Finding Aid to the
Richard E. Lyons Papers

Lyons, Richard Eugene, 1920-2000
Richard E. Lyons Papers, 1936-1997
10 linear ft.
Collection number: Mss 259
Tapes 346-360
Reel to Reel 121

OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to an earlier accession (Mss 10) of the Richard Lyons Papers
Finding Aid to an earlier accession (Mss 151) of the Richard Lyons Papers

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

Provenance: Donated by Cressida Lyons and Christopher Lyons, 2000, (Acc. 2608).

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Copyrights: The Institute does not own the copyrights.

Citation: [Identification of item]. Richard Lyons Papers, MS 259, 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 that 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. In 1950 after two years, Mr. Lyons came to North Dakota Agricultural College where he held a duel position as order librarian and instructor in English. His early work connected with the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies where he researched a proposed anthology of North Dakota writers. In 1959 Mr. Lyons returned full time to the English Department, and that same year he 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 to teach English until his retirement in 1981.

Lyons was a published poet and a graphic artist. Though he concentrated on poetry, he exhibited his prints nationally and some of his writing concerns the visual arts. At Miami University, he was a member of the Poet’s Circle. Numerous poems by Mr. Lyons have been published in periodicals including The New Yorker, The Virginia Quarterly Review and The Kenyon 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), Racer and Lame (1975) and Scanning the Land (1980). In addition to these publications, Mr. Lyons also operated a small printing press in his home on which he produced the publications of Merrykit Press. His first Merrykit publication was Eclogues in Blue (1947).

Richard Lyons was a member of the College English Association, the American Studies Association, the Rourke Art Gallery and Phi Kappa Phi. He was married in 1942 to Marjorie Dunkel. They had two children, Christopher and Cressida. Lyons retired from NDSU in 1982 and 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

The Richard Lyons Papers supplement those donated to the Institute in 1972 & 1976, (processed as Mss 10) and 1985 (processed as Mss 151). See separate finding aid to those collections. The focus of this latest collection is his poetry. This collection represents the last of Mr. Lyons’ work. Where possible the original arrangement of the papers has been maintained. In addition to his poetry, this collection contains drama, fiction, papers written as a student, nonfiction, slide shows, and a small collection of letters. A few letters from poet John Crowe Ransom also are included.

This collection also contains essays written in 1947 and 1948 by veterans of World War II who were taking an English class from Mr. Lyons while he taught at Miami University. These essays document the men’s experiences during the war. There are also the letters of C.E. Dunkel written during his military service in World War I. A small collection of his wife Marjorie Dunkel’s poetry is also included. The papers have been organized into fourteen series: Poetry publications, Poetry collections, Individual poems, Collected poems, Poetry notebooks, Dramatic writing, Fiction, Big Sea, Nonfiction, School papers, Slide shows, World War II themes, Subject files, and Cassettes and tapes.
The **Poetry Publications Series** contains a substantial number of poetry chapbooks that Mr. Lyons produced on his Merrykit Press. There is a small number of Mr. Lyons’ poems that were published in periodicals. This series also contains Mr. Lyons’ book *Paintings in Taxicabs* and a collection of slides associated with that book. The slides are, for the most part, photographs of art pieces owned by North Dakota residents. Many of these slides were used to illustrate *Paintings in Taxicabs*. The publications in this series are arranged alphabetically by title.

The **Poetry Collections Series** contains typescripts of Lyons’ poetry collections. These were not originally organized in any way, and they are filed here alphabetically by title.

The **Individual Poems Series** contains a large number of individual typescripts of poems that were found unorganized among Mr. Lyons’ papers. These also have been arranged alphabetically. Untitled individual poems and untitled collections of poems can be found at the end of this series.

The **Collected Poems Series** contains typescripts of poems that Mr. Lyons had organized in boxes by date. The poems were placed in files in order to maintain Mr. Lyons’ organizational scheme. This series contains two different collections that cover roughly the same chronological period. One collection was labeled “Printed Poems” followed by the dates of the poems that are included. The other collection was labeled “Poems” followed by the inclusive dates and “Published and Unpublished.” Both collections cover the years from 1939 through 1981.

The **Poetry Notebooks Series** contains the poems as found in twenty-one notebooks compiled by Mr. Lyons. The contents of the individual notebooks were filed as Mr. Lyons left them, but the notebooks themselves are arranged chronologically.

The **Dramatic Writing Series** contains plays that Mr. Lyons wrote. These plays are filed alphabetically.

The **Fiction Series** contains typescripts of various short fiction that Mr. Lyons wrote. These were found unorganized and have been filed alphabetically.

The **Big Sea Series** contains material associated with Mr. Lyons novel *The Big Sea*. Two complete versions that do not appear in earlier Lyons collections are included here. These versions are respectively labeled “Original Effort” and “Primary Copy.” This series also contains a large amount of research material that Mr. Lyons found and created as he prepared to write this novel. The research material includes index cards, handwritten notes, a project description created to secure funding, maps, photographs, and advertisements circa 1910.

The **Nonfiction Series** contains prose written by Mr. Lyons. These papers have been filed alphabetically, and most are undated.

The **School Papers Series** contains papers written by Mr. Lyons when he was a student. This series includes a typescript of Mr. Lyons master’s thesis, *Fable from a North Window*. The rest of this series consists largely of criticism and critiques of other writers’ work. The series begins with his thesis but otherwise is organized alphabetically.
The Slide Show Series contain the slides, note cards, and poetry collections of four slide shows that Mr. Lyons created. The slide shows are based on four of Mr. Lyons poetry collections: Scanning the Land, The Quest and the Questions, Insights and Double Visions, and The Facts and the Fantasies.

The Correspondence Series contains both incoming and outgoing letters from 1965 to 1997. The correspondence with poet John Crowe Ransom and The Kenyon Review have been collected in one of the files of this series.

The World War II Themes Series contains essays written by World War II veterans. These themes were written in 1947 and 1948 by veterans who were taking an English class taught by Mr. Lyons. The essays offer researchers firsthand accounts of American soldiers’ experiences during the war. They were the basis for later works by Mr. Lyons.

The Subject File Series includes material on a variety of topics. There are articles about Mr. Lyons, reviews and criticisms of Mr. Lyons’ writing, contracts and copyright paperwork, papers connected to Mr. Lyons’ poem about the assassination of Martin Luther King The Man on the Balcony, Mr. Lyons’ drawings, and poetry by Mr. Lyons’ wife Marjorie Dunkel. This series also contains other publication of the Merrykit Press including, Back in ’18: The Letters of C.E. Dunkel from World War I; Faulkner on Love: A Letter; The Adventures of Dr. Dork, by Cameron Lyons; and On the Occasion of the Launching of the Red Earth Satellite Sputnik by Tom McGrath.

The Tape and Cassette Series contains fourteen cassette tapes and one reel to reel tape. The cassette collection contains Mr. Lyons poetry collection A Cast of Nameless Characters, which was published only on cassette tape, tapes that correspond with Mr. Lyons’ slide shows, (see slide show series) various poetry readings by Mr. Lyons, and recordings of Mr. Lyons appearance on various radio shows. The single reel to reel tape in this collection contains Mr. Lyons reading several of his poems and a recording of news reports about a tornado that hit Fargo. These tapes can be found in the Institute’s cassette tape and reel to reel tape collection.

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Lot Again, undated
Love Dirge Two, Dec. 24, 1943, Nov. 28, 1965
Love is More, Oct. 24, 1948
Love is Not All, 1948, Oct. 23, 1965
Love Song, Sadly, Feb. 28, 1970
Low Tide, undated
Loyal Citizen, undated
Magician, undated
The Man, undated
The Maps Were Splendid, undated
Medea and Absyrtus, 1939
Message, undated, Nov. 19, 1966
Mildew in the Mind, undated
Millet Begins to Sketch, undated
Mirage, undated
Metal Detector, undated
Moon Rock, undated
Motel, 1966, undated
Moving, undated
The Muck in the Dream Was Real, undated
Mutation, undated
My Each Gethsemane, undated
My Last Experience, undated
The Naked Window, undated
Natural Selection, undated
Nectarines and Peaches, April 25, 1944
Neither Here Nor There, 1969
The Neuter Man, undated
New Administration, undated
New Apartment, undated
New Messiahs, May 31, 1970
New Routine, undated
The New Wheel Chair, undated
New York, undated
New Question, undated
Nightmare, 1954
Night Nurse, 1949, undated
Night without Starts, Jan. 31, 1942
Night, undated
No, undated
No Asylum, undated
Nocturnes in the New Age
A Note for My Dossier in the Files of the F.B.I., Feb. 10, 1968
Notes from a Seminar, Feb. 15, 1949
A Note to Thoreau, undated
Nothing Else, undated, July 15, 1969
Nevertheless, undated
New Words Wouldn’t Cover Our Errors, undated
Observation, undated
Ocean Floor, 1948
October 26th, undated
An Ode, Sept. 17, 1982
Office Blues, Dec. 28, 1976
Off the Record, undated
Of Robert Lowell, undated
Old Appointment, undated
Old Man, undated
Old Water, undated
One of These Days, 1956
On Love, Sept. 7, 1952
On Modern Poetry, Oct. 16, 1986
On Reason, Sept. 7, 1952
On the Road, undated
On TV, undated
The Ordeal of Mrs. Sheldon, undated
Opaque Water Color, Dec. 13, 1952
Orpheus Again, undated
Out of Control, undated
Oxford, Ohio, 9:00 PM, July 26, 1948
Paper Glut, undated
Parable, undated
The Party Thundered, the Words Poured, May 12, 1960
Pastoral, undated
The Patriarch, undated
Peace is the Sun, 1949
Piano Player, undated
Piazza Quindici Martiri, undated
Picture of Children, undated
Pine Siskins, undated
Poem On My Grandfather Lyons, undated

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Poor Richard, 1939
Portrait of an Officer, undated
Portrait, Jan. 3, 1971
Pregnancy, undated
Proem, undated
Proposed These Song for Atlantis, A Rock Group, Aug. 2, 1969
Prouts Neck, undated
Public Address, undated
Public Address VI, undated
Public Penance, undated
Quiet Curio, undated
The Race Track by Albert T. Ryder, Feb. 4, 1957
The Rain Forest, undated
Raking Leaves, Nov. 8, 1972
Random Alleys, May 21, 1948
The Red Coats are Coming, Jan. 14, 1961
Refugee Chorus, undated
Remembered Plum, undated
Reminiscences of Lady Jane, undated
Retrospect, undated
Requiem for Spring, undated
Retirement, undated
Rev. Morton Sword, undated
Reward, undated
The Right Man, undated
Robinson Shaw, undated
The Rooms Will Never Be Clean, undated
Rose, undated, 1956
Round Trip to Nowhere, July 10, 1970
Runner Within, undated
Rut, Oct. 13, 1961
Salt, undated
The Second Coming Was the Last, undated, 1970
Second Thoughts, undated
Security, undated
Sediment, undated
Self-Defense, undated
Sept. 1st, 1945, undated
Sere, undated
Shadow, undated
The Shaker Village, undated
Ship in a Squall by Washington Alston, undated
Shooting, undated
Sight Bite, undated
Silius Cleon, undated
Sow Descent, undated
Slow Reader, undated
Small Towns, undated
Socrates, undated
Song, Oct. 10, 1961
Song in the Eye, undated
Song of the Dispensary, March 26, 1975
Song of the Lost Ark, 1968
Song of Myself, Oct. 16, 1966
Sounds in Silence, undated
Space x3, undated, July 12, 1954
Sparrows, undated
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, undated
Speak to Me, undated
Stackers of Wheat, undated
Stiff Spring, undated
Still Life, Oct. 18, 1948
Still Out of Bounds, 1968
Stop, undated
A Story for Christopher, undated
Strange Passage, undated
Sufferers, undated
Sulphur and Molasses, undated
Summer in the Mind, 1962, undated
Summer Morning, undated
Summer Solstice, undated
Sunflowers on the Wall, undated
Sunrise at Sunset, undated
Surprise, 1970, undated
Swift, undated
The Temptation, undated
Tenants Harbor, undated
That’s Mine, March 22, 1967
This Happy Land of Sisyphus, March 9, 1969
This Private Earth, undated
Three in One, undated
Three-Ring Circus, undated
Three Variations on Hay, undated
Ticking Streams, undated
Tide, undated
The Tides of Time, undated
The Tigress, By Darrel Austin, Jan. 26, 1957
Time, undated
Timothy, undated
Tired of Being a Bother, of the Endless Little Things I Cannot Keep from Thinking, undated
The Toast, undated
To a Soldier in Africa, undated
To Future Generations, April 18, 1955
To the Older Members of P.C., undated
To Santa Elena, Mexico, undated
To Sit So, undated
To Succor the Bereaved, undated
To the Several Inquisitors, undated
Too Bad Aubade, Sept. 7, 1952
The Tower Ticker, Feb. 1, 1966
Trailer Court, Oct. 25, 1948
Trapped, undated
Trapped in Reality, undated
Travel, undated
Trip to Neutrality, undated
T.S. Eliot, undated
The Turning Mind, The Broken Door, undated
Truth in Advertising, undated
Two Sides of a Triangle, May 11, 1969
Tyler, undated
Unforewarnable, undated
Used Lives, Dec. 24, 1975
Variations on a Theme
Verge, undated
Victim, undated
Victoria, undated
Vinnies’s Last Slam, undated
Visibles, undated
Waiting, undated
Waiting to be Hunted, undated
Wake Me, Wake Me, undated
Wait, undated
Walter, undated
War Game, undated
Warm Words From A Stranger, undated, 1965
Washington Coast, undated
We, undated
Wedding, undated
What the Padre Said, undated
When I Died, undated
When the Machine Stopped, Nov. 26, 1975
White Blues, Aug. 28, 1973
White Lava, undated
The White Moon, May 22, 1961
White Noise, May 15, 1961
Wilson, undated
Windy Net, undated
Winter Sun, undated
White Fargo, Jan. 18, 1970
Winter Love, Jan. 9, 1943
World of Little Time, undated
You and I, undated
Your hand on Mine, undated
You See, She Said, undated

5/5 Untitled Poems March 22, 1940-Sept. 4, 1993
5/6 Untitled Poems, undated
5/8 Untitled Collections, undated
5/9 Untitled Collections, undated
5/10 Untitled Collections, undated
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**Collected Poems Series**

Printed Poems 1939-1960
5/14 Poems, 1939-1945
5/15 Poems, 1946-undated
5/16 Poems, undated
Printed Poems 1961-1970
5/17 Poems, 1961-undated
5/18 Poems, undated
Printed Poems 1971-1981
5/19 Poems, 1971-undated
6/1 Poems, undated
Poems 1982-
6/2 Poems, undated

Poems 1939-1949 Published and Unpublished
6/3 Poems, 1939-1945
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8/8  Mother Love, April 2nd, 1966
8/9  Optimism, April 3rd, 1966
8/10 Plays In One Act, 1992
8/11 Recovery of the Hammer, Sept. 1958
8/12 Round Trip to Motley, Dec. 26th, 1963
8/13 Spring Dialogue On How Not to Read the Daily Paper While Listening to the Radio, undated
8/14 Surcease of Pain, 1964, 1996
8/15 Television Minute: Independence, April 2nd, 1966
8/16 The Tongue, undated
8/18 Untitled Partial Transcript, undated

**Fiction Series**

8/19  Always Now, undated
      Billy, undated
      Coon Cat, undated
      Crowd, undated
      Elmer the Great, undated
      Fiction and Fables, 1992
8/20  Fiction and Fables, undated
      Fragments from a Discarded Dream, undated
      A Front Porch, undated
      A Gentle Murder, undated
      How I Learned to Write Post Modern Poetry, undated
      Images, undated
      Jeff, undated
8/21  Joshua’s Ride, undated
      Leadership Leading, undated
      Miss America, undated
      Oblivion, undated
      Once Upon a Time, 1944
      The Planet, undated
      Robert’s Quest, undated
      The Room, undated
      The Slide, March 30th, 1988
      Stevie, undated
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      Versatile Verticals, undated
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8/22  Untitled Fiction April 9th, 1963-Nov. 29th, 1985
**Big Sea Series**

8/23  “Original Effort” pages 1-164, undated
8/24  pages 165-380, undated
8/25  pages 381-564, undated
8/26  pages 565-728, undated
8/27  The Big Sea “Primary Copy” pages 1-165, 1980
8/28  pages 166-324, 1980
9/1   Project Description, undated
9/2   Research Material: Maps, Photographs, and Advertisements, circa 1910
9/3   Research Material, Index Cards
9/4   Handwritten Notes, undated
9/5   Handwritten Notes, undated
9/6   Handwritten Notes, undated
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**Nonfiction Series**

9/8   Aspects Relating to the Death of Mary Robinson, undated
      Analogy, undated
      The Blurred World of Contemporary Literature, undated
      Breathing, undated
      Byron, undated
      To Carl Abshire, Esquire – A Refutation, Oct. 1943
      Computers, undated
      A Death, undated
      Driven, undated
      Expletives, undated
      Fiction, undated
      Frontier Mind, undated
      Heritage, undated
      Hill, undated
      Ideas, undated
      The Impossible Dream, undated
      In Search of the Past, undated
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      Symphony Pathetique … Tschaikowsky, undated
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9/9  
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**School Papers Series**

**Fiction:**  
9/10  
A Thesis: Fable From a North Window, 1947  
9/11  
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**Criticism and Critiques:**  
9/12  
The Aristocratic Woman and the Genteel Tradition, Jan. 3, 1960  
Aspects of Art in the Mid-Thirties, no date  
The Authority of the Witch of Edmonton, no date  
The Blithedale Romance, no date  
Browning’s “By the Fireside” “Two in the Compagna” and Dorme’s “The Ecstasy” no date  
Brownson and Protestantism, Jan. 26, 1960  
Bussy D’Ambois, no date  
The Character, no date  
Charles Jackson and the Critics, no date  
The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck, no date  
9/13  
Commentary on “The Secret of Chaucer’s Pardoner,” by Walter Clyde Curry, no date  
“The Decorative Arts of Early New Jersey,” by Margaret E. White, no date  
The Duchess of Malfi, no date  
An Essay on the Gothic Novel, no date  
Everyman in His Humor, no date  
A High E.Q., no date  
The Plague by Albert Camus, no date  
Honest John Vane by John W. Deforest, no date  
The Knight of the Burning Pestle, no date  
The Lady of Pleasure, no date  
The Malcontent, no date  
Merton M. Sealt's, “Herman Melville’s ‘I and My Chimney’” no date  
The New Poor Law in “Margaret Graham” no date  
A New Way to Pay Old Debts, no date  
A Nonorganization Man, Dec. 9, 1959  
On the Nature of Poetry as an Art Form, no date  
9/14  
Ormond, by Charles B. Brown, no date  
Painting and Sculpture in New Jersey by William H. Gerdts, March 29, 1965  
Picasso in America, 1911-1940, Summer 1960  
Radio Drama: A Partial Survey, no date  
Richard Realf Enters Kansas, no date  
Shades of Mr. Poor’s Father, Spring 1960
Social and Economic Aspects of Art Consumption, 1900-1904, no date
The Shoemaker’s Holiday, no date
Sister Carrie, no date
9/15 Some Social and Theatrical Aspects of Drama during the American Revolution, Fall 1959
Stephen Crane, no date
Tourneur’s “The Revenger’s Tragedy,” no date
A Trick to catch the Old One, no date
T.S. Eliot and Robert Browning, no date
The Use of the Word Rose in the Major Works of Hawthorne, no date
“The Ways of the Hour” by James F. Cooper, no date
What Must I Do To Be Saved, Nov. 18, 1959
The Widening Strata of Art Consumers: A Limited Survey, no date
William Dean Howells, no date

Slide Show Series

9/17 Scanning the Land, Part 1 1980
9/18 Scanning the Land, Part 2 1980
9/19 Scanning the Land, Part 3 1980
9/20 Scanning the Land, Part 4 1980
10/1 The Quest and the Questions, 1976
10/2 Insights and Double Visions, 1975
10/3 The Facts and the Fantasies, 1976

Correspondence Series

10/4 Outgoing correspondence, Nov. 10, 1965-July 13, 1996
10/5 Incoming correspondence, July 30, 1973-Dec. 25, 1989
10/6 Incoming correspondence, Jan. 11, 1990-Nov. 3, 1997

World War II Veterans Themes Series

10/8 Discharge, no date
10/9 Individuals, May 26, 1948
10/10 Army-Overseas, May 29, 1947
10/11 Army of Occupation, May 26, 1948
10/12 Air Corps, no date
10/13 Marines, no date
10/14 Navy, Basic, no date
10/15 Army, Basic, OCS, May 28, 1948
10/17  Home Front and Back Home, May 26, 1948
10/18  Pacific Islanders, no date
10/19  Graveyards, PX, Officers Club, no date

Subject Files Series

10/20  Articles about Richard Lyons, Aug. 11, 1974-June 6, 1996
10/21  Drawings, Illustrations, and Portraits, no date
10/22  Marjorie Dunkel Poetry Publications
       And If Not Why Not, 1986
       The Birds of the Sixties, 1977
       Brown Dog Blues, 1978
       Gifts, 1979
       Random Moments, 1986
       Time Capsule, 1980
10/24  A Chronological List of Merrykit Publications, no date
10/25  List of Computer Files and Disks, no date
10/26  List of Computer Files and Disks, no date
10/28  Gallery 20 Exhibition, April 1983
10/29  The Man on the Balcony, Various related Documents, 1968
10/31  Other Publications
       Back In ’18: The Letters of C.E. Dunkel From World War I, 1988
       Back In ’18: The Letters of C.E. Dunkel From World War I, Part 2, 1988
       Faulkner on Love: A Letter, 1974
       The Adventures of Dr. Dork by Cameron Lyons, 1989
       On the Occasion of the Launching of the Red Earth Satellite Sputnik by Tom
       McGrath, 1963
10/34  Small Notebooks, 1983-1986

Tape & Cassettes Series

Cassette #  Cassettes:
346    A Cast of Nameless Characters, sides A and B, 1978
347    A Cast of Nameless Characters, sides C and D, 1978
348    Pierced with Worms, Parts 1-4,
       Colloquies, no date
349    Chicken Licken, 3, (numbers indicate tape counter) no date
       Three Ring Circus, 18
       Zephyr, 45
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350 The Facts and the Fantasies (master), no date
351 In Sights and Double Vision (master), no date
352 The Quest and the Question (master), no date
353 Poetry and electronic music, Richard Lyons and Ray Kril, no date
354 Poetry reading, Richard Lyons with Mike Olsen on guitar
355 Poetry and Jazz, Bison Room, Richard Lyons, Phil Kienholz, Joe McClellan, and Sam Breteke, Dec. 3, 1965
356 Side One, Poetry and Jazz, Richard Lyons and others, 1968
   Side Two, Richard Lyons on the radio show, Arts Around Us, Feb. 13, 1981
358 Poetry On The Prairie with Richard Lyons, radio show, March 8, 1980
359 Side One, Poetry readings by Richard Lyons, Tom McGrath, David Martinson, and Dale Jacobson, Jan. 13, 1972
   Side Two, various music

Tape#   Reel To Reel Tape:
121 Side One, Sept. 2, 1961 (numbers indicate tape counter)
   Noah Canto I, 28-72
   Fargo Tornado and News Media, 138-162
   Digressions on Canto I, 258-471
   Landscape, 472-502
   Buzzards, 503-540
   Side Two, Sept. 3, 1961
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   Time Which a while I Sit, 15-35
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   Stackers of Wheat, 92-111
   Claim, 112-322
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