

**ALLEN TATE
AND
MARK VAN DOREN
CORRESPONDENCE
1940-1977**

MSS# 433

**Arranged and described by Molly Dohrmann
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**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
Jean and Alexander Heard Library
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ALLEN TATE/MARK VAN DOREN CORRESPONDENCE 1940-1977 WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

Biographical Notes

John Orley Allen Tate was born near Winchester, Kentucky November 19, 1899. He graduated from Vanderbilt University *Magna Cum Laude*, Phi Beta Kappa in 1922. During this time at Vanderbilt he became one of the Fugitive poets who published their magazine *The Fugitive* during the years 1922-1925. Later he contributed an essay to the Agrarian manifesto *I'll Take My Stand* (1930) and in 1936 he was co-editor with Herbert Agar of *Who Owns America?* He published poetry throughout his long career and was a master of several literary genres writing one novel *The Fathers* (1938), criticism, and biographies. Tate was also the editor at *The Sewanee Review* from 1944-46. He received many awards for his poetry including the Bollingen Prize in 1956 and held the Chair of Poetry at the Library of Congress in 1943-44.

Allen Tate was also a teacher with appointments at among others the Women's College of the University of North Carolina, Princeton, New York University, and the University of Minnesota where he taught from 1951 until his retirement in 1968.

He was married twice to the writer Caroline Gordon from 1924 to 1959. They had a daughter Nancy born in September 1924. After his divorce from Caroline Gordon in 1959 he married poet Isabella Gardner. And after his divorce from Gardner in 1966 he married his former student at Minnesota Helen Heinz. They had three sons, one of whom Michael Paul, died in an accident in infancy before his first birthday..His brothers are John Allen Tate (b.August 30, 1967) and Benjamin Bogan Tate born in December 18, 1969.

Tate lived in many places including England and France (on a Guggenheim Fellowship), New York, Minnesota, Sewanee, and at his farm Benfolly near Clarksville, Tennessee.

He had longtime friendships with writers Robert Penn Warren, Donald Davidson, Andrew Lytle, and John Peale Bishop. His friendship with poet and writer Mark Van Doren is recorded here in this archive of their correspondence. Other correspondence between these two is in Van Doren's papers at Columbia University.

Allen Tate converted to Roman Catholicism in 1950.

He died in Nashville, Tennessee in February 1979. His papers are at the Firestone Library at Princeton University

Mark Van Doren was an American poet, critic, and teacher . Born on June 13,1894 in Hope, Vermilion county, Illinois he graduated from the University of Illinois in 1914 and received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1920. He taught English at Columbia from 1920-1959. He was a renowned and dedicated teacher and a legendary classroom presence who inspired generations of Columbia students some of whom went on to have careers as writers and critics including poet Allen Ginsberg and writer, activist, and Trappist monk Thomas Merton.

Among his writings are *Collected Poems* which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1939, and *American and British Literature Since 1890* which he wrote with his brother Carl Van Doren.

He was married to novelist Dorothy Graffe Van Doren in 1922.

Mark Van Doren died in Torrington, Connecticut December 10, 1972. Today the students at Columbia College honor great teachers with the Mark Van Doren Award.

This Collection chronicles the literary and professional friendship of Allen Tate and Mark Van Doren.

Scope and Content Note

This small collection (.21linear feet) includes personal correspondence between Allen Tate and Mark Van Doren and his wife Mrs. Dorothy Van Doren and other correspondence that concerns Mark Van Doren. There are also poems by Tate, Christmas cards, photographs, and various other items that relate to their friendship over many years. Other correspondence can be found in Mark Van Doren's papers at Columbia University.

Folder Listing

Folder 1

Outgoing Correspondence Tate to Van Doren
1940-1967
26 Letters and postcards

Folder 2

Outgoing Correspondence Tate to Van Doren
1968-1972
20 Letters and postcards

Folder 3

Outgoing Correspondence Tate to Mrs. Dorothy Van Doren

1970-1977

6 Letters and postcards

Folder 4

Correspondence

5 Letters

Folder 5

Poems

Allen Tate to Mark Van Doren on his 75th Birthday, June 13, 1969, typescript

Mark Van Doren to Allen Tate about Allen Tate and his wife Helen, Jan. 6, 1967,
handwritten

Christmas card with poem by Tate about his infant twin sons John and Michael, 1967

Christmas card with poem by Allen Tate, 1971

Folder 6

Photographs

Photograph of a portrait of Allen Tate and his wife Caroline Gordon with their daughter Nancy

Photographic portrait of Allen Tate as a young man

Photographs of Tate's sons

- 1) John and Michael as infants (1967)
- 2) Tate with his son John Allen Tate (11 ½ months)
- 3) John Allen Tate aged 14 months in the nursery
- 4) John Allen Tate, 4 yrs., 4 months with Benjamin Bogan Tate, 2 yrs.
- 5) Photograph of Tate house in Sewanee, TN, Sept. 1968

Folder 7

Miscellaneous File

Promotional brochure for *Six American Poets*

Note about gift of Mark Van Doren of Tate's letters to Columbia University

Invitation to a poetry reading at the Pierpont Morgan Library in NYC December 9, 1980
by Allen Tate and John Hall Wheelock

Photocopy of entry on Allen Tate in *Contemporary Poets*

Handwritten card in loving memory of Michael Paul Tate (August 30, 1967-July 16, 1968)