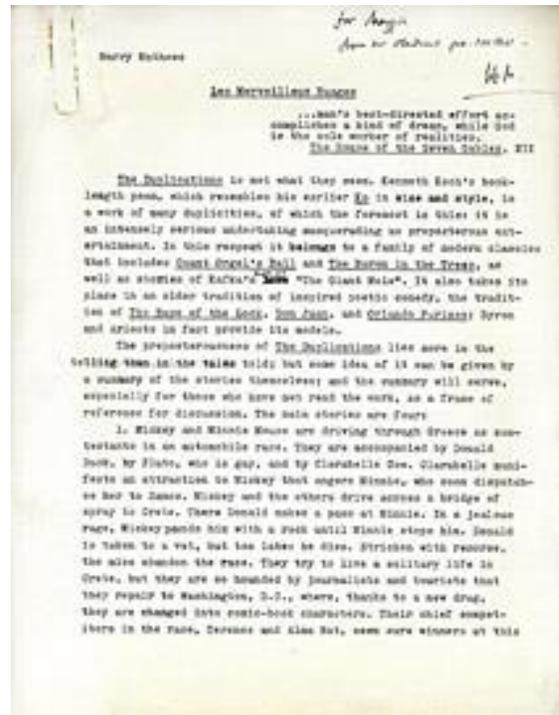
Harry Mathews (1930–) is an American novelist, poet and writer of short fiction and essays. Along with John Ashberry, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler, Mathews founded the journal *Locus Solus* in Paris in 1960 and edited it through its brief, but influential life. He was also the first American chosen for membership in the French literary society, Ouvroir de Litterature Potentielle (OULIPO), or Workshop of Potential Literature. The late French writer Georges Perec, also a member, was a good friend, and the two would translate each other's writings.

Mathews' first novel *The Conversions* (1962) was considered groundbreaking by many. Terry Southern called it a "startling piece of work" in an exuberant review in *The Nation* and George Plimpton published a seventy-page excerpt in *The Paris Review*.

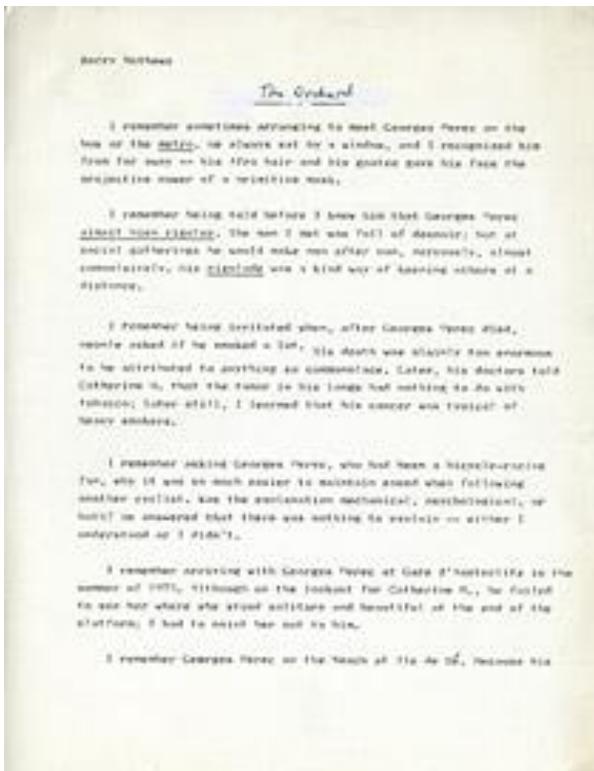
The archive contains more than 50 letters and cards from Harry Mathews to Maggie written between 1982 and 1992. In addition, there are approximately 15 Mathews manuscripts, approximately 48 SX-70 Polaroid photographs, and other assorted items.



One of approximately 48 SX-70 photographs of Harry Mathews and Maggie Paley.



First page of "Les Merveilleux Nuages," a 23-page inscribed manuscript.



First page of the 18-page manuscript of "The Orchard."

The original title has been whited out and a new title has been written in.



First page of Harry Mathews' 128-page typescript, with some light corrections, *20 Lines a Day*, March 16, 1983.

It is considered to be one of the finest examples of Mathews' constrained automatic writing and was first published by Dalkey Archive Press in 1988.

As for
 between approaches
 suggested
 Jersey, ruined isle,
 Osman's obtains
 A mix-channel disengagement
 that returns the authority of cultures
 that he has left. Abyssinian, Lebanon,
 Singapore
 something observable but not predictable or
 definable, something between codes, that is with
 small rift to a profuse time, and proceed
 to the gap, as a displacement
 displaced.

Draft of "Rigra Sprats" in the hand of Harry Mathews on a 5 x 5-inch napkin.

Le Haut du Feuill
 34760 Lons-le-Saunier
 December 19, 1986

Dear Joe,

Thanks for the second formalism address and for mentioning me in Jonathan Swift. I'm not sure what DDI said and as perhaps Miller (the painter) is a painter with Irons and Fiericis, as you know, Brad Morrow has taken the Morris-Lewis chapter for Conventions.

As for your article: I like the expression of your commitment to a way of writing (of life-in-writing); I guess I like your brotherly concern for my own future as a writer, even if that sentiment is mostly implicit. I find little to like otherwise. Marie commented that you seem to be carrying a grudge. If that doesn't strike me as ironic, the article did contain by way as if that were so, I'm baffled that you find it necessary to re-emphasize in print, to your advantage, our familiar and to me perfectly acceptable differences. In doing so, you have succeeded in a way I find bewilderingly rare to recognize. I suppose I may appear to you as a "journalistic" thingy-sparingly, but why do you assume that the guests of The Conventions and Lines were "gratuitously made up"? (Did you read the love story called The Singing of the Sirens?) Aside from very short works or incidental passages, what had I ever treated form as a "service" or scheme to be externally "applied" -- a mechanistic compromise of (readability, given that readability is your standard) that the problem of how to belong among feeling cannot be solved by imposed form? What do you think I've been working at and for all these years? The answer to this last question may, like, lead to the strangest incident of all, one that produces the overall effect of the article, namely that I might become a good writer if I agree with you and started writing in the way you define and appear of, (I wish I had Sweden Gill's letter responding to the manuscript of The Conventions to show you the kind of company you wish keeping.) How would you feel if I spent the same demonstrating that your work showed a nice talent but would bear within distinction unless you shared how to give formalist aspect? True, false, or irrelevant, I would never write any more being because I'm interested in what your work is, not in what it isn't -- an attitude I've always assumed between equals.

I've just arrived here after three weeks in Paris. Marie went through a hard time after Juliette's death, one not made easier by the unrelenting obsession of Jean-Louis-God-Francis that a nice old childhood servant had died. She has since emerged from the worst, in part through writing a beautiful 16-page piece on her experience and also benefited from being kept busy -- having to give a party for a dealer-broker's opening, having to give a course on stage for a benefit (she was hilariously good in it), for a time we were also absorbed by the student drama and their non-sequiturs. I've gotten a fair amount of work done -- one poem, my "Machinist" has resulted for publication, one of the latter chapters in Conventions completely overhauled at my editor's suggestion. Here I've found page proofs from Princeton, late and rather rushed-back.

Some Fin d'année, as people here say as they break up for the holidays; and happy new year after that.

Love,
 Harry

Copy of letter written by Mathews to Joseph McElroy reflecting upon McElroy's article "Harry Mathews Fiction: What Is at Stake," December 19, 1986.

(A copy of McElroy's manuscript is also in the archive.)

Mathews writes "As for your article: I like the expression of your commitment to a way of writing (of life-in-writing); I guess I like your brotherly concern for my own future as a writer, even if that sentiment is mostly implicit. I find little to like otherwise."

Terry Southern

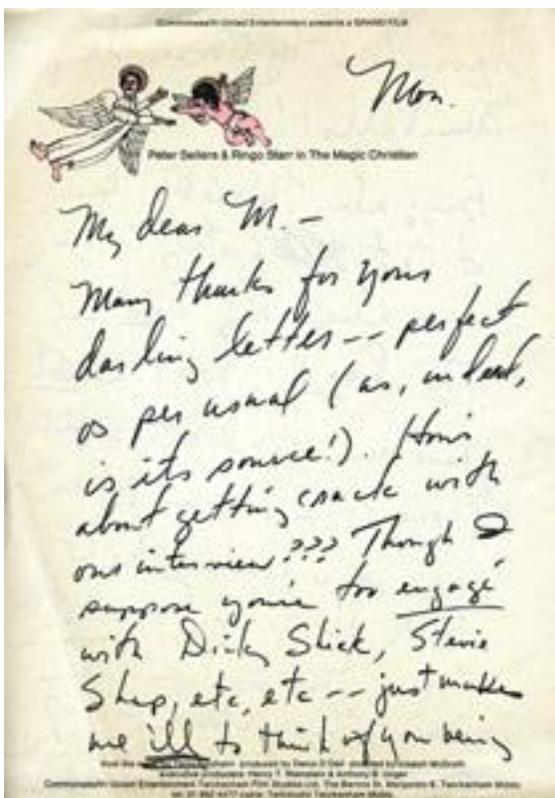
Terry Southern (1924–1995) was an American author, essayist, screenwriter. He was considered "one of America's pre-eminent satirists" and was hailed by Gore Vidal as "the most profoundly witty writer of our generation." Tom Wolfe credits him as having invented New Journalism when a 1962 article of his was published in *Esquire*. Southern's pop-icon credentials were firmly established by being included, next to Dylan Thomas and with Lenny Bruce behind him, on the Beatles 1967 *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover. His screenwriting credits include *Dr. Strangelove*, *Easy Rider*, *The Cincinnati Kid*, *Barbarella*, and *The Magic Christian*. His books include the novel *Candy* (originally published in 1958 by Olympia Press in Paris under the pseudonym Maxwell Kenton, and in 1964 in the United States), *The Magic Christian* (1959), and *Red-Dirt Marijuana and Other Tastes* (1967).

Terry Southern's correspondence with Maggie often included notes, clippings, advertisements, found material, cards, and other ephemera. The archive contains approximately 20 letters, cards and other items from Southern. In addition, there is a copy of *Red Dirt Marijuana and Other Tastes* with the inscription: "To Maggie, the perfect repeat perfect, thing with much affection and lust, Love Terry."



Terry Southern with The Beatles during the making of *The Magic Christian*. 14 x 11-inch black and white silver gelatin print, ca. 1969.

This photograph was given to Maggie by Terry.



First page of a 3-page letter to Maggie from Terry Southern, ca. 1969.

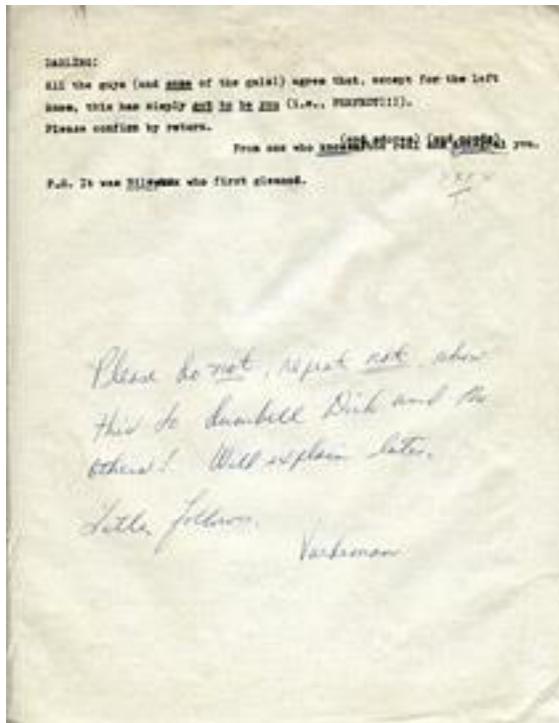
The letter is written on Magic Christian letterhead. Southern wrote the screenplay for the 1969 film adaptation based on his 1959 comic novel.



First page of a 4-page magazine article "Getting the Right Things Out of Sex"

Sent in an envelope addressed to Fab Meg Paley and postmarked January 17, 1979.

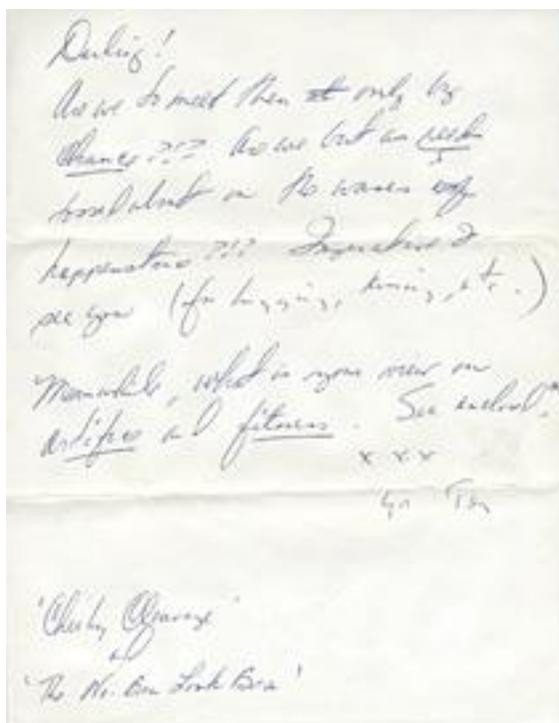
Southern added the note "Darling! Please check this out!!! xxx ooo," underlined words for emphasis and, on subsequent pages, crossed out all of the advertisements.



Left: Letter from Southern to Paley and enclosures in envelope postmarked October 27, 1970.

Southern writes, referring to the cover of *Witches' Tales*: "DARLING! All the guys (and some of the gals!) agree that, except for the left knee, this has simply got to be you (i.e., PERFECT!!!)."

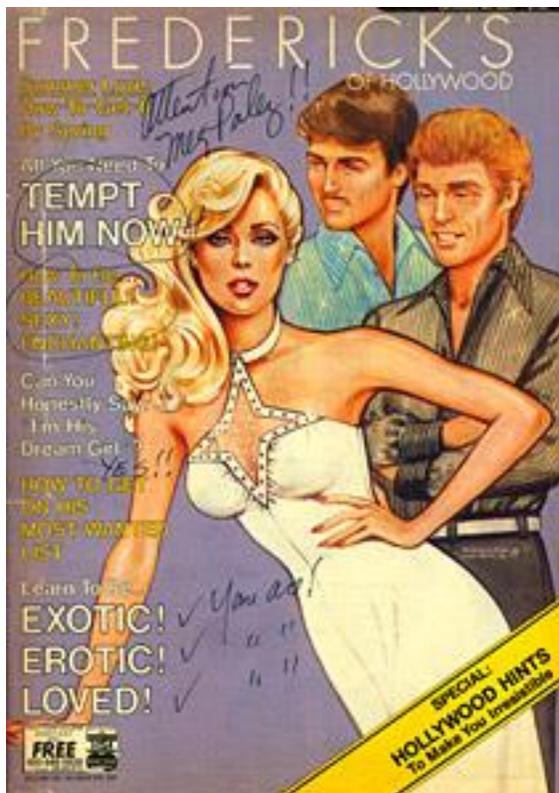
Right: Issue of *Witches' Tales* on which Southern has placed a plastic embossed tape that reads "THE PERFECT M. PALEY."



Left: Letter from Southern to Paley, postmarked February 12, 1979, that accompanied a photocopy of several ads.

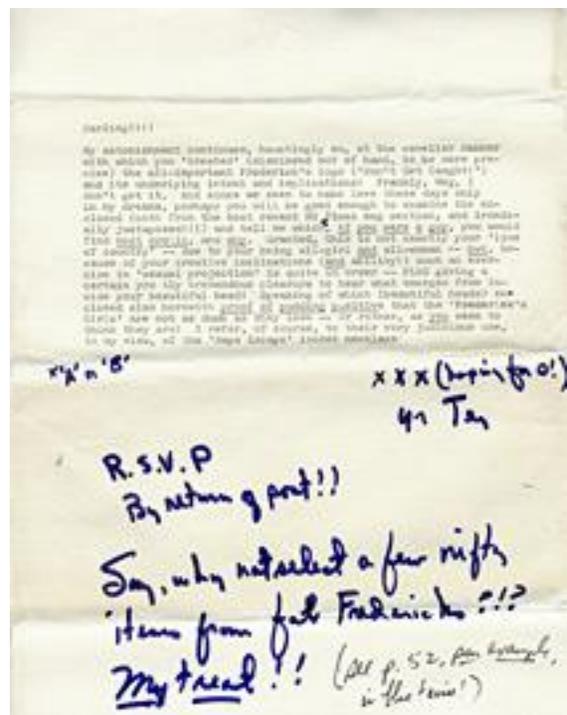
Terry asks the question "Meanwhile, what is your view on artifice and fitness."

Right: Photocopy of "Frederick's Fantastic Cheeky Cleavage" and "The Nipple Bra" sent by Southern to Maggie, February 12, 1979.



One of two *Frederick's of Hollywood* catalogs sent by Southern to Paley, July 20, 1979.

He has written notes and circled text on the cover.



Letter from Southern to Paley, August 27, 1979, which was sent with a *Frederick's of Hollywood* catalog and advertisement clippings from the *New York Times Magazine*.

Referring to the catalog, Southern writes "[E]nclosed also herewith proof of pudding positive that the 'Frederick's Girls' are not as dumb as they look – or rather, as you think they are! I refer, of course, to their very judicious use, in my view, of the 'Rape Escape' locket necklace!"



Typewritten answers from Southern to questions from Paley for an interview conducted in ca. 1969.

The interview was first published in the 200th issue of *The Paris Review*, Spring 2012.

The Paris Review

Maggie Paley has been associated with *The Paris Review* since 1963. She worked for George Plimpton doing research; reading manuscripts; managing *The Paris Review* poster program, helping to set up *The Paris Review* booth at the New York World's Fair, and helping to organize the first *Paris Review* Spring Revel at the Village Gate.

George Plimpton

George Plimpton (1927–2003) was an American writer, editor, actor, and gamesman. He is widely known for his sports writing, his work as "participatory journalist," and for being one of the founders of *The Paris Review*.

Maggie and George had a very public affair in the early 1960s. She speaks of the relationship in *George, Being George: George Plimpton's Life* (Nelson W. Aldrich, Jr., ed., 2008). The affair ended and later she "made the transition from girlfriend to assistant editor."



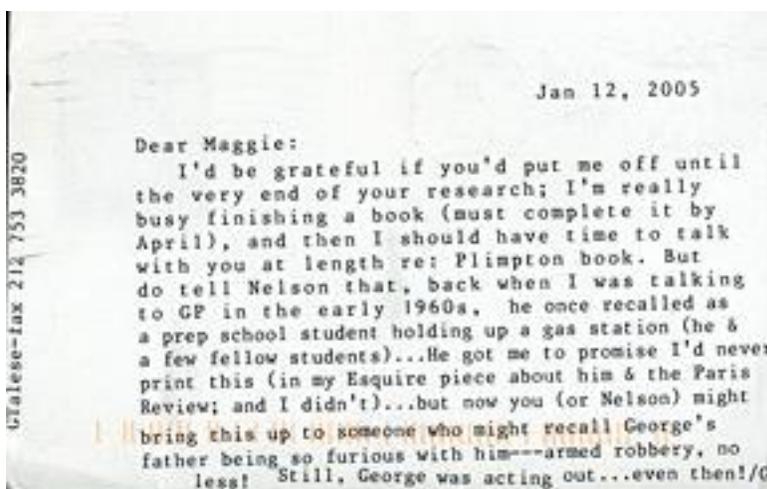
An invitation, with a Peter Max image, to the 144 Bleecker Street Cinema for the premiere of *Vali*, Sheldon and Diane Rochlin's documentary about Vali Myers and her husband Rudi Rappold, May 31, 1967.

Also on exhibit were drawings by Vali from George Plimpton's collection.



Letter from George Plimpton to Maggie explaining why he rejected Ned Rorem's writing, ca. 1966.

Plimpton writes, "It's not for us – much heavier than I expected (it reminded me of those unbearably abstruse paragraphs one reads at the Philharmonic Hall)."

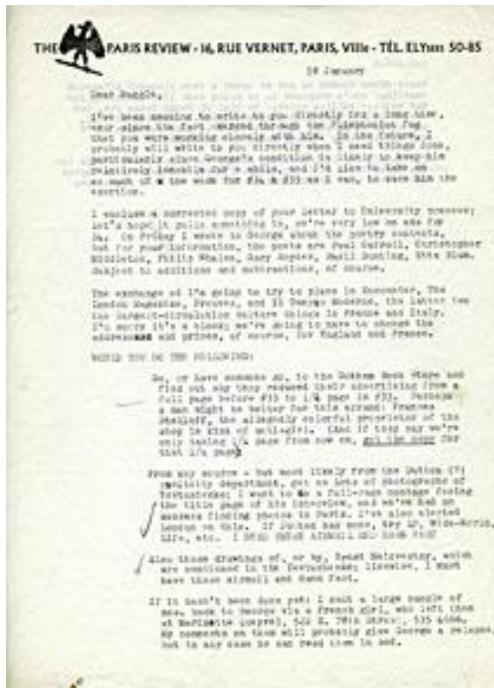


Gay Talese postcard to Maggie Paley, January 12, 2005.

Maggie was both an interviewer and interviewee for the Plimpton oral biography *George, Being George: George Plimpton's Life*. In this postcard, Gay Talese asks to have his interview delayed, but recounts a story that Plimpton told him in the early 60s, "he once recalled as a prep school student once holding up a gas station ...He got me to promise I'd never print this ...but now you (or Nelson) might bring this up ...".

Assorted Paris Review

During her years at *The Paris Review*, Maggie Paley was involved in a wide assortment of editorial activities as well as special projects.



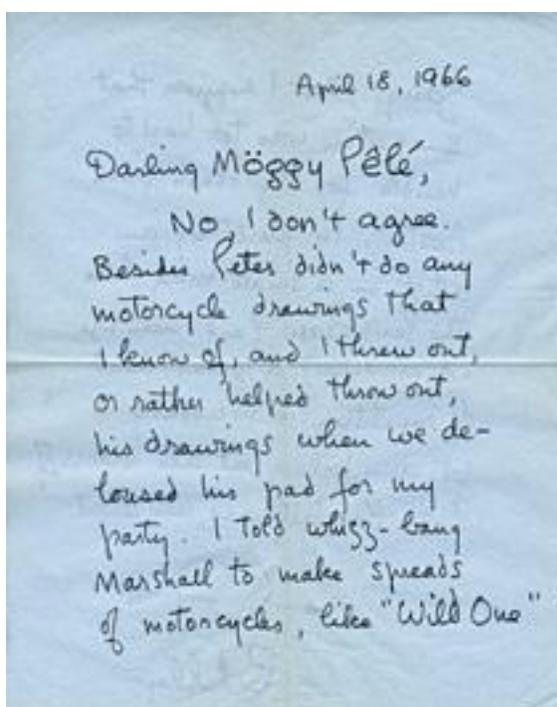
Letter from Larry Bensky (Paris editor of *The Paris Review* from 1964 – 1966) to Maggie, January 18, [1965].

In this 2-page letter to Maggie he writes, "I've been meaning to write to you directly for a long time, ever since I heard through the Plimptonian fog that you were working closely with him [George Plimpton]."



Letter from Maxine Groffsky (Paris editor of *The Paris Review* from 1966 – 1970 who played a role in *Paris Review Editions* books), October 4, [1967].

In this letter to Maggie, she writes about the "whole mess" around James Schuyler and her desire to publish him in the *Paris Review Editions*. Schuyler's *Freely Espousing* was published by *Paris Review Editions* in 1969 and in 1980 she also became his literary agent.



First page of a 2-page letter from William Pène du Bois, *The Paris Review* flyer with a photograph of April 18, 1966.

The Paris Review flyer with a photograph of the 1965 *Review* staff. Maggie is seated on the bottom row, furthest to the right.

Pène du Bois was a co-founding editor and art editor of *The Paris Review* and a well-known illustrator.



Photo contact sheet, with photographs of *The Paris Review* booth at the 1964/1965 New York World's Fair.

Maggie was one of the workers in the booth and George Plimpton can be seen in some of the shots. One of the photographs from this photo shoot was used for a *Paris Review* flyer (also in the archive).

Life Magazine, Magazine Publishing and Rock & Roll

In addition, to her work at *The Paris Review*, Maggie Paley was Managing Editor of *Status* (1966–67); Associate Articles Editor at *Saturday Evening Post* (1967–69), where she hired and worked with writers, including Lewis Lapham and Marshall McLuhan; Assistant Editor at *Life* (1967–1972), reporting and writing entertainment stories.



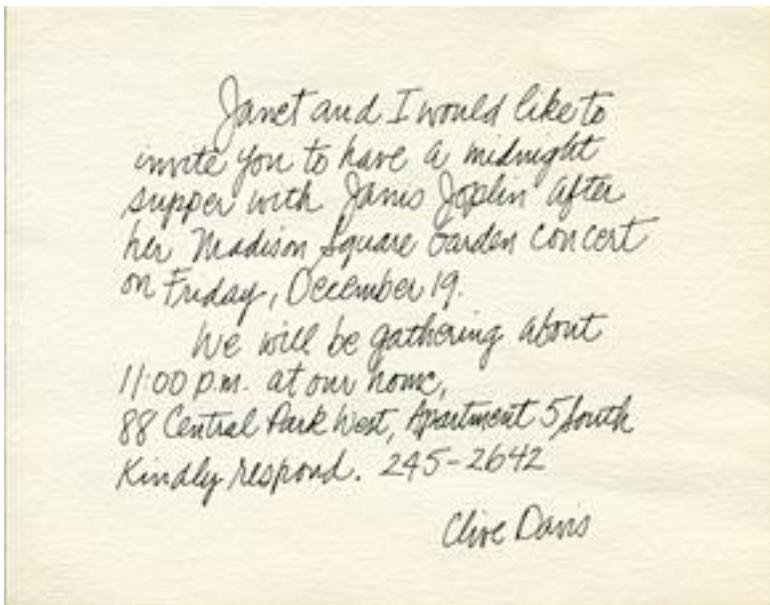
A silver gelatin print of Maggie with Stephen Stills while she was doing a story for *Life* magazine, ca. 1971.

Also in the archive are transcripts of the interview with Stills and a transcription of Maggie's notes.



A silver gelatin print of Maggie (in sunglasses) in the back of the Delaney & Bonnie and Friends tour bus.

Maggie's story for *Life* was never published. Also included in the archive are manuscripts of the unpublished article.



Invitation from Clive Davis "to have a midnight supper with Janis Joplin after her Madison Square Garden concert on Friday, December 19, [1969].



A silver gelatin print of Maggie (in sunglasses) and singer Laura Nyro walking down the street.

Maggie was writing a story on Nyro for *Life* which was published January 30, 1970. The archive also contains transcripts of the interviews with Nyro.



Color photograph, Maggie Paley interviewing Elliott Gould on a movie set.

Her *Life* magazine article was published December 12, 1969.



A silver gelatin print by Lawrence Fried of Diana Vreeland speaking with Mick Jagger at his birthday party.

This was one of nine photographs of the celebration given to Maggie by her father when he was an editor at *Parade*.



A Lawrence Fried silver gelatin print of Bob Dylan and Zsa Zsa Gabor taken at Mick Jagger's birthday celebration.



Letter from Lewis Lapham, ca.1969.

Maggie was Lewis Lapham's editor at the *Saturday Evening Post*, and according to her a "flirtatious friendship ensued."

He writes to Maggie "I don't think any of us (I'm thinking of you and me and Kenward Elmslie) like the idea of working for Life, but who else can pay Bloomingdale's and BOAC? I imagine walking into a building crowded with Washington correspondents talking about responsibility and the state of the nation. Kenward worries they might send him to Biafra or Key Biscayne; both places seem to him incomprehensible and dangerous."



A photo for the "Vintage Fashion" spread, with models Robin Morgan, Alix Elias, Maggie Paley, and an unidentified woman, for *Status* magazine, ca. 1966.

Original silver gelatin print by Richard Davis. 17 x 14 inches.

Maggie Paley was the Managing Editor of *Status* magazine, 1966–67. In addition to hiring and editing writers she produced picture stories including fashion spreads.



A photo for the "Gangster Fashion" spread, with models Jules Feiffer, Jack Gelber, Jack Richardson, John Gruen, Richard C. Neuweiler, and Sondra Lee, for *Status* magazine, ca. 1966.

Original silver gelatin print by Richard Davis. 4 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches.

Maggie Paley's large circle of friends and associates encompassed many of the writers, composers and artists of the New York School.

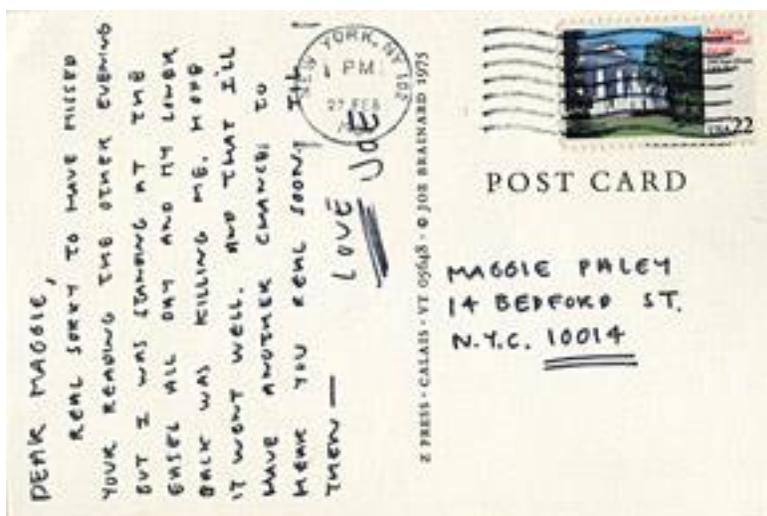


Flyer for a Bill Berkson and Kenward Elmslie reading at New York University Loeb Student Center, December 7, 1969. The photo for the flyer is by Joe Brainard.

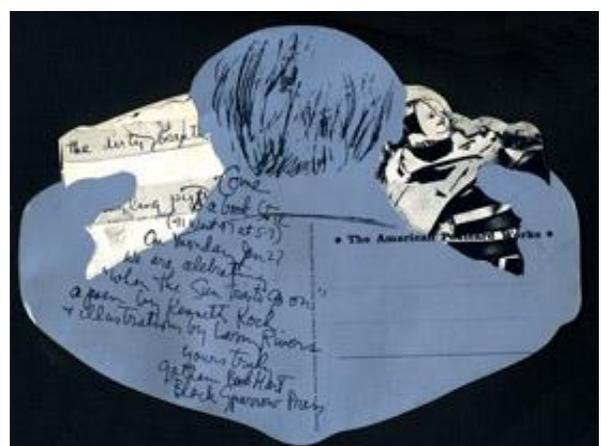


First page of a 5-page stapled announcement for a Bill Berkson and Joe Brainard reading at the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church, May 21, 1969.

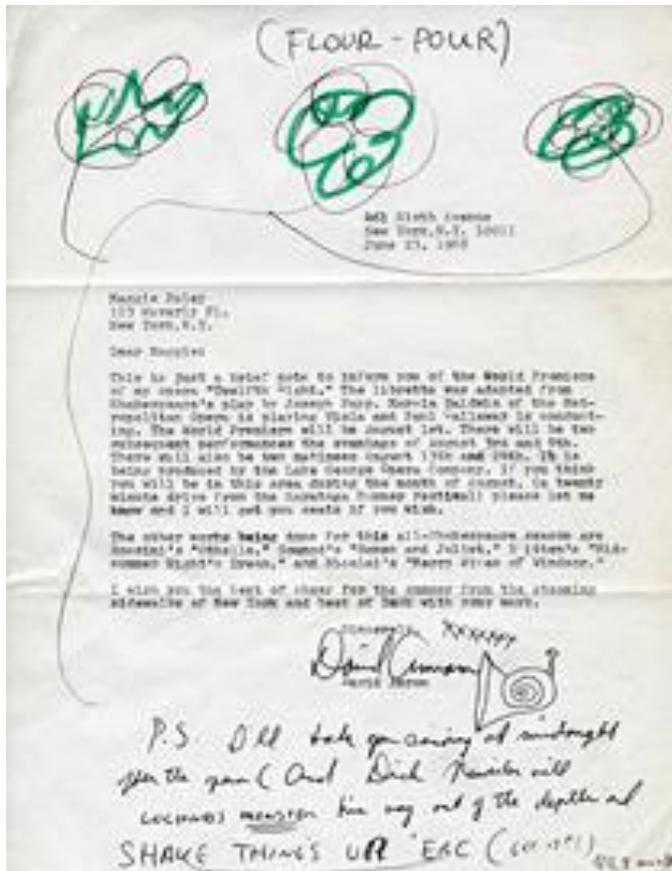
There is additional correspondence from both Berkson and Elmslie in the archive.



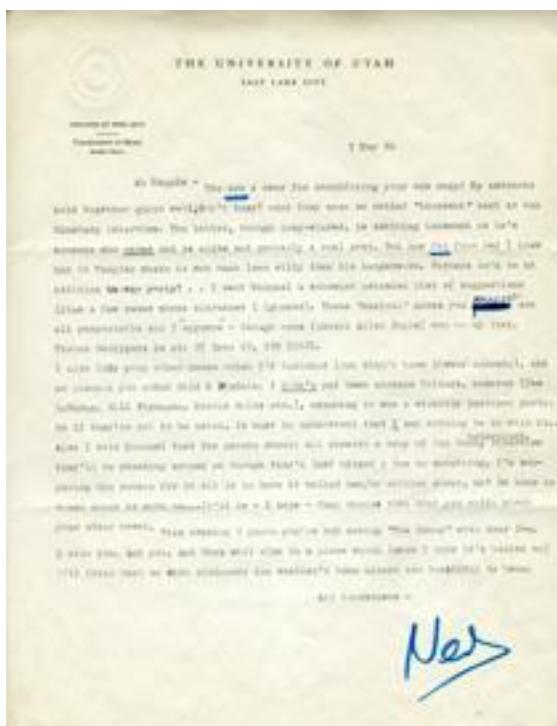
Postcard from Joe Brainard, February 27, 1986.



Front and back of a die-cut postcard designed by Larry Rivers for the Gotham Book Mart book launch of Koch's book, *The Sun Tries to Go On*, illustrated by Rivers, January 27, 1969.



Letter from David Amram, inviting Maggie to the world premiere of *Twelfth Night*, with a libretto by Joseph Papp, June 23, 1968.



Letter from Ned Rorem, May 7, 1966.

Rorem writes of having his "Paris Diaries" published alongside Allen Ginsberg in *The Paris Review*, Spring 1966. "My extracts held together quite well, don't they? – and they seem rather "innocent" next to the Ginsberg interview. The latter, though long-winded, is exciting inasmuch as he is someone who cares and is alive and probably a real poet. But how far from me. I knew him in Tangiers where he was much less silly than his hangers-on. Perhaps he'd be an addition to our party?"



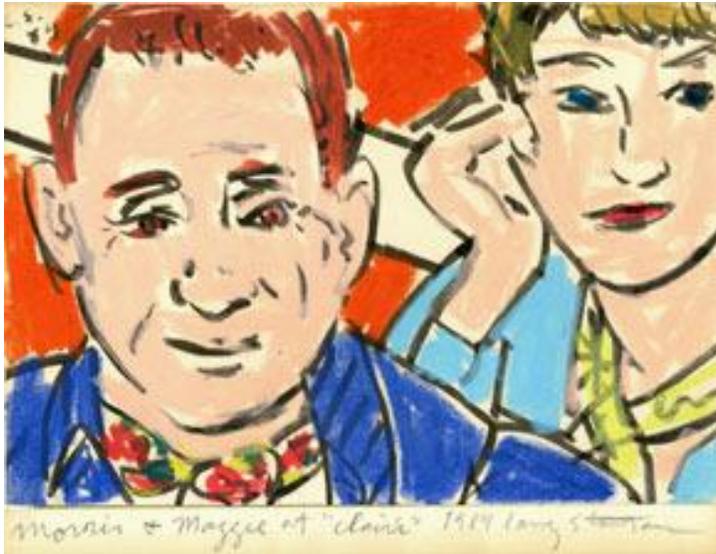
Letter from Ned Rorem, February 23, 1966.

In the letter he asks Maggie "If you're able to locate that glamorously amusing photo of you and Robin Morgan (with brimmed hats and net stockings) taken around 1965 for one of those slick magazines you were working for [see photo elsewhere in this prospectus], I could probably have it reproduced in a book."

Morris Golde

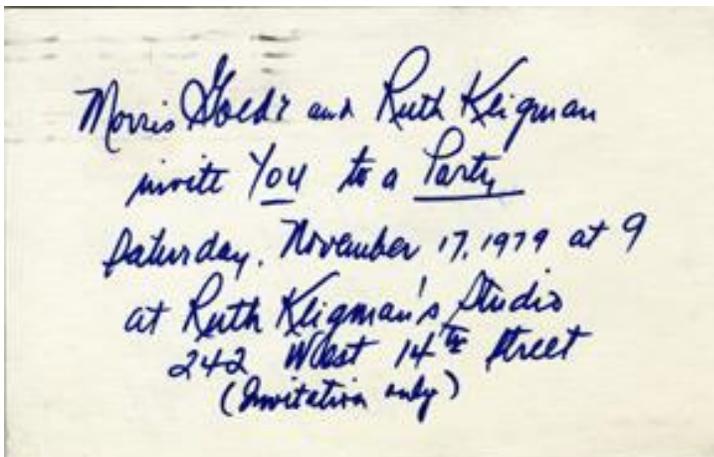
Maggie was a longtime friend of businessman Morris Golde. Known as a passionate friend of the arts, Golde was a supporter of arts schools, including Juilliard, the Harlem School of the Arts and the Greenwich House Music School, as well as of arts organizations, including the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Poetry Project of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery. He also gave support to friends, including the composer Ned Rorem, the poet John Ashbery, the dancer Erick Hawkins, the composer Virgil Thomson and the poet Frank O'Hara. (O'Hara was staying at Golde's summer house on Fire Island in 1966 when he was run over by a beach buggy and killed.)

There are three folders with Golde correspondence and other items. In addition, there are three folders of items related to the planning of Golde's 2001 memorial, including copies of some of the eulogies, and legal documents related to Maggie being named in Golde's will.



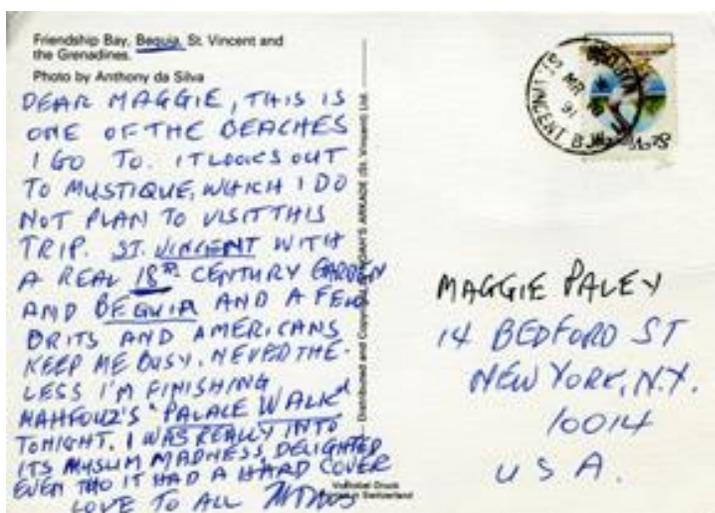
Original Larry Stanton artwork.
5 ¾ x 4 inch drawing with colored pencils of Morris Golde and Maggie Paley, signed by the artist and titled "Morris & Maggie at 'Clair's' 1984," in a 7 x 5-inch plastic frame.

Larry Stanton lived in New York until he died of AIDS at the age of 37 in 1984. The book *Larry Stanton: Painting and Drawing* (Twelvetrees Press, 1986) included essays by David Hockney, Henry Geldzahler, and Tim Dlugos.



An invitation to a party thrown by Morris Golde and Ruth Kligman, November 17, 1979.

Ruth Kligman was a writer and artist. She was also known as a muse for Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning.



Postcard from Morris Golde sent from Bequia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, March 18, 1991.

Golde had just finished reading Naguib Mahfouz's *Palace Walk* and wrote "I was really into its Muslim madness, delighted even tho it had a hard cover."

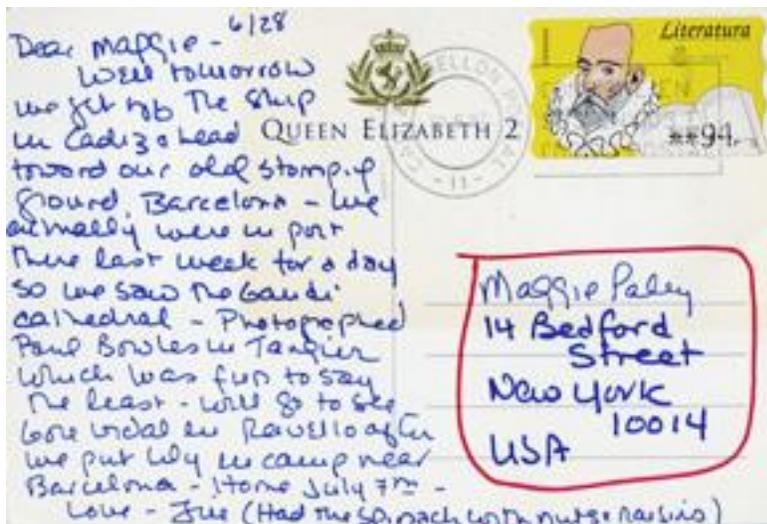
Other friends and activities



First page of a 2-page manuscript "On Anger" by Rachel Hadas. The manuscript was enclosed with a 3-page handwritten letter, September 11, 1983.

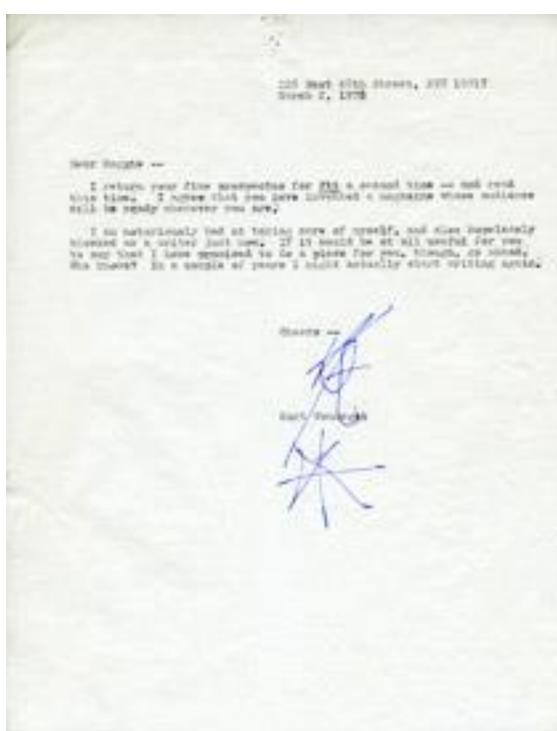
The poem is "to Maggie" and inscribed "love, Rachel."

There are a total of 16 folders of correspondence and manuscripts from Rachel Hadas dated 1976 – 1992 included in the archive.

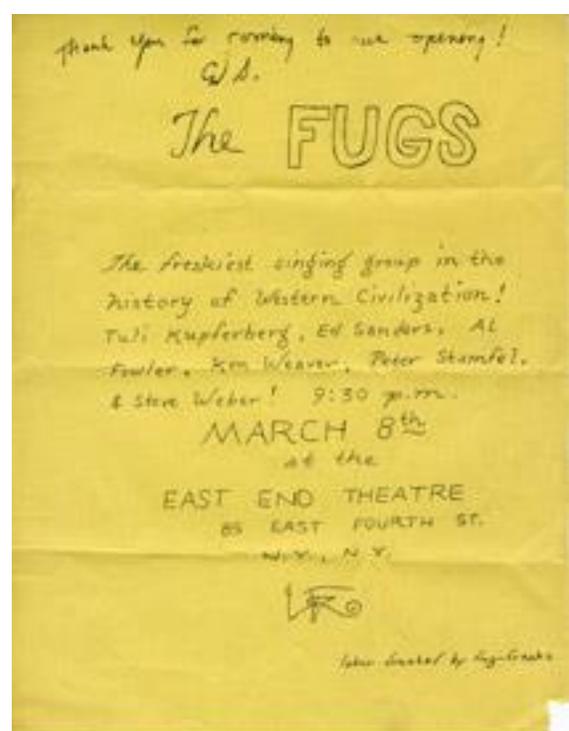


Postcard from Jill Kremetz, dated June 28, 1997.

Kremetz writes of her visit to Tangiers (with her husband Kurt Vonnegut) and of photographing Paul Bowles.



Letter from Kurt Vonnegut, dated March 2, 1978.



Flyer for The Fugs at East End Theater, March 8, 1965.

This letter was a response to Maggie having sent Vonnegut a prospectus for *Fit* magazine. Vonnegut writes, "I am notoriously bad at taking care of myself, and hopelessly blocked as a writer just now."

This was The Fugs third gig. The flyer is inscribed by Ed Sanders, "Thank you for coming to our opening!"



Flyer for the "Confront the Whoremakers" event outside of the Bridal Fair at Madison Square Garden, by W.I.T.C.H., February 15, [1969].

Summary of the Maggie Paley Archive

Series I: Correspondence

Including ephemera from John Ashbery, Tina Barney, Gerald Busby, Judith Crist (3 folders), Douglas Dunn, Kenward Elmslie, Morris Golde (5 folders), Brad Gooch, Rachel Hadas (16 folders), Gerrit Henry, Kenneth Koch, Jill Kremetz, Lewis Lapham, Joseph McElroy, Gerard Malanga, Harry Mathews, Eileen Myles, Grace Paley, Darragh Park, Ned Rorem (7 folders), Armand Schwerner, Terry Souther, Larry Stanton, Gay Talese, and Kurt Vonnegut. Correspondence and ephemera from George Plimpton, Lewis Lapham, William Pène du Bois, Larry Bensky, Candace Bergen, Elliott Gould, Maxine Grofsky, and others can be found in Series III.

Series II: Harry Mathews

Series II: Harry Mathews: Subseries A) Correspondence

Series II: Harry Mathews: Subseries B) Manuscripts

Series II: Harry Mathews: Subseries C) Assorted

Series III: Writing and Publishing

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries A) The Paris Review—Correspondence

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries B) The Paris Review—Assorted

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries C) Saturday Evening Post—Assorted

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries D) Life and Time Magazines—Correspondence

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries E) Life and Time Magazines—Writings

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries F) Books

Series III: Writing and Publishing: Subseries G) Other Magazines and Writing

Series IV: Photographs

Series V: Ephemera

Series VI: Assorted

Total of 16 boxes, approximately 20 linear feet.