

**Poetry Society of Vermont
Records, 1947 -
Doc 548-549, 582-583, 817, MSA 405-406, 842, 864-867**

Introduction

This collection contains the records of the Poetry Society of Vermont, a state-wide organization that promotes public awareness of poetry. The collection was given to the Vermont Historical Society in December 2005 by the creating organization (ms. acc. no. 2005.10). Additional material was donated in 2014, 2018, 2019, and 2021; indexes to the *Mountain Troubadour* have been updated over the years. The collection is stored in 5 document storage boxes and seven flip-top archival boxes; it consumes 7.75 linear feet of shelf space.

Organizational History

The Poetry Society of Vermont (PSOV) was envisioned by Mary Newton Baldwin and founded on May 15, 1947, in Burlington, Vermont. The organization's first workshop meeting was held at the Wood Art Gallery in Montpelier on January 24, 1948. The organization attracted many prominent members including folk song collector Helen Hartness Flanders and Arthur Wallace Peach, English professor at Norwich University.

Two publications grew out statewide poetry readings and meetings. *The Mountain Troubadour* was first published in 1949 as a four-page newsletter and was later reformatted in 1956 as a poetry journal to showcase the work of PSOV members. *First Harvest*, a 74-page collection of poems by PSOV members, was published in 1954; *Second Harvest* followed in 1982. A Poetry Society of Vermont Anthology entitled *Brighten the Barn*, was published in 2007.

Part of the PSOV's mission is to encourage young poets. PSOV-sponsored annual High School Poetry Contests began in 1960 and have been run in cooperation with WCAX-TV ever since. Another educational program of the PSOV is the Creative Writing Contest for students in grades 1- 8, who participate through their schools.

In 1961 the PSOV recommended that the Vermont legislature honor Robert Frost as Poet Laureate of Vermont, a position he held until his death in 1963. Twenty-eight years later Galway Kinnell was appointed Vermont State Poet instead of the PSOV-backed William Daniel Mundell. A controversy ensued, complete with newspaper coverage, and eventually Mundell was crowned Poet Laureate of the PSOV.

The organization holds semi-annual meetings at which poems are critiqued and a winning poem is selected. The PSOV council, the governing and policy-making body of the organization, meets at least three times a year. Summer workshops have been offered in Fayston, Vermont, since 1970. The PSOV sponsors several contests during the year in which monies and certificates are awarded for winning poems; these poems are published in *The Troubadour* and on the organization's web site.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the organizational, historical, financial and poetical records of the Poetry Society of Vermont from 1947 to the present. These include founding documents, histories of the organization, membership lists, financial statements and ledgers, presidential letters, minutes of meetings, workshop and poetry reading materials, and information about published materials.

Two complete sets of the *Mountain Troubadour*, 1947-2019, are part of this collection. A paper index is included; the same index is online at: <http://vermonthistory.org/documents/digital/MountainTroubadourIndex.pdf>

The collection also includes scrapbooks containing newspaper articles, members' biographical information, memorabilia, photographs, and letters.

Related Collections

The Vermont Historical Society manuscript collection contains a small amount of information on the Poetry Society of Vermont in the Harold Rugg papers (Doc 91). Items in the VHS printed collection will be found in the main catalog under "Poetry Society of Vermont."

Inventory

A. Organizational Records

A1. Constitutions

- Doc 548:01 1963 constitution
- Letters and documents relating to 1973 and 1976 amendments
- 2002 constitution
- 2018 by-laws and job descriptions

A2. Description and history

- 02 Description of PSOV organization
- 2005 history of the PSOV
- 1972 history of the PSOV
- Anonymous history of the PSOV
- "Vermont's Poetry society Turning Forty" by Marian Gleason
- "Forty Years of PSOV History" by Marian Gleason
- Letters of Mim Herwig, Mollie Baldwin, Frances Stockwell Lovell, Ruth Holden, Arthur Hewitt
- Article from *Time* magazine, 1970
- Article by Bettie Cassie Liddell, "The Story Begins in May, 1947"
- List of Presidents
- List of charter officers and council members

A3. Membership lists

- 03.1 List of charter members of the PSOV, 1947
List of Active Members of the PSOV in 1948
List of Associate Members of the PSOV in 1952
List of Active Members of the PSOV in 1952
Membership lists for 1971 to 1977
Membership lists for 1980, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988,
Membership lists for 1989, 1993, 1994, 1997, 1999
- 03.2 Membership lists for 2000-2009
- 03.3 Membership lists for 2010-2020
- 04 Membership cards, ca. 1976

A4. Founding of PSOV

- 05 Reprint of photo of women at Durham conference, 1946
List of charter members
List of original officers and council members
List of original committee appointments
List of active members, 1948

A5. Financial Records

- 06 Financial statements, 1966-1969
- 07 _____, 1966-1973
- 08 _____, 1972-1979
- 09 _____, 1976
- 10 _____, 1970-1979
- 11 _____, 1979-1986
- 12 _____, 1980-1989
- 13 Brown ledger, 1981-1987
- 14 Blue ledger, 1988-1990
- 15 _____, 1993-2000
- 16A _____, 2005-2006
- 16B Checking account, 2008-2010
- 16C 2010-2020

A6. Folder of Trust Monies for Awards

- 17 Specific material on Mary Baldwin bequest

A7. Presidential Letters, 1975 to date

- 18 Presidential Letters, 1975-2013

A8. Minutes of Council meetings

- 19 Council meetings, 1947-1950
- 20 _____, 1963-1966
- 21 _____, 1967-1973
- 22 _____, 1974-1976
- 23 _____, 1977-1979

- 24 _____, 1980- 1987 [gap: 1988-1994]
- 25 _____, 1995-2006
- 26 _____, 2007-2009
- 27 _____, 2010-2011
- 28 _____, 2012-2015 [gap: 2016-2017]
- 29 _____, 2018-2020

A9. Material relating to publication of *The Mountain Troubadour*

- 30 Letters, memos and notebooks on contests and awards
- Letters and documentation on issue of copyright
- Letters and documentation relating to financial concerns

A10. Materials relating to *Troubadour* Contests and Awards

- MSA 865:03 Descriptions of contests
- 04 Judging, 1972-1979
- 05 Contests, 1959, 1967-1975 (includes photographs)
- 06 _____, 1976-1997
- 07 _____, 2001
- 08 _____, 2002-2007

A11. Materials relating to the three PSOV anthologies

- Doc 548: 31 Descriptions of anthology process
- 32 Minutes of third anthology committee, 2005
- Doc 817:01 _____, _____, and 75th anniversary anthology

A12. Workshop Minutes and Materials

- MSA 405:01 Workshops, 1948, 1949
- 02 _____, 1947- 1955 (as documented in *The Mountain Troubadour*)
- 03 _____, 1950-1955
- 04 _____, 1956-59
- MSA 864:01 _____, 1965-1969
- 02 _____, 1970-1975
- 03 _____, 1976-1979
- 04 _____, 1980-1985
- 05 _____, 1986-1989
- 06 _____, 1990-1995
- 07 _____, 1996-2001
- 08 _____, 2002-2008
- MSA 865:01 _____, 2009-2012
- 02 _____, 2013-2014

A13. Materials relating to Poetry Readings

- MSA 406:01 Materials relating to Poetry Readings

A14. Materials relating to PSOV Web Site

- 02 Materials relating to PSOV Web Site

A15. Materials relating to Poet Laureate Selection

03 Materials relating to Poet Laureate Selection

A16 Miscellaneous

Doc 548:33 School Contests
 34 National Federation of State Poetry Societies
 35 Miscellaneous

B. Publications

Doc 549:01 *The Troubadour* (1947-2021)
 _____ (second set, 1947-2021)
 _____, index, 1947-2021
[Online index](#)

MSA 842:02 *First Harvest* (1954) (3 copies)
Second Harvest (1982) (2 copies)
Brighten the Barn (2007)

C. Scrapbooks

Doc 582:01 Black scrapbook, 1947-1964
 02 Blue three ring binder, 1947-1964 (see also box MSA 866:01-02)
 03 Green scrapbook, 1973-1979
 04 Green scrapbook, 1965-1979 (see also box MSA 866:03-05)
 05 Red scrapbook, 1965-1973
 06 White/Gray scrapbook, 1980-1982
 07 Green snake pattern scrapbook, 1981-1984
 08 Gray snake pattern scrapbook, 1980s-1990s
 09 Green scrapbook, 1981-1995 (see also box MSA 866:06-08)

Doc 583:01 Large red scrapbook, "Poet Laureate," William Mundell, 1912-1997
 02 Red scrapbook, 1996-1998
 03 Green scrapbook, 2000-2005
 04 Red scrapbook, 2004-2007
 05 Red scrapbook, "Gala," 2007
 06 Black scrapbook, Mad River Poets, 2003-2005
 07 Folder, Chris White's Photo Collection

Doc 817:02 Correspondence, biographies, presidents (including letters), 2005-2021
 :03 Outreach: Poem City (2014-2021), Poet Laureate, Poetry Readings,
 Festival of the Arts (Waitsfield)
 :04 Minutes, Spring 2020-2021 (Covid-19 Pandemic)

MSA 866:01 1947-1964 "vol. II" – folder 1 of 2
 02 _____ - folder 2 of 2
 03 1965-1979 "vol. II" – folder 1 of 3

04 _____ - folder 2 of 3
05 _____ - folder 3 of 3
06 1980-1995 “vol. II” – folder 1 of 3
07 _____ - folder 2 of 3
08 _____ - folder 3 of 3
MSA 867:01 1996-1999 – folder 1 of 2
02 _____ - folder 2 of 2

Carol Milkuhn
Leslie Rowell
Paul Carnahan
Peter Nelson
November 2007
Judy Safford

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