

Harry Roskolenko:

A Preliminary Inventory of His Papers in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Roskolenko, Harry, 1907-1980
Title:	Harry Roskolenko Papers
Dates:	ca. 1941-1968
Extent:	2 boxes (.84 linear feet)
Abstract:	This collection of works of American writer and poet Harry Roskolenko includes typescripts of poetry, autobiographies, two novels, a "screen story," and a dramatic verse play.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-03614
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 1969 (Reg. no. 5063)
Processed by:	Caitlin Murray, 2006
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Scope and Contents

This collection of works of American writer and poet Harry Roskolenko includes typescripts of poetry, autobiographies, two novels, a "screen story," and a dramatic verse play. Reflecting his writing and publishing in both the United States and Australia, the collection spans 1941 to 1968 and is arranged alphabetically in a single Works series.

Poetry comprises the largest segment of works with over 850 poems in various stages of revision, written from approximately 1941 to 1957. There are drafts of published and unpublished poems, as well as photocopies of published poems from the 1950s. A typescript for the collection of poems, *The Blood Tree* (1950), is accompanied by Roskolenko's letter to editor Robert Glauber stating that this "much revised manuscript" contains thirteen new poems--"the Paris Poems"--while "I have taken out about ten poems."

Manuscripts for two of Roskolenko's three published autobiographies are present, *When I Was Last on Cherry Street* (1965), and *The Terrorized: 1945-1950* (1968). The folder that housed the miscellaneous pieces of the *Cherry Street* autobiography reads, "Great reviews but not great sales." This work, like others, chronicled his early years on New York City's Lower East Side.

The collection contains both galleys and revised typescripts of the novel *Black Is a Man*, about racism, published in 1953; and *Lan-Lan*, his novel about Cambodia between 1925 and 1931, published by New American Library in 1962.

Also present are an original screen story, "Command Performance," and a dramatic verse play about T. S. Eliot titled "Journey of the Five (Of Whom Three Were One)." The typescript of "Journey of the Five" is heavily revised and includes a note on the title page that states, "Read at Oxford. T. S. Eliot was present...."

Series I. Works, ca. 1941-1968

<i>Black Is a Man</i> (1953), novel	Box 1
Typescript, temporary title "'Nigger' Jimmy (a modern folk-fable)"	
Carbon copy with minor revisions	Folder 1
Top copy, revised	Folder 2
Galley inserts	Folder 3
"Command Performance," 1952, typescript, uncorrected, original screen story by Harry Roskolenko and Alexander Klein	Folder 4
"Journey of the Five (Of Whom Three Were One)," 1949, typescript with revisions, dramatic verse play	Folder 5
<i>Lan-Lan</i> (1962), novel	
Typescript with revisions, includes publishing information and Signet Books Press release	Folder 6-7
Galleys (*removed to galley files)	Folder *
Poetry, ca. 1941-1957, typescripts	
"The Blood Tree," 1950, poetry collection	Folder 8
"Poems submitted, published and unpublished, 1941-...; various versions...1943-1951, published widely"	Folder 9
"Poems in draft form, written from 3/10/42 to date, in the army"; includes poems written for "Satyr and the City"	Box 2 Folder 1
Poems, most published in magazines, and in <i>A Second Summary</i> (Melbourne, 1944) and <i>Notes from a Journey: Poems</i> (Melbourne, 1947); includes lists of poems throughout	Folder 2

"Various poems published widely; photocopies of poems published" through 1957	Folder 3-4
<i>The Terrorized: 1945-1950</i> (1968), autobiography, typescript with revisions	Folder 5-6
<i>When I Was Last on Cherry Street</i> (1965), autobiography, typescript with revisions; includes publisher's letter to Roskolenko	Folder 7