Abstract: In this collection of nineteen letters, American poet Walter Lowenfels wrote to his editor Allen De Loach, praising him for recent editorial work on Lowenfels's autobiography and discussing his writing and the work of other poets, particularly Walt Whitman and "poets of old age."
# Descriptive Summary

**Identification:** MSS 099, F870  
**Creator:** Lowenfels, Walter, 1897-1976.  
**Title:** Walter Lowenfels letters to Allen De Loach  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1965-1970  
**Bulk Dates:** 1968-1970  
**Extent:** 20 items (27 p.)  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

# Administrative Information

**Citation:** MSS 099, F870, Walter Lowenfels letters to Allen De Loach, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.  
**Shelving Summary:** Box 61, F870: Shelved in SPEC MSS 0099 manuscript boxes  
**Location:** Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: [http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/](http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/)  
**Source:** Purchase, April 2010.  
**Processing:** Processed and encoded by Anita Wellner, July 2010.  
**Access Restrictions:** The collection is open for research.  
**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction:** Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law. Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library, [http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi](http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi)
Biographical Notes

Walter Lowenfels

American poet, anthologist, and social critic Walter Lowenfels wrote poetry that reflected social commentary and political thought.

For a number of years, Lowenfels edited the Communist Daily Worker. Based on his membership in the Communist Party, Lowenfels was convicted in 1954 for conspiring to teach and advocate the overthrow of the U.S. Government by force. The verdict was later overturned when party membership was ruled not to be conspiratorial in nature.

Lowenfels has been recognized as an anthologist of avant-garde poetry, including Where is Vietnam?, a 1967 compilation of the poetic responses to the Vietnam War. This anthology and his editorial contributions to the anti-war publication Dialog, reflected his own anti-Vietnam War convictions.

Born May 10, 1897, in New York City, Lowenfels died on July 7, 1976, in Tarrytown, New York. He was married to Lillian Apotheker.

Allen De Loach

American editor, publisher, and writer Allen De Loach, who edited Walter Lowenfels book, We Are All Poets Really (1968), was also Lowenfels's literary executor and friend. De Loach's primary interest was social history but other interests included the poetics of the Beats and Black Mountain poets, ethnoPoetics, Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams.

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

In this collection of nineteen letters, American poet Walter Lowenfels wrote to his editor Allen De Loach, praising him for recent editorial work on Lowenfels's autobiography and discussing his writing and the work of other poets, particularly Walt Whitman and "poets of old age."

These letters were written between 1965 and 1970, a period when the two worked on several projects, including De Loach's editing of *We Are All Poets Really*, and several volumes of Lowenfels's autobiography. Lowenfels referred to his autobiography as the "Premature Inquest," and in several of the letters he discussed De Loach's editorial work on the manuscripts. The manuscripts occasionally served as an impetus for reflection on the development of his poetic style or reminiscences on his experiences in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s.

Lowenfels wrote about the other writers he knew, such as those from his Paris days, namely Henry Miller, T. S. Eliot, and Victor Fraenkel. He also mentioned other poets such as Denise Levertov, Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, and Ezra Pound. He was especially interested in "poets of old age," which is what he considered himself.

Occasionally Lowenfels alluded to his political views and the lack of support from the political left for his writing. His letters suggest that his commitment to including social criticism and political perspective in his poetry and other writing was unflagging.
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

De Loach, Allen--Correspondence.
Lowenfels, Walter, 1897-1976--Correspondence.

Corporate Names

Communist Party of the United States of America.

Topical Terms

African American poets--20th century--Correspondence.
American poetry--20th century--Correspondence.

Form/Genre Terms

Correspondence.

Occupation

Poets.

Personal Contributors

De Loach, Allen, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository

This item forms part of MSS 099 Miscellaneous Literary and Historical Manuscripts.
MSS 207 University Place Book Shop papers
Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.
**Detailed Description of the Collection**

Typed letter signed, 1965 March 13 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (1 p.)
This brief letter regarded publications and "Phil Kaplan's question."

Typed letter signed, 1965 July 3 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (1 p.)
A brief letter in which Lowenfels mentioned a Dialog symposium on Whitman and inquired about a copy of a typescript De Loach was to send.

Typed letter signed, 1968 January 11 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (1 p.)
This letter regarded Lowenfels response to reading *We Are All Poets Really* and his own poetry.

Typed letter signed, 1968 January 30 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (1 p.)
A brief letter which discussed the printing "Elegy" and "Premature Inquest" (Lowenfels' autobiography).

Typed letter signed, 1968 February 22 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (1 p.)
A brief letter which mentioned typos in print, a letter of his published in the Irish Statesman in 1930, and Lillian's reading and approval of "Premature Inquest."

Typed letter signed, with envelope, 1968 March 7 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (2 p.)
Extensive two-page, single-spaced letter in which Lowenfels offered comments on a recent draft of Lowenfels' autobiography, including his thoughts on use of "letters" in writing.

Typed letter signed, 1968 May 5 [Box 61 F870]
1 item (1 p.)
This brief letter, typed on a sheet, bears a previously handwritten statement: "We are all poets at heart. The fact is I am a very bad one most of the time. My only virtue is the fact that I am able to correct myself," which Lowenfels indicated was the origin of the phrase which became, "We are all poets really."
In this letter Lowenfels commented on the feeling of "fragility of coming and going and parting" after having visited with De Loach recently.

A brief undated note in which Lowenfels mentioned working on his autobiography as he approached the age of 72.

In this brief note Lowenfels asked De Loach to write an introduction to volume three of Lowenfels' autobiography.

In this letter Lowenfels inquired about De Loach's projects and mentioned one of his current projects, a book on Walt Whitman.

A letter in which Lowenfels mentioned Francis Hugot and Alan Trachtenberg and inquired about De Loach's projects.

This letter written by Lowenfels to Francois Hugot was mentioned in Lowenfels's October 5, 1969, letter to De Loach. The letter has a brief signed note to De Loach on the top and is a reflection on his life as a series of "youths." Lowenfels remarked that he was in his "final youth" and "all my friends are young poets in their 20s and 30s."

Lowenfels noted that when he was working on his Whitman book and he came across the phrase, "he never developed as a poet of old age." He continued by suggesting that he has kept up his poetry and further, "Eliot didn't, neither did Pound (in my judgement), but William Carlos Williams also maintained a very high level to the end." And as a postscript, "Michelangelo kept it up to about 90."
In this long and intimate letter Lowenfels wrote of his difficulties in promoting his work and expressed disappointment that his work wasn't even available in the Communist bookstores, saying that, "it still hurts that your own political family wouldn't put one book in the window to claim me for their own." He also discussed Whitman as entrepreneur of his own work.

Lowenfels discussed poetic technique, surrealism, Denise Levertov, and Henry Miller. Of Miller he stated, "Doesn't Miller relate to the letter tradition too? His Tropics and black Spring were originally typed in five carbons that he sent to friends (including me) ... " The letter was in an envelope postmarked March 4, 1970.

Lowenfels discussed his 1929 work, *Reality Prime*, the political environment of the 1930s, poets involvement in the anti-fascist movement, and his and Lillian's participation in street demonstrations. Enclosed with the letter is half-page essay on the poetry of the Avant Garde.

This is a photocopy of a brief essay written by Lowenfels regarding the poetry of the Avant Garde.

Lowenfels discussed an anthology on which he was working titled, "Who Is Lenin: Americans Respond," as well as his idea of the "poet's view of the universe."

Brief undated note stating: "PS Biog arrived! Thanks."