

# Ray Roberts:

## A Preliminary Inventory of his Collection of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Roberts, Ray
<b>Title:</b>	Ray Roberts Collection of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
<b>Dates:</b>	1963-2001, undated (bulk 1978-1992)
<b>Extent:</b>	1 box (.42 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Ray Roberts Collection of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis contains letters, notes, memos, clippings, and memorabilia dating from 1963 to 2001. The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence from Onassis, dating from 1978 to 1992. Roberts acquired the first of the materials while working with Onassis at Doubleday & Co. The collection is arranged as Correspondence (2 folders), Clippings (3 folders), and Memorabilia (1 folder).
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-05151
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gift, 2009 (2009-10-02-G)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Stephen Cooper, 2009
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Scope and Contents

The Ray Roberts Collection of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis contains letters, notes, memos, clippings, and memorabilia dating from 1963 to 2001. The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence from Onassis, dating from 1978 to 1992. Roberts acquired the first of the materials while working with Onassis at Doubleday & Co. The collection is arranged as Correspondence (2 folders), Clippings (3 folders), and Memorabilia (1 folder).

Onassis began her publishing career at Viking in 1975 and became an associate editor at Doubleday in early 1978. There are 50 letters from Onassis to Roberts, more than half of which were sent between 1978 and 1980 while Onassis and Roberts were colleagues. Most of her letters are a page long, written on Doubleday memo paper or half-leaves of Doubleday letterhead.

The letters are usually handwritten, signed familiarly "Jackie xo" or with a similar closing. During her time at Doubleday, Onassis worked closely with Roberts. Her letters are enthusiastic, friendly and playful.

Most of Onassis's letters are witty and brief, addressing editorial matters or providing background on an enclosed letter or document. She and Roberts exchanged ideas and information frequently and effectively. Onassis often forwarded letters she received or copies of letters she wrote to Roberts with a memo, asking his opinion, making suggestions or pointing out a detail in the letter.

In the latter part of 1980, Roberts left Doubleday for Little, Brown in Boston. Though their professional relationship had ended, Onassis and Roberts continued to correspond about books and planned lunch dates.

In one letter, Onassis thanks Roberts: "You are so adorably generous and I am so grateful. The glories of my library are all presents from you." (October 30, 1982).

A year later, she writes, "It's Autumn in New York and you are Santa Claus—I can't believe the marvelous pile of books you sent me—*Julia*, Coastal New England, Balthus, Karsh—they are all treasures." (October 15, 1983).

Still grateful for Roberts's generosity years later, she wrote in December 1990: "I cant BELIEVE it—Little Brown will fire you if you keep giving me these treasures."

The collection also contains original and photocopied letters to and from other correspondents including Cornell Capa, Deborah Turbeville, and Diana Vreeland. Also present are a printed invitation to a cocktail party following the 1978 premiere of *The Big Picture*; ephemera from a ballet and opera performance Roberts attended with Onassis; a copy of the exhibition catalog *A Frenchman in Camelot, The Decoration of the Kennedy White House by Stephane Boudin*; and photocopies of Onassis letters, news clippings, and excerpts from periodicals about Onassis and her family.

## **Separated Material**

A folder to carry manuscripts, bought in Paris, France, by Onassis as a gift for Roberts, was transferred to the Ransom Center's Personal Effects Collection.

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## **Index Terms**

### **People**

Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929-1994

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Correspondence, Roberts, 1978-1992	<b>Container 1.1</b>
Correspondence, general, 1978-1993, undated	<b>Container 1.2</b>
Clippings, Onassis, 1963-2001	<b>Container 1.3</b>
Clippings, Onassis memorial, 1994-1998	<b>Container 1.4</b>
Clippings, John F. Kennedy, Jr., 1988-2000	<b>Container 1.5</b>
Memorabilia, 1964-1995, undated	<b>Container 1.6</b>