

Finding Aid to the Richard E. Lyons Papers

Lyons, Richard Eugene, 1920-2000

Richard E. Lyons Papers, 1940-1976

3.2 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 10

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to a later accession of the [Richard Lyons Papers](#)
Finding Aid to a later accession of the [Richard Lyons Papers](#)

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Richard E. Lyons, Fargo, North Dakota, 1972 and 1976. (Acc. 1868 & 1943).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Richard Lyons Papers, MS 10, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Richard Eugene Lyons was born June 19, 1920 at Detroit, Michigan, the son of Frank C. and Daisy (Sweeny) Lyons. After graduating from high school he attended the University of Dayton for two years. He then went to Miami University at Oxford, Ohio where he earned a B.A. degree in 1942. After several years working in Dayton and recovering from tuberculosis, he returned in 1946 to Miami University to

work on a master's degree, which he received in 1947. Mr. Lyons then became an English instructor there for a year. In 1948 he went to Indiana University to begin work on a Ph.D. degree. After two years, Mr. Lyons in 1950 came to the North Dakota Agricultural College where he held a dual position as order librarian and instructor in English. His early work was connected with the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies where he researched for a proposed anthology of North Dakota writers. In 1959 Mr. Lyons returned full time to the English Department, and that same year took a sabbatical leave to attend the University of Minnesota where he completed his course work towards a degree in American Studies. Mr. Lyons returned to North Dakota State University where he was a professor of English until retiring in 1982.

Mr. Lyons was interested in poetry from a very early age, and at Miami University was a member of the Poet's Circle. Numerous poems by Mr. Lyons have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review* and *The Paris Review*. His first major work was *Men and Tin Kettles* (1956). Other publications include *One Squeaking Straw* (1958), *Paintings in Taxicabs* (a study of art consumers in North Dakota, 1965), *Above Time* (1968), editor of *Poetry North: Five Poets of North Dakota* (1970), a one-act play, "John, Where Are You?", and the three part series, *Poetry and Photographs: A way into the Meaning of Space, Resources, and Life Styles in North Dakota* (1976). In addition, Mr. Lyons did work in painting, drawing, and printmaking.

In 1942 Mr. Lyons married Marjorie Dunkel. They had two children, Christopher and Cressida. Mr. Lyons was a member of the College English Association, American Studies Association, the Rourke Art Gallery, and Phi Kappa Phi. After retiring from NDSU in 1982 he and his wife moved to Newark, Delaware. Marjorie Lyons died in 1983. In 1994 he moved to Gardiner, Maine, where he continued to write and publish poetry. Richard Lyons died January 29, 2000.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

These Richard Lyons papers were the first of three donations documenting the literary career of Mr. Lyons. Later donations in 1972 and 1976 were processed as a single collection (Mss 151). The final donation by his children was made by his children in 2000 and processed as Mss 259. This initial donation was organized into nine series: Correspondence, Play manuscripts, Poetry manuscripts, Prose manuscripts, *Poetry and Photographs*, Publications, Reviews, North Dakota State University and Art galleries programs.

The [Correspondence Series](#) is arranged alphabetically by correspondent or subject, following Mr. Lyons' original order. Each file is chronological and all appear to be quite complete. The correspondence is concerned almost completely with Mr. Lyons' publication efforts. Some files do contain pamphlets, brochures and other non-correspondence material. The period 1951 to 1968 is the most complete period.

The [Manuscript Series](#) is the largest component of the collection and includes Mr. Lyons' plays, poetry and prose. The plays section includes his two works, *The Front Steps*, and *Untitled*. Also included are two copies of Frederick G. Walsh's *Yield of the Fountain*. The poetry section contains typed drafts of many of his works. They have been organized alphabetically by title and are listed separately in the contents

listing. The prose section contains his and Kenneth Kuhn's unpublished study, *Anthology of North Dakota Writers*, compiled in the early 1950s as a project of the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies. Why it was never published is not known. It consists of a typed copy and is arranged alphabetically by the writer's name. Mr. Lyons' other major work, *Paintings in Taxicabs*, is represented by draft and final manuscripts, and an incomplete galley proof. The final section is his notes, drafts, final manuscripts and newspaper clippings for *Poetry and Photographs: A way into the meaning of space, resources, and life styles in North Dakota*.

The [Publications Series](#) is relatively complete for his major works. They have been organized alphabetically and are listed in the contents listing.

The [Reviews Series](#) contains reviews for only several of Lyons' major works to include *Men and Tin Kettles*, *One Squeaking Straw*, *Paintings in Taxicabs*, and *Poetry North*.

The [North Dakota State University Series](#) includes a variety of materials. There are minutes and other documents of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors for the period of 1955 to 1964. The memorandum from Professor Elliott Millner concerns the committee report on student complaints of grades received in his class. There are several informational items on the name change of North Dakota Agricultural College to North Dakota State University. The North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies files contain various exhibition programs, pamphlets, and research proposals. The *Poetry North* files, a series of monthly programs of poets and poetry presented at NDSU beginning in 1966, contain correspondence, newspaper clippings, and programs for the period 1966 to 1971.

The [Art Galleries Programs Series](#) include from the Fort Ransom Summer Art program, several from the Red River Art Center, and a very complete set for the Rourke Art Gallery from 1960 to 1971.

SEPARATIONS RECORD

The following non-manuscript material has been removed from the Richard Lyons papers and sent to the sections indicated.

Photographs (Institute photograph collection)

- 190 Photo used for cover of *Poetry North*, various paintings by Willis Nelson, Cyrus Running, James Rourke, Paul Allen, Frank Sampson and others, those used for *Paintings in Taxicabs*, Lois Hudson, John Winkleman and Donald D. Govan, and Mr. Lyons' operating his printing press.

Broadsides (Institute broadside collection)

- "The N.D.S.U. Little Country Theatre presents Triple Plays ... John, Where are you? by Richard E. Lyons."
- "Poetry Forum - Allen Tate, James Wright, Richard Lyons, Harry Strickhausen, Richard Foster, Morgan Blum"
- "SUAB present "Gaslight Cafe"
- "Poetry and Jazz"

Drawings

- Self pen etching, January 6, 1965
- Mats for *Fargo 5* which includes of Washington House, NDSU, NSP power plant, Red River, and the Orpheum Theatre

Media

- 2 cassettes for slide-tape presentations of *The Quest and the Questions* (cassette 1) and *The Fact and the Fantasies* (cassette 2); and 280 slides for the above programs

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Biographical material, and Finding aid
	Correspondence Series
1/2	Bismarck Art Association, 1956-1962
1/3	<i>Discourse</i> , 1958-1968 (Concordia College)
1/4	Distler, Alan J., 1955
1/5	Fulbright program, 1956
1/6	Guggenheim Memorial Fund, 1958-1959
1/7	Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961
1/8	Hungarian revolution, 1962-1965
1/9	Indiana University Press, 1953-1961
1/10	Job applications, 1959
1/11	Media Arts Association, 1958-1959
1/12	<i>Men and Tin Kettles</i> , 1952-1967 (Alan Swallow)
1/13	<i>Minnesota Review</i> , 1960-1962
1/14	Nelson, Willis, 1960
1/15	<i>New Yorker</i> , 1951-1955
1/16	<i>North Dakota Quarterly</i> , 1956-1960
1/17	<i>One Squeaking Straw</i> , 1958
1/18	<i>Paintings in Taxicabs</i> , 1952, 1961
1/19	<i>Paintings in Taxicabs</i> , 1964-1966, 1971
1/20	<i>Paris Review</i> , 1955-1962
1/21	Pocket Books, 1952-1954 (<i>Discovery</i>)
1/22	Prairie Press, 1958-1963
1/23	Print Council of America, 1960-1963
1/24	Red River Art Center, 1966
1/25	Rejection slips
1/26	Rourke Art Gallery, 1960-1970

- 2/1 Ruff, Ruth Haggard, 1954-1956
- 2/2 Saxton Memorial Trust, 1958
- 2/3 University of Minnesota-American Studies Program, 1959-1963
- 2/4 University of North Dakota-75th Anniversary Convocation and Faculty Conference, 1958
- 2/5 General, 1941-1954
- 2/6 General, 1955-1968
- 2/7 Undated

Play Manuscripts Series

- 2/8 *The Front Steps*
- 2/9 Untitled
- 2/10 Untitled (copy)
- 2/11 *Yield of the Fountain*, by Frederick G. Walsh (draft)
- 2/12 *Yield of the Fountain*, by Frederick G. Walsh

Poetry Manuscripts Series

- 2/13 *Above Time, Tenth Street Bucolics*
- 2/14 *The Brush of Tension*
- 2/15 *Creatures and Creators*
- 2/16 *Eclogues in Blue*
- 3/1 *Fable from a North Window*, p. 1-80
- 3/2 *Fable from a North Window*, p. 81-160
- 3/3 *Gray Circumstance*
- 3/4 *Margaret*
- 3/5 *Men and Tin Kettles*
- 3/6 *One Squeaking Straw*
- 3/7 *One Squeaking Straw* (Final manuscript)
- 3/8 *Poetry North* - Layout scheme and cover
- 3/9 *Poetry North* - Edited galley proof
- 3/10 *Portfolio*
- 3/11 *Third Person*
- 3/12 *This Private Earth*
- 3/13 *Thumb-nail Sketches*
- 3/14 *Wax Wings Poems*
- 3/15 *World of Little Time*
- 3/16 *General*

Prose Manuscripts Series

- Anthology of North Dakota Writers*
- 3/17 Notes
- 3/18 Introduction

3/19	Adams - Audubon
3/20	Aaron McGaffey Beede
3/21	Bigelow - Burgum
3/22	Catlin - Custer
4/1	deTrobriand - Duncan
4/2	Foley - Fougera
4/3	Gannon - Grimstad
4/4	Hagen - Hult
4/5	H. V. Johnston
4/6	Keeney - Kurz
4/7	Lang - Libby
4/8	Maxmiliam - Milburn
4/9	Neal - Quain
4/10	Raaen - Russell
4/11	Sand - Stegner
4/12	Stickney - Sweetman
4/13	Tabeau - Trinkka
4/14	Waldo - Woodward
4/15	<i>The First Poet of North Dakota Paintings in Taxicabs (Draft)</i>
4/16	Introduction
4/17	Chapter I
4/18	Chapter 2
4/19	Chapter 3
4/20	Chapter 4
5/1	Chapter 5
5/2	Chapter 6
5/3	Footnotes, Appendix and Index
	<i>Paintings in Taxicabs (Final manuscript)</i>
5/4	Introduction
5/5	Chapter 1
5/6	Chapter 2
5/7	Chapter 3
5/8	Chapter 4
5/9	Chapter 5
5/10	Chapter 6
5/11	Footnotes and appendices
5/12	Index
5/13	<i>Paintings in Taxicabs (Galley proof, incomplete)</i>
5/14	Speech
5/15	You and I

Poetry and Photographs: A way into the Meaning of Space, Resources and Life Styles of North Dakota, 1974-1976 Series

5/16 Proposal, 1974
 5/17 Notes
 5/18 Poem Drafts
 5/19 Poem Drafts
 5/20 Poem Drafts
 5/21 Poem Drafts (typed)
 5/22 Poem Drafts - North Dakota towns
 5/23 Poem Drafts (typed copies)
 5/24 *Illusions in Reality* (typed manuscript)
The Fact and the Fantasies
 5/25 Manuscript
 5/26 Manuscript
 6/1 Manuscript (final)
In Sights and Double Vision
 6/2 Poems
 6/3 Manuscript (draft)
 6/4 Manuscript (final)
The Quest and the Questions
 6/5 Poems
 6/6 Manuscript (draft)
 6/7 Manuscript (final)
 Newspaper clippings
 6/8 ABM, 1974-1976
 6/9 Coal, 1974-1975
 6/10 Garrison Diversion, 1975
 6/11 Water and floods, 1975
 6/12 General, 1972-1975
 6/13 Slide title boards

Publications Series

6/14 *Above Time*, 1966
 6/15 *The Fact and the Fantasies*, 1976
 6/16 *Fargo Five*
 6/17 *Faulkner on Love*, 1974
 6/18 "The First Poet of North Dakota," in *North Dakota History*, 1957
 6/19 *Goodbye*, 1970
 6/20 *John, Where are You?*, 1967
 6/21 *Lazy Lover*, 1966
 6/22 *The Man on the Balcony*, 1968
 6/23 *One Squeaking Straw*, 1958
 6/24 *Paintings in Taxicabs*, 1965
 7/1 Poetry (copies)
 7/2 *Poetry North*, 1970

- 7/3 *Poetry North at the 1968 Red River Annual Art Exhibition, 1968*
- 7/4 *Poet's Circle, 1940-1941*
- 7/5 *Poet's Circle, 1941-1942*
- 7/6 *Portrait, 1971*
- 7/7 *The Quest and the Questions, 1976*
- 7/8 *Six Poets of the Red River Valley, 1971*
- 7/9 *Stackers of Wheat, 1951*

Reviews Series

- 7/10 *Men and Tin Kettles*
- 7/11 *One Squeaking Straw*
- 7/12 *Paintings in Taxicabs*
- 7/13 *Poetry North*

North Dakota State University Series

- 7/14 American Association of University Professors, NDSU Chapter, 1955-1964
- 7/15 Elliott Millner affair, 1971
- 7/16 Name change of NDAC, 1958
- 7/17 North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1951-1970
- 7/18 North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies exhibition programs, 1952-1956
- Poetry North*
- 8/1 1966-1967
- 8/2 1967-1968
- 8/3 1968-1969
- 8/4 1969-1970
- 8/5 1970-1971

Art Galleries Programs Series

- 8/6 Fort Ransom Summer Art, 1964-1965
- 8/7 Red River Art Center pamphlets, 1966-1967
- Rourke Art Gallery programs
- 8/8 1960-1961
- 8/9 1962-1963
- 8/10 1964
- 8/11 1965
- 8/12 1966
- 8/13 1967
- 8/14 1968
- 8/15 1969
- 8/16 1970
- 8/17 1971

