

# Guide to the Nancy Dean Papers, 1950-2017

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## Table of Contents

- [Collection Summary](#)
- [Biographical Note](#)
- [Scope and Content Note](#)
- [Subject Headings](#)
- [Administrative Information](#)
- [Access and Use](#)
- [Arrangement](#)
- [Series List](#)
- [Container List](#)

## Collection Summary

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries
<b>Creator:</b>	Dean, Nancy
<b>Title:</b>	Nancy Dean Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1950-2017
<b>Quantity:</b>	6.5 cubic feet (20 boxes)
<b>Abstract:</b>	Collection includes manuscripts of Dean's scholarly works, fiction and theatrical writing, as well as subject files and teaching files. Collection includes correspondence with friends and family, handwritten notes and manuscript drafts, as well as index cards containing notes used for research and/or teaching. Publicity and press clippings files include reviews of Dean's theatrical works. Collection also contains audio visual materials, including CDs, DVDs, as well as audio and video cassettes.

[Top](#)

## Biographical Note

Nancy Dean (1930-2017), was an scholar of medieval history and literature specializing in Chaucer, professor, playwright, author of fiction, plays and opera, and noted advocate and philanthropist for LGBTQ causes. She founded the Astraea Foundation, which supports the needs of lesbians and women of color. With Beva Eastman, her partner of 54 years, she went on to create the Open Meadows Foundation, a global fund supporting political change directed by and benefiting women and girls. A Vassar alumna (VC Class of 1952), Dean received a masters

degree from Radcliffe (1953), a PhD in Medieval Studies from New York University (1963), followed by a 28-year teaching career at Hunter College (1963-1991), teaching Medieval Studies, Chaucer, Creative Writing and Women's Studies). Before teaching at Hunter, Dean taught at the American College for Girls in Istanbul, Turkey for three years during the 1950s.

Published works by Dean include: *In the Mind of the Writer* (Cranfield Press), *In the Looking Glass: Twenty-one modern short stories by women*, (Putnam Press, 1977), and published short stories in periodicals including *Room with a View* (The Gathering) and *IKON* (Requited Love). Her first novel entitled *Anna's Country*, was written and published under the pseudonym, Elizabeth Lang (Naiad Press, 1981). Playscripts include: *Larks and Owls* (1986), *Returning Home* (1989), *Hetty Pepper's Stew* (1986), *Blood and Water* (1986), *Ophelia's Laughter* (1988), *Ripe Avocados* (2008), *Gloria's Visit* (1990), *Which Marriage?* (1991), *Burning Bridges* (1992), *Upstairs? In the Afternoon?* (1995), and *That Ilk* (1998).

Excerpts from her libretto *Criseyde*, a feminist reading of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, were presented in Middle English at performance staged at City University of New York in 2008. Dean was a member of both the Dramatists Guild and the Women Playwrights Collective.

[Top](#)

## **Scope and Content Note**

Manuscripts, many in draft form, comprise the majority of the collection, documenting Dean's academic work from Vassar undergraduate studies through graduate and PhD work at Radcliffe and New York University. Included among these is Dean's PhD dissertation, *Studies in Chaucer's Use of Ovid in Selected Early Poems*. Speech and lecture files include talks given at Vassar, Allegheny College, Hunter College, Brooklyn College and Smith College. Playscripts and opera librettos, both in draft and final form are also included among her writings. Playscript files also include some correspondence, editorial notations, contracts, agreements, and program notes. Manuscript files for dramatic works contain scripts, research notes, correspondence, musical scores, and publicity.

Dean's correspondence files include both professional and personal communication. Of note are letters written to both her mother and father during her years teaching in Turkey during the 1950s.

Teaching and subject files document Dean's management of her career as both a writer and college professor. A collection of oversized index cards contain notes used for researching and/or teaching 17th & 18th century literature. Teaching files also contain class schedules, notes, bibliographies and syllabi. Audio visual material includes CDs, DVDs, and audio and video tapes documenting selections from Dean's theatrical works including a recording of Dean reading the libretto of her opera, *Criseyde*.

[Top](#)

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into eight series. Manuscripts are arranged

alphabetically, by title. Writings are arranged into subseries by name by of teaching institution, and by genre (fiction and playscripts), as arranged by the author. Subject and teaching files are arranged alphabetically, as titled by the creator. [Top](#)

## **Subject Headings**

### **Organizations:**

- Hunter College--Faculty
- Vassar College--Alumni and alumnae
- Vassar College--Students

### **Subjects:**

- Women college teachers--United States
- Women dramatists--United States
- Women novelists--United States

### **Document Types:**

- Manuscripts (documents)

### **VCL Categories**

- LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer) Life and Culture
- Literature and Writing

[Top](#)

## **Encoding Information**

Encoded by Laura Streett, July 2019. Updated by Mark Seidl, September 2020.

[Top](#)

## **Administrative Information**

### **Preferred Citation**

Nancy Dean Papers Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by Janine St. Germain, 2019.

### **Acquisition Information**

[Top](#)

## Series List

**Series I. Subject Files, approximately 1952-2011 (Box 1-2)**

**Series II. Teaching Files , 1988, undated (Box 3-6, 19)**

**Series III. Writings, approximately 1974-2000 (Box 7-15)**

**Series IV. Correspondence, 1951-2009 (Box 16-17)**

**Series V. Speeches and Lectures, approximately 1976-2011 (Box 18)**

**Series VI. Publicity and Press clippings, 1977-2008 (Box 18-19)**

**Series VII. Photographs, approximately 1956-2000 (Box 18)**

**Series VIII. Audiovisual Material, approximately 1967-2008 (Box 20)**

## Container List

SERIES I. SUBJECT FILES, approximately 1952-2011	
1.1-1.3	Actor's Alliance, 1989-1992
19.2	Astrea Foundation, 1979-2009
1.4	Bio file, certificates, awards, 1982-2009
20.1	Bio file, certificates, Vassar, Harvard, New York University, Hunter College, 1952-1999
1.5	Bio file, resumes, artist statements, 1976-2003
1.6	Collected bibliographies, feminist writings undated
1.7	Criseyde, opera, character studies, 2011
1.8	Criseyde, opera, copyright certification, 2009-2010
1.9	The Crystal Quilt, publicity, 1993
1.10	Hunter College, Future Speak, 1982

1.11	Hunter College Annual Report, Asst. Dean of Instruction, 1967-1968
1.12	Hunter College, resume, teaching file, memos, 1963-1982
1.13	International Women Playwrights Conference, 1991-1997
1.14-1.15	Intimate Acts: Eight Contemporary Lesbian Plays, 1996-2000
1.16	Lesbian Theater Project, 1996-1997
1.17	Love Creek Productions, 1986-2008
1.18	Manhattan Repertory Theatre, 2009
2.1	Medieval Club, 1967-1971
2.2	Medieval Literature, 1974-1987
2.3	New York University, reference/teaching, 1960-1985
2.4	Open Meadows Foundation, press releases, newsletters, 1986-1992
2.5-2.9	Pen and Brush Playwrights Conference, 1996-2004
2.10	Play agreements, requests, 1992-2001
2.11	That Ilk, play, correspondence, press, agreements, 1998-2000
2.12	Vassar, Smashing History: 150 Years of LGBTQA, speech text, logistical file, 2001-2011
2.13	Women's One World Theater, play, Upstairs in the Afternoon, 1996
<b>SERIES II. TEACHING FILES, 1988, undated</b>	
3.1-3.6, 4.1-4.6, 19.3	17th, 18th Century Literature, index cards (notes), undated
4.7	Chaucer: The Early Works, class bibliography, 1988
5.1-5.6, 6.1-6.6	Chaucer, index cards (notes), undated
19.4	Teaching tool, timeline, Anglo Saxon Period undated
<b>SERIES III. WRITINGS, approximately 1950-2015</b>	
<b>General</b>	
7.1	Book of Duchess, undated (manuscript and typescript)
7.2-7.3	Book proposal, Anthology of Visions of the 1990s, 1988-1989

7.4	Book proposal, The Best Stories By American Women, 1987-1989
7.5	Book proposal, Women, According to Women: Twenty One Short Stories, 1977-1980
7.6	Chaucer's Complaint, A Genre Descended from the Heroides, Comparative Literature, 1967 (offprint)
7.7-7.10	Chaucer's House of Fame, first draft, with edits, bibliography, 1978 (notes)
7.11	Chaucer and Ovid, introduction, undates (edited typescript)
7.12	Chaucer's Use of Myth, 1968
7.13	Criseyde, 2005
19.5-19.7	Criseyde, opera, full musical score, 2010
8.1	Criseyde, opera libretto, 2001
8.2	Criseyde, opera, piano and vocal score, 2008
8.3	Criseyde, opera, scene list, 2006
8.4	Criseyde, An Opera in Three Acts, Being a Feminist Retelling of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, libretto undated
8.5-8.6	Ecloga Theoduli, 1970-1971 (typescript)
8.7	Ecloga Theoduli, What School Child Might Have Learned from the Ecloga Theoduli, 1972-1973 (typescript)
8.8	The Gatherings, by Elizabeth Lang [Nancy Dean], 1976 (includes edits)
8.9	Ladies Mile, TS, 2012 (typescript; includes correspondence)
8.10	Nun's Priest's Tale, 1971-1974 (typescript)
8.11	Ovid's Elegies From Exile, Chaucer's Book III, House of Fame, 1964 (typescript)
9.1-9.3	Poetry, 1953-1975 (manuscripts, notes)
9.4	Requited Love, Ikon Press, undated (typescript)
9.5-9.6	Song to David Chretien Yvain, 1961, 1971 (includes notes, correspondence)
10.1-10.3	Submitted/Unpublished fiction, 1950-1970 (typescripts)
10.4-10.6	Three Voices, One Song, 1999-2000 (typescript)
<b>Fiction</b>	
10.7-10.10	Essays, short stories 1970-1990 (typescripts)

10.11-10.12, 11.1-11.4	Murder on the Mantel, 1986 (typescript)
<b>Playscripts</b>	
11.5	Blood and Water, 1988-2008
11.6	Burning Bridges, 2010
11.7	The Cooky Thief, 1998
11.8	Counter Talk, 1999
11.9	Gloria's Visit, 1990
11.10	Hetty Pepper's Stew, 1987, 2008
11.11	High Buttoned Sneakers: The Bartow Pell Staircase, 2009
11.12	Larks and Owls, 1984-1986
11.13-11.14	The Misanthrope, undated
12.1-12.2	Murder at the Regatta, 1998
12.3	Ophelia, 2004-2015
12.4	Ophelia's Laughter, 1988
12.5	Ophelia's Rainbows, undated
12.6	Resort, 2002
12.7	Returning Home, 1988
12.8	Ripe Avocados, 2001-2005
12.9	That Ilk, 1987-2000
12.10	Upstairs in the Afternoon, 1995-1996
12.11	Which Marriage?, undated (typescript)
12.12	The Yellow Wallpaper, based on a short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, undated
<b>Harvard University</b>	
13.1	Miscellaneous academic papers, 1952-1953
<b>Hunter College</b>	
13.2	How Were Medieval School Children Introduced to Myths, 1973
13.3-13.7	The Complaints of Machaut and Chaucer, 1962, 1983 (typescripts)

<b>New York University</b>	
13.8	Bibliography, Titus Andronicus, 1959 (typescript)
13.9	Chaucer, 1960 (typescript)
13.10-13.11	Chaucer's Use of Ovid, 1960 (typescript)
13.12	Dissertation Abstract, Studies in Chaucer's Use of Ovid, 1961-1966
14.1-14.6	Dissertation, PhD, Studies in Chaucer's Use of Ovid in Selected Early Poems, 1963
14.7	Dryden, Pope, Swift, Chaucer (final exam), 1960 (typescript)
14.8-14.10	Dryden, Pope, Shakespeare, Milton, 1960-1961 (typescript, notes)
14.11	Milton: An Explication of Sonnet XI, 1960
15.1-15.4	Richard Coeur de Lion, 1961 (manuscript, typescript)
15.5	The Wife of Bath, 1960 (typescript)
19.8	The Use of Ovid's Tale Seyx and Alcyone, 1960
<b>Vassar College</b>	
15.6	Chaucer, 1950 (typescript)
15.7	Preaching in Chaucer's Time, 1950 (edited typescript)
15.8	Vassar Alumnae Magazine, October 1967
<b>Other Writings</b>	
15.9-15.10	Ginnie Goddard on Nancy Dean, Contemporary Lesbian Writers, 1991-1994
<b>SERIES IV. CORRESPONDENCE, 1951-2017</b>	
<b>Professional</b>	
16.1	From Nancy Dean, 1951, 1956
16.2-16.3	To Nancy Dean, from friends/associates, 1951-1999
16.4-16.10	To/From Nancy Dean, re: Criseyde, opera logistics, 2003-2009
16.11	Re: In the Mind of the Writer, published work, 1972-1973
16.12-16.13	Re: Playwriting, 1991-2000



16.14-16.16	Re: Teaching, Vassar, Hunter, NYU, Turkey, 1958-2017
<b>Personal</b>	
17.1	From Dean, Archie [father], 1951-1971
17.2	From Dean, Ella Lang [mother], 1952-1962
17.3-17.10	From Nancy Dean to parents, 1956-1962
<b>SERIES V. SPEECHES/LECTURES, approximately 1976-2011</b>	
18.1	All Lesbian Theater is Political, Allegheny College, 1997
18.2	Barnard College - The Scholar and the Feminist Towards a Politics of Sexuality, 1982
18.3	Brooklyn College, Women's Studies Association Conference, Culture and Change, 1984
18.4	CUNY Conference, Working Towards Multiculturalism, 1991
18.5	Draddy Lecture, Hunter College, Social Change and the English Language, 1989
18.6	The Female Man, Women's Studies, undated (edited typescript)
18.7	Hunter College Women's Studies, Setting the Record Straight, 1996
18.8	Memorial, Elizabeth Evans, 1995
18.9	Modern Language Association, Feminist Short Stories, New Forms and Styles, 1976
18.10	New York Women's Association, The Ending of Woman On Edge of Time, 1984
18.11	On Late Bloomers, The Crystal Quilt, 1994
18.12	Smith College, interview transcript, 2004
18.13	Spyer, Thea-memorial, 2009
18.14	Vassar College, Smashing 150 Years of LGBTIQ at Vassar, To Be a Freshman in 1948, 2011
18.15	Writing at Hunter College, Conference, 1996
<b>SERIES VI. PUBLICITY/PRESS CLIPPINGS, 1977-2008</b>	
18.16	Anna's Country, by Elizabeth Lang [Nancy Dean], 1981-1991
18.17	Blood and Water, one act play, 1988
18.18	Criseyde, opera program, City Opera, CUNY, 2008

19.1	In the Looking Glass, edited by Nancy Dean and Myra Stark, 1977-1979
18.19	Women's Theatre Collective, 1985-1999
<b>SERIES VII. PHOTOGRAPHS, approximately 1956-2000</b>	
18.20	Portrait, Nancy Dean undated
18.21	Publicity photos, That Ilk production, 19980-2000
18.22	Photographic prints separated from correspondence, family/friends, 1956-1962
<b>SERIES VIII. AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIALS, approximately 1967-2008</b>	
Box 20	Blood and Water, audio cassette, undated
Box 20	Burning Bridges, 1993 (VHS tape)
Box 20	Criseyde, opera, undated (CD, DVD)
Box 20	Criseyde, Nancy Dean reading libretto, 2008 (CD)
Box 20	Hetty Pepper's Stew, 2008 (CD)
Box 20	Iliad, Anthony Quayle, undated (audio cassette)
Box 20	Ripe Avocados, 2008 (CD)
Box 20	Sounds of Chaucer's English, Knapp and Snortum, 1967 (audio cassette)
Box 20	That Ilk, music and voice cues, undated (CD)

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)

#### ▼ Details

##### Abstract

Collection includes manuscripts of Dean's scholarly works, fiction and theatrical writing, as well as subject files and teaching files. Collection includes correspondence with friends and family, handwritten notes and manuscript drafts, as well as index cards containing notes used for research and/or teaching. Publicity and press clippings files include reviews of Dean's theatrical works. Collection also contains audio visual materials, including CDs, DVDs, as well as audio and video cassettes.