Ford, Charles Henri.

Charles Henri Ford papers related to *Om Krishna II*  
1966-1981  
(bulk dates 1979-1981)

Abstract: These letters from American poet Charles Henri Ford (and others) to publishers Charles and Pamela Plymell concern publication plans for Ford's *Om Krishna II* (Cherry Valley Editions, 1981). In addition to Ford's letters there are single letters from Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, Nepalese artist Indra Tamang, bookbinder Alan Brilliant, writer Ed Germain, and the Plymells. A draft typescript of *Om Krishna II*, a book cover for the limited edition title, and biographical information about Ford are also contained in the collection.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 294
Creator: Ford, Charles Henri.
Title: Charles Henri Ford papers related to *Om Krishna II*
Bulk Dates: 1979-1981
Extent: 42 items (1 box and oversized removals)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 294, Charles Henri Ford papers related to *Om Krishna II*, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch); F4 (removal): Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (32 inch)

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/


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Biographical Notes

Charles Henri Ford

Poet, artist, filmmaker, and editor Charles Henri Ford was regarded as America's first surrealist poet.

Charles Henri Ford was born on February 10, 1908, in Hazelhurst, Mississippi. In 1929, having dropped out of high school, Ford began his literary career as co-editor, with Parker Tyler, of *Blues: a magazine of new rhythms* (1929-1930). The magazine showcased the new schools of modern art and literature, publishing such contemporary writers as Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Erskine Caldwell, Ezra Pound, and e. e. cummings.

By 1931 Charles Henri Ford had left the United States for France and began his world travels. During his first few years abroad, Ford wrote his only novel, *The Young and the Evil* (Obelisk, 1933). Later Ford lived in Morocco, Italy, France, Crete, and New York City; and his poetry, films, and artwork reflected his international travels and multicultural experiences.

From 1940 until 1947, Ford was editor and publisher of both the little magazine *View* and of *View Editions*. Published in New York, *View* featured the works of avant-garde American and European artists and writers, especially the surrealist artists.

*View*, recognized as one of the most important little magazines of the 1940s, bore covers designed by such artists as Man Ray, René Magritte, Marcel Duchamp, and Alexander Calder, and contained the prose, fiction, critical essays, stories, and art of Wallace Stevens, Edouard Roditi, Max Ernst, Lincoln Kirstein, William Carlos Williams, Paul Bowles, James T. Farrell, Marc Chagall, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus.

In addition to his editorial achievements, Charles Henri Ford was a recognized poet and an accomplished artist. Since his first book of poetry, *A Pamphlet of Sonnets* (Caravel Press, 1936), more than fifteen collections of his poems have been published.

Charles Henri Ford was also a graphic artist, filmmaker, and photographer. His photography, paintings, and drawings were exhibited in London, Paris, and New York; and frequently included collaborations with international craftsmen. For example, *The Kathmandu Experience* (New York Cultural Center, 1975) included sculptures in wood and embroideries in silk and appliques, all executed by Nepalese craftsmen from Ford's original designs; and his *An Operation Minotaur Manifestation* (The October Gallery, 1976) included the collages of Nepalese artists Reepak Shakya and Indra Tamang.

Ford's motion pictures included *Poem Posters* (1966), which received the Fourth International Avant-Garde Film Festival Award in 1966, and *Johnny Minotaur* (1972).

Charles Henri Ford died September 27, 2002, in New York City.

Charles and Pamela Plymell

Poet and publisher Charles Plymell was born April 26, 1935, in Holcomb, Kansas. He attended Wichita State University (1955-1961) and in 1970 received a Master of Arts degree from Johns Hopkins University. In 1966 Plymell married Pamela Beach, who has assisted him in the publication of Cherry Valley Editions.

In addition to Cherry Valley Editions, Plymell has published several magazines, including *Poet's Corner* (1959), *Mikrokosmos* (1959), *Now* (1963-1965), *The Last Times* (1967), and *Bulletin from Nothing*.

Having lived with Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady in San Francisco during the early 1960s, Charles Plymell and his poetry have been identified with the Beat Generation. Some of his poetry was published in Beat journals and by Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s City Lights Books. His first collection of poems, *Dreams of Straw*, was published in 1963.

Sources:


Biographical information is also derived from this collection.
Scope and Content Note

These letters from American poet Charles Henri Ford (and others) to Charles and Pamela Plymell primarily concern publication plans for Ford's *Om Krishna II* (Cherry Valley Editions, 1981). In addition to Ford's letters there are single letters from Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, Nepalese artist Indra Tamang, bookbinder Alan Brilliant, writer Ed Germain, and the Plymells. A draft typescript of *Om Krishna II*, a book cover for the limited-edition title, and biographical information about Ford are also contained in the collection.

In his letters to the Plymells, Ford referred to his current literary projects, including *Blues 10, Om Krishna I and III, Double Exposures*, and a *Blues* anthology. However, most of the letters focus on the publication details and financing for *Om Krishna II*, which the Plymells were editing for publication in their Cherry Valley Editions. Ford wrote about proofs, financial arrangements, the binding of different editions, and the number of copies to be printed. In addition, Ford discussed royalties, travel plans, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, exhibitions of his work, such as *Layouts and Camouflages*, and his film *Johnny Minotaur*.

Ford's letters contain several enclosures, including a list of authors and their work titled "Best in Blues 1-9," a list of contributors for *Blues 10*, and a typescript colophon and dedication for *Om Krishna II*.

Many of Ford's letters were written on the verso of photocopies of announcements or reviews of Ford's work, collages of images (including pictures of Ford), or poems and photographs by Ford. The poems are titled "A Tent of Camel's Hair in Arabia," "Farm Building in Ohio," and "Houses on Stilts in Manilla." The verso of one letter is a poster for Ford's exhibition, "Poem Posters Charles Henri Ford," at the Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery in New York (1965). Some of the postcards bear mini collages created by Ford by affixing images, clippings, words, and/or designs to the cards.

All but one of other letters in the collection were written to the Plymells. Allen Ginsberg declined a request from the Plymells for money, possibly to partially finance the *Om Krishna II* project. Alan Brilliant wrote to Pam Plymell, offering options for binding various editions of *Om Krishna II*. Indra Tamang, who designed the collage illustration for the deluxe edition of *Om Krishna II*, sent New Year's greetings on a photocopy of a collage which he created.

Only Ed Germain's letter was written to Ford and concerned editing an anthology of *Blues* (which was never published).

Series II consists of a typescript draft of *Om Krishna II*, which bears autograph corrections and revisions. The draft included a final poem which was not included in the published version, as well as a cover for the limited edition of this title.

Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Ford, Charles Henri--Correspondence.
Plymell, Charles--Correspondence.
Plymell, Pamela--Correspondence.
Ginsberg, Allen, 1926-1997--Correspondence.
Brilliant, Alan--Correspondence.
Tamang, Indra--Correspondence.
Germain, Edward B.--Correspondence.

Corporate Names

Cherry Valley Editions.

Topical Terms

American poets--20th century--Correspondence.
Publishers and publishing--United States--20th century--Correspondence.
American poetry--20th century--Correspondence.

Form/Genre Terms

Correspondence.
Clippings (information artifacts)
Brochures.
Postcards.
Collages (visual works)
Typescripts.
Announcements.
Colophons (parts of books)
Posters.
Occupation

Poets.

Publishers.

Personal Contributors

Plymell, Charles.

Plymell, Pamela.


Related Materials in this Repository

MSS 292, Charles Henri Ford letters to Ted Joans
Arrangement

I. Correspondence, 1979-1981
II. *Om Krishna II*, 1979-1981
II. Biographical information, 1966-1976
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. Correspondence, 1979-1981 42 items

All letters are from Charles Henri Ford and to the Plymells unless otherwise noted and are arranged in chronological order.

Typed letter signed, 1979 July 31 [Box 1 F1]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with enclosure, 1979 September 12 [Box 1 F1]
2 items (3 p.)
Enclosed with the letter was a typed list titled "Best of Blues 1-9." On the verso of the letter is a handwritten list of contributors for Blues 10 and an autograph note on the bottom of the page: "copy to Kay Boyle May 6, 1979."

Autograph postcard signed, 1979 November 15 [Box 1 F1]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1979 November 19 [Box 1 F1]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1979 December 7 [Box 1 F1]
1 item (1 p.)
The image on the postcard is of Charles Henri Ford.

Autograph postcard signed, 1979 December 13 [Box 1 F1]
1 item (1 p.)
Postcard has a clipping attached.

Autograph letter signed with enclosure, 1979 December 29 [Box 1 F1]
2 items (3 p.)
The verso of page one is an announcement for reprints of View. The verso of page two is a photocopy image by Ford. Enclosed with Ford's letters is a signed New Year's greeting from Indra Tamang.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 January 3 [Box 1 F2]
1 item (1 p.)
The verso of the letter is a photocopy image of Ford.

Autograph letter signed, [1980 January] [Box 1 F2]
1 item (2 p.)
The verso of page one is a photocopy review of a postcard exhibition by Ford. The verso of page two is a photocopy of a letter from the University of Texas Library Humanities Research Center to Ford.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 February 25 [Box 1 F2]
1 item (3 p.)
The verso of each page bears a photocopied poem and a related photograph created by Ford.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 March 2 [Box 1 F2]
1 item (1 p.)
On the verso of the letter is a mimeographed announcement for a run of Ford's film "Johnny Minotaur at The Performing Garage."

Autograph letter signed with enclosure, 1980 March 15 [Box 1 F2]
2 items (4 p.)
Enclosed with the letter is a letter from Alan Brilliant to Pam Plymell.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 April 13 [Box 1 F2]
1 item (2 p.)

Autograph letter signed, 1980 April 25 [Box 1 F2]
1 item (2 p.)

Autograph letter signed, 1980 May 12 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)

Photocopy of Ed Germain letter to Ford, 1980 May 20 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (2 p.)
This copy may have been enclosed with a letter from Ford to the Plymells.
Autograph letter signed, 1980 May 30 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (2 p.)

Typed letter signed with enclosures, 1980 May 31 [Box 1 F3]
3 items (3 p.)
Enclosed are a typescript colophon and a dedication for *Om Krishna II*.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 June 19 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)

Plymell note to Ford, 1980 June 24 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)
This is a carbon copy of an autograph note from the Plymells to Ford regarding proofs for *Om Krishna II*.

Autograph postcard signed, 1980 June 25 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)
The verso of this postcard has an image pasted to it.

Typed letter signed, 1980 July 24 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1980 August 22 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)

Allen Ginsberg autograph letter signed to Charles Plymell, 1980 September 3 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)
The letter was written on the verso of an announcement for a COSMEP Writers and Publishers Conference in 1980.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 October 1 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (2 p.)

Typed letter signed, 1980 October 22 [Box 1 F3]
### Series I.

1 item (1 p.)

**Autograph postcard signed, 1980 November 1** [Box 1 F3]

1 item (1 p.)

**Autograph letter signed, 1981 January 24** [Box 1 F4]

1 item (2 p.)

The letter was written on the verso of an oversized poster announcing the 1965 exhibition, "Poem Posters Charles Henri Ford," held in New York City.

**Tom Brown letter to Cherry Valley Editions, 1981 February 25** [Box 1 F4]

1 item (1 p.)

**Autograph postcard signed, 1981 March 8** [Box 1 F4]

1 item (1 p.)

### Series II. *Om Krishna II*, 1979-1981 2 item (88 p.)

Manuscript and cover for the book.

**Typescript, [1979-1980]** [Box 1 F5]

1 item (87 p.)

The typescript includes 87 typed pages (missing pages 31 and 60) with autograph corrections, which were incorporated into the published text. This draft included a final poem which was not published in the final edition. Orange wrapper bears the autograph title and Ford's initials. See F3 for a colophon and dedication.

**Printed cloth cover, [1980-1981]** [Box 1 F6]

1 item (1 p.)

### Series III. Biographical information, [1966-1976] 3 items (3 p.)

**Biographical information, [1966-1976]** [Box 1 F7]

3 items (3 p.)

Includes an announcement for Ford's Spare Parts, a review of work by Ford in The Soho Weekly News, and "Charles Henri Ford: biographical sketch."