

Travel Papers: Passports in Literary Archives

Literary archives in the Beinecke Library's collections often include personal papers that provide a wide view of a writer's life, including activities that may fall outside their creative practice. Legal and otherwise "official" documents in archives may include travel papers and passports—such documents are both personal (bearing one's name, photograph, and signature) and general (one such document is in many ways like another). Through their stamps and seals, passports may reveal the facts of travel—dates and times, specific cities or countries visited. But these facts can leave out all the distinct details of an individual's specific border crossings—documents from the past may not differentiate the immigrant from the adventurer, the tourist from the exile, the expatriate from the refugee. Biographers and historians must view official documents such as passports in relationship with other historical and archival materials—journals and diaries, correspondences and keepsakes—to understand the nature and significance of any journey.

From the literary archives of James Weldon Johnson, Josephine Herbst, Langston Hughes, Eugene O'Neill, Ezra Pound, Olga Rudge, Maurine Watkins, Dorothy Porter Wesley, Thornton Wilder, and Richard Wright

Objects

NOTE: some of these and other examples of passports can be found in the Digital Library

Dorothy Porter Wesley
JWJ MSS 93 Box: 290, Folder 2659 – SCAN / Facsimile
SCAN 2 2pg spreads marked

Richard Wright
JWJ MSS 3 Box 117 Folder 1882 -- SCAN / Facsimile
SCAN 2 2pg spreads marked

Thornton Wilder
YCAL MSS 108 Box 139 Folder 3173
Passport in folder 3175 marked for SCAN no Facsimile needed

Olga Rudge
YCAL MSS 54 Box 111 folder 2798
2 passports exhibited, no scans needed

Ezra Pound
YCAL MSS 53 Box 39 Folder 884
1 passport exhibited, no scans needed

James Weldon Johnson
JWJ MSS 49 Box 91 Folder 736
Passport needs to be flattened, no scans needed

Maurine Watkins
YCAL MSS 1079 Box 7 Folder "Passport 1933" – SCAN / Facsimile

SCAN 2 2pg spreads marked

Eugene O'Neill

YCAL MSS 123 Box 108, Folder 1868 – SCAN / Facsimile

SCAN 2 2pg spreads marked

Note: second spread to be scanned no facsimile needed

Langston Hughes

JWJ MSS 26 box 514 folder 12780

Two passports exhibited, openings marked

Josephine Herbst

YCAL MSS 474 Box 104 Folder "Passports" – SCAN / Facsimile

SCAN 2 2pg spreads marked