Wilson, Robert A. (Robert Alfred), 1922-

Robert A. Wilson - Marianne Moore collection
1925-1997
(bulk dates 1950-1977)

Abstract: The Robert A. Wilson - Marianne Moore collection comprises .6 linear feet of material spanning the dates between 1925 and 1997 and includes correspondence to and from American poet Marianne Moore, the majority of which was written to Phoenix Book Shop proprietor Robert A. Wilson; works by and about Moore; newspaper clippings, photographs, pamphlets, broadsheets, and invitations documenting aspects of Moore’s career and public appearances; audio recordings; and realia.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 641
Creator: Wilson, Robert A. (Robert Alfred), 1922-
Title: Robert A. Wilson - Marianne Moore collection
Inclusive Dates: 1925-1997
Bulk Dates: 1950-1977
Extent: 1 linear foot (3 boxes) and oversize removals
Language: Materials in English and French.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 641, Robert A. Wilson - Marianne Moore collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Boxes 1-2: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (3 inches); Box 3: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch); Box 4: Shelved in SPEC MSS shoeboxes; Box 5: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (18 inches); Removals: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (24 inches); Removals: Shelved in SPEC Media audio recordings

Location: Special Collections, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/

Source: Purchases and gifts from Robert Wilson, 2008-2011.

Processing: Processed and encoded by Julia Pompetti, June 2011.

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, University of Delaware Library, http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi
Biographical Notes

Marianne Moore

American poet and editor Marianne Moore (1887-1972) is best known for her modernist style, use of syllabics, and her love for baseball and strange animals, which were often topics of her poetry. Moore served as the editor of the literary magazine *The Dial* from 1925 to 1929.

Moore was born in 1887 and was raised solely by her mother; her father had been committed to a mental hospital for a nervous breakdown before her birth. She attended Bryn Mawr College, graduated in 1909, and went on to teach at the U.S. Industrial Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the New York City Library in Manhattan before her success as a poet allowed her to write full time. Moore's poems first appeared in European and American periodicals and her talent was encouraged by fellow modernists H. D., Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and T. S. Elliot. In 1925, she became the editor of the literary magazine *The Dial* and held the position until the magazine's dissolution in 1929. Moore was awarded the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize in 1952 and the Bollingen Prize in 1953 for her *Collected Works* (1951). She continued to write new poetry throughout her career, but she was also known for rewriting and republishing already-published poems. Moore was a longtime and much-beloved resident of Brooklyn, New York, and an active participant in New York's literary scene, where she cut a distinctive figure in her signature ensemble of a long black cape and tricorn hat. Moore suffered several strokes in 1968, which marked the end of her prodigious literary career. Moore died on February 5, 1972, and the majority of her papers and her entire library were bequeathed to the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, where the permanent installation of Moore's Greenwich Village living room and library can be seen.

Robert A. Wilson

American bibliographer, bookseller, and collector Robert A. Wilson was born in 1922. For many struggling writers and poets of the latter half of the twentieth century, Wilson was a familiar presence. As proprietor of the Phoenix Book Shop in New York City from 1962 until the store closed in 1988, Wilson provided both encouragement and financial support to many writers.

The Phoenix Book Shop was known for its selection of books by the avant-garde and contemporary writers of the 1950s and 1960s, stocking works by Edward Albee, William S. Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Michael McClure. Wilson's shop also specialized in modern first editions and literary manuscripts of writers such as W.H. Auden, Marianne Moore, Laura Riding Jackson, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Dylan Thomas.

Sources:

The Robert A. Wilson - Marianne Moore collection comprises 1 linear foot of material spanning the dates between 1925 and 1997 and includes correspondence to and from American poet Marianne Moore, the majority of which was written to Phoenix Book Shop proprietor Robert A. Wilson; works by and about Moore; newspaper clippings, photographs, pamphlets, broadsheets, and invitations documenting aspects of Moore's career and public appearances; audio recordings; and realia.

The collection documents Moore's witty epistolary style, public persona, and poetic interests, including her modernist poetic style, use of syllabics, and love of baseball and animals.

The collection is arranged into five series: I. Correspondence; II. Works by and about Marianne Moore; III. Photographs and ephemera; IV. Media; and V. Realia.

Series I. is arranged into three subseries based on primary correspondent. Subseries I.A. consists of correspondence to and from Marianne Moore, including a number of letters to Robert Wilson. These letters document a friendly relationship between Moore and Wilson and often discussed scheduling time for Moore to inscribe copies of her books to be sold at Wilson's Phoenix Book Shop, as well as her other time commitments. Also included are several letters between Faber & Faber and Moore discussing corrections and changes to the British edition of Moore's Like A Bulwark (1957) and a letter in which Moore offered advice to an aspiring poet. Subseries I.B. includes letters to Robert Wilson from friends and fellow collectors that mentioned Moore. Also included is a linen handkerchief belonging to Moore and embroidered with her initials which was sent to Wilson. Subseries I.C. consists of two photocopies of letters from Moore's brother John Warner Moore to her friend Louise, presumably the paper-manufacturing heiress Louise Crane, about potential visits including all three.

Series II. comprises manuscripts by and about Moore. Subseries II.A. includes material pertaining to Faber & Faber's publication of the British edition of Like a Bulwark, which consists of a corrected copy of the American edition, corrected typescripts, notes, and proofs. Moore signed the title page of the corrected volume at Robert Wilson's request. Also included in this series are Moore's handwritten lecture notes on Christian iconography and a typescript of a eulogy for American editor and literary critic Morton Dauwen Zabel. Series II.B. contains a dissertation written by Jeffrey Bowman Kindley titled Efforts of Affection: The Poetry of Marianne Moore and submitted to Columbia University as a requirement for completion of his doctorate.

Series III. includes clippings, photographs, posters, invitations, pamphlets and other printed ephemera documenting some of Moore's awards, appearances, and interests, as well as events honoring her legacy. Material is arranged by subject.

Series IV. contains two long-playing records; the first is a recording of Moore reading her poetry and her translations of LaFontaine's fables, and the second features an essay by Moore about American boxer Cassius Clay (Muhammed Ali) on the record sleeve.

Series V. consists of a candlestick that belonged to Marianne Moore, given to Robert Wilson by Moore's literary executor Clive Driver.
Selected Search Terms

**Personal Names**

Wilson, Robert A. (Robert Alfred), 1922--Correspondence.

Moore, Marianne Craig, 1887-1972--Correspondence.

**Corporate Names**

Phoenix Book Shop.

**Topical Terms**

Poets, American--History--20th century--Correspondence.

**Form/Genre Terms**

Correspondence.

Clippings.

Invitations.

Pamphlets.

Broadsheets.

Manuscripts.

Photographs.

Posters.

Proofs.

Reviews (document genre)

Long-playing records.

Handkerchiefs.

Candlesticks.

**Occupation**

Poets.

Collectors.
Booksellers.

**Personal Contributors**

Moore, Marianne Craig, 1887-1972, correspondent.

**Related Materials in this Repository**

- MSS 369 Robert A. Wilson collection related to James Purdy
- MSS 481 Robert A. Wilson collection
- MSS 555 Robert A. Wilson - John Wieners collection
Arrangement

I. Correspondence
II. Works by and about Marianne Moore
III. Photographs and ephemera
IV. Media
V. Realia
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. Correspondence, 1925-1968

Series I. is arranged into three subseries based on primary correspondent. Subseries I.A. consists of correspondence to and from Marianne Moore, including a number of letters to Robert Wilson. These letters document a friendly relationship between Moore and Wilson and often discussed scheduling time for Moore to inscribe copies of her books to be sold at Wilson's Phoenix Book Shop, as well as her other time commitments. Also included are several letters between Faber & Faber and Moore discussing corrections and changes to the British edition of Moore's *Like A Bulwark* (1957). Material is arranged alphabetically by correspondent's surname, the first word of a corporate name, or in the case of Moore's form letter soliciting donations for the Dorothy Maynor Harlem School of the Arts, by subject. A file of empty envelopes follows the correspondence. Subseries I.B. includes letters to Robert Wilson from friends and fellow collectors that mention Moore. Also included is a linen handkerchief belonging to Moore and embroidered with her initials which was sent to Wilson. Subseries I.C. consists of two photocopies of letters from Moore’s brother John Warner Moore to her friend Lucy, presumably the paper-manufacturing heiress Louise Crane, about potential visits including all three.

Subseries I.A. Marianne Moore, 1925-1968

Diorio, 1958 May 10 [Box 1 F1]

A photocopy of Moore's letter of advice to a Mrs. Diorio, an aspiring writer who sent her poems (not included in this collection) to Moore.

Dorothy Maynor's Harlem School of the Arts, 1968 November 22 [Box 1 F2]

A brief, unaddressed form letter asking for donations for Dorothy Maynor's Harlem School of the Arts.

Faber & Faber, 1957 March 4-1957 April 6 [Box 1 F3]

Correspondence concerning the British publication of *Like a Bulwark* in which Faber & Faber representative Shirley Cokayne-Frith asked Moore to review proofs and additional corrections to be made. Also included is Moore's response to the proposed corrections.

Fi[ri]uski, Maurice, 1925-1926 [Box 1 F4]

Two letters written by Moore in her capacity as editor of *The Dial* regarding the rejection and acceptance of poems by Archibald MacLeish along with two typescript copies of MacLeish's poems. Moore addresses one letter to "Fruski" and the other to "Firuski."

Jennison, Peter S., undated [Box 1 F5]

Letter to Peter S. Jennison of the National Book Committee.

Saillet, Maurice, 1962 December 26 [Box 1 F6]
A letter from Moore to Maurice Saillet thanking him for the complimentary copy of *Les Poésies d'Adrienne Monnier* which is included along with the letter.

Sanders, Edward, 1964 January 31 [Box 1 F7]

A letter to Edward Sanders, editor of *Art Magazine*.

Wilson, Robert A., 1959-1968 [Box 1 F8]

28 letters, cards, and postcards written from Moore to Wilson between 1959 and 1968. Most are signed by Moore and many are handwritten. Many of the letters are also accompanied by their original envelopes and demonstrate Moore's frugality in readdressing envelopes she received. The letters are organized chronologically followed by undated material. The earliest letter dated August 17, 1959, is the first letter Wilson received from Moore in response to his request to sign some of her books. Much of the subsequent correspondence discussed Moore's availability to sign items. Also included in the correspondence is a photograph of a giraffe which Moore indicated that she was returning to Wilson. Several of the letters mentioned Moore's interest in animals.

Zukofsky, Louis, October 1960 [Box 1 F9]

Correspondence between Moore and poet Louis Zukofsky concerning an article Moore was writing about him.

Envelopes, 1954-1966, undated [Box 1 F10]

Envelopes and labels addressed to or from Moore without accompanying letters.

**Subseries I.B. Robert A. Wilson, 1964-1965**

Robert A. Wilson, 1964-1965 [Box 1 F11]

**Subseries I.C. Other correspondents, 1961-1967**

John Warner Moore to Louise [Crane], 1961-1967 [Box 1 F12]

Photocopies of two handwritten letters from Moore's older brother John Warner Moore to Moore's friend Louise, likely paper-manufacturing heiress Louise Crane.

**Series II. Works by and about Marianne Moore, 1957-1971**

Series II. comprises manuscripts by and about Moore. Subseries IIA. includes material pertaining to Faber & Faber's publication of the British edition of *Like a Bulwark*, which consists of a corrected copy of the American edition, corrected typescripts, notes, and proofs. Moore signed the title page of the corrected volume at Wilson's request. Also included in this series are Moore's handwritten lecture notes on Christian iconography and a typescript of a eulogy for American editor and literary critic Morton Dauwen Zabel (1902-1964). Series IIB. contains a dissertation.
written by Jeffrey Bowman Kindley titled *Efforts of Affection: The Poetry of Marianne Moore* and submitted to Columbia University as a requirement for completion of his doctorate.

**Subseries II.A. By Moore, 1957-1964, undated**

*Like a Bulwark*, circa 1957 [Box 1 F13]

Material pertaining to Faber & Faber's publication of the British edition, which consists of a corrected copy of the American edition, corrected typescripts, notes, and proofs. The binding of the American edition has been gutted and separate pages have been laid in, which bear many corrections and instructions throughout. Robert Wilson notes that one of the most interesting corrections is Faber editor and poet T.S. Eliot's changing of the title "Tom Fool at Jamaica" to "Tom of Greentree Stable," based on his notion that British readers would not know that Jamaica was a race course in the United States. Moore signed the title page of the corrected volume at Wilson's request. Also included is a typed notecard with instructions for Moore's corrections, as well as five typescript pages of poetry on Moore's stationary with her handwritten corrections. Additional material relating to this publication can be found in I.A. Marianne Moore correspondence -- Faber & Faber.

Lecture notes, undated [Box 1 F14]

Three pages of handwritten notes by Moore for a lecture on Christian iconography.

"Morton Dauwen Zabel", 1964 [Box 1 F15]

Four-page typescript eulogy for American editor and literary critic Morton Dauwen Zabel (1902-1964) typed and signed by Moore.

**Subseries II.B. About Moore, 1971**

*Efforts of Affection: The Poetry of Marianne Moore* by Jeffrey Bowman Kindley, 1971 [Box 2 F16]


**Series III. Photographs and ephemera, 1952-1990**

Series III. includes clippings, photographs, posters, invitations, pamphlets and other ephemera documenting some of Moore's awards, appearances, and interests, as well as events honoring her legacy. Material is arranged by subject.

Articles and reviews by Moore, 1956-1968, undated [Box 1 F17]
Articles by Moore on various topics, including her support for a local library. There are also a number of blurbs Moore provided for book advertisements as well as full-length book reviews by Moore.

Baseball, 1968, undated [Box 2 F18]

Moore was a well-known baseball fan and supported the New York Yankees. Material includes related articles and photographs of Moore at baseball games.

Biographical information, undated [Box 2 F19]

A brief list of a selection of Moore's publications and awards.

Birthday celebrations, 1961-1977 [Box 2 F20]

Includes clippings and articles celebrating Moore's 74th, 75th, and 77th birthdays along with a posthumous celebration of her 90th held at her alma mater Bryn Mawr College.

Book reviews and advertisements, 1954-1969, undated [Box 2 F21]


Brooklyn, 1966 [Box 2 F22]

Two clippings documenting Moore's move from her longtime Brooklyn home to Manhattan after several home invasions in her neighborhood.

Catalogs, 1952-1963 [Box 1 F23]

An exhibition catalog for Chagall and two advertisements for Steuben Glass's "Poetry in Crystal," both of which feature Moore's poetry.

Centenary celebration, 1987 [Box 2 F24]

Clippings, invitations and programs for centenary celebrations of Moore's birth held at The Grolier Club, Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, and the 92nd Street YMHA.

The Dial Press, Inc., undated [Box 2 F25]

A Dial Press broadsheet for Hugh Nissenson's *Notes from the Frontier* featuring a quote from Moore.

Estate and papers, 1997 [Box 2 F26]

An article sent to Wilson about the handling of Moore's estate and papers.

Fashion, 1965-1966 [Box 2 F27]
Fashion articles which mention Moore as a sartorial inspiration.

Ford car, 1961 [Box 2 F28]
Clipping about Ford Motor Company asking Moore to name a car.

_Gone with the Wind_, undated [Box 2 F29]
Two clippings related to Margaret Mitchell's _Gone with the Wind_ (1936).

Honoring Moore, 1967-1983 [Box 2 F30]
Invitations and advertisements for events honoring Moore, including events at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where the majority of her papers are held.

Interviews with Moore, 1963, undated [Box 2 F31]
Included is a transcript from an interview Moore did with the radio program _Voice of America_ in 1963 and an undated newspaper interview.

Obituaries, 1972 [Box 2 F32]
Obituaries from newspapers and magazines including the _New York Times_.

Parks, circa 1967 and undated [Box 3 F33]
Items documenting Moore's support for New York City parks and Prospect Park in particular. The folder includes twelve black and white photographs from what appears to be the publication party for the _Prospect Park Handbook_ (1967) written by Clay Lancaster with an introduction by Moore. The photographs feature Moore as well as other party guests.

_Poetry_, 1963 [Box 3 F34]
An article in Lima, Peru's _Idea: Artes y Letras_ about the 50th anniversary of the magazine _Poetry_ which mentions Moore as one of the poets the magazine helped publicize.

Poetry readings, 1962-1968, undated [Box 3 F35]
Articles and posters about Moore's public poetry readings sponsored by the New School in 1962 and the New York Parks Department in 1968.

Photographs and portraits, 1951, 1964, 1990, undated [Box 3 F36]
Portraits and candids of Moore, publicity photographs, and clippings of portraits of Moore from newspapers. Includes a publicity photograph of the National Book Award Committee for 1951 with Moore, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lloyd Frankenberg and Padraic Colum; a photograph of Moore's stone on the Brooklyn Botanical Garden's "Celebrity Walk"; and a photograph of Moore taken after a reading at Lowell House in May 1964.
Public Lectures, 1962-1967 [Box 3 F37]

Contains items related to Moore's talk at the Eastern District High School poetry contest followed by several clippings from talks Moore gave at New York University including at the 1967 graduation.

Stamps, 1990 [Box 3 F38]

A sheet of U.S. stamps featuring Moore issued in 1990 along with a program from the United States Postal Service's unveiling.

**Series IV. Media, 1954-1963**

Series IV. contains two long-playing records; the first is a recording of Moore reading her poetry and her translations of LaFontaine's fables, and the second features an essay by Moore about American boxer Cassius Clay (Muhammed Ali) on the record sleeve.

*Marianne Moore Reading her Poems and Fables from La Fontaine, 1954-1955* [Box 3 F39] (Removed to SPEC Media audio records)

*I Am the Greatest: Cassius Clay, 1963* [Box 3 F40] (Removed to SPEC Media audio records)

**Series V. Realia, undated**

Series V. consists of a candlestick that belonged to Marianne Moore, given to Robert Wilson by Moore's literary executor Clive Driver.

Candlestick, undated [Box 4 F41]