

Session 4: James Merrill: Life and Archive

Hello. This will be a quick tour exhibit. I will mention some highlights and Justin Reed, a junior writer-in-residence here who worked with the Merrill archive this past summer, will play some audio and video selections as we go.

You all should have exhibit guides. The idea behind the exhibit is to reflect the strong connection between the JM Papers and JM: Life and Art. The cases are divided up by book sections and the guide reflects the finding aid. Each item has an entry in the guide, with a brief description, and a citation of where it is in the collection and where it is referenced in the book.

First we thought we'd start with a short video clip of JM speaking here in 1994 about the origins of his papers coming to WU. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxVwimVAf3U>

We don't have the christening gown in this exhibit but we do have his baby book...

Cases 1-2 – Love and Money – highlights

- Realia: baby book
- Personal Papers: Jimmy Merrill Marionettes
- Ephemera: "Among the Cottagers at Southampton" – "Master Jimmie Merrill"
- Manuscript: "Looking at Mummy" and "Lost in Translation"
- Correspondence: note to Zelly
- Photos: Lawrenceville school photo
- Publication: North Star: A Book of Poems
- Journal: being in love with Kimon Friar and mother's discovery of letter
- Correspondence: James Merrill to Hellen Merrill – elegy for Hans Lodeizen / "The Country..."

Cases 3-4 – Water Street – highlights

- Correspondence: early post card from James Merrill to David Jackson; and birthday letter/poem
- Personal Papers: from The Immortal Husband scrapbook: telegram from Charles Merrill to James Merrill
- Realia: portraits of James Merrill and David Jackson by Larry Rivers
- Publication: Short Stories printed by Claude Fredericks
- Manuscript: Stonington Novel fragment
- Personal Papers: "Happy Days in Stonington"
- Correspondence: James Merrill to Hellen Plummer about what Ephraim is revealing
- Journal: Ouija transcript speaking to Wallace Stevens
- Manuscript: "Voices from the Other World"
- Material toward books: notes toward The Seraglio

Cases 5-6 – Greece – highlights

- Photo: James Merrill and Maria Mitsotaki (JM's face bound due to Bell's palsy)
- Correspondence: Kimon Friar to James Merrill kiss-off letter
- Personal Papers: David Jackson drawing of house in Greece, sent to friends as Christmas card 1964
- Journal: James Merrill's notes toward what would become The (Diblos) Notebook
- Correspondence: James Merrill to David Hine about meeting Strato Mouflouzelis and about spiritual debates with Tony Harwood
- Journal: draft of letter to Tony Harwood about soul and spirituality
- Audio: James Merrill reading "In Monument Valley"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8rIDnBE55Q>
- Journal: in re DMC's unhappiness at Stonington; first lines of "The Kimono"

Cases 7-8 – The Other World – highlights

- Realia: homemade Ouija board
- Photo: Maya Deren still from Meshes in the Afternoon
- Journal: Tony Harwood describing his recent death
- Manuscript: "Lost 70s Novel"; "The Will" "Ephraim" A & P
- Ouija Board Transcript: higher powers begin revealing cosmology; communicating with Elizabeth Bishop
- Video: James Merrill reading "One Art" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ISvWtabStw>
- Journal: coming up with possible names for "Voices from Sandover"

Cases 9-10 – Love and Death – highlights

- Correspondence: James Merrill to Peter Hooten while PH is sleeping
- Ouija Board Transcript: getting relationship advice from Ephraim
- Photo: James Merrill, Peter Hooten, Stephen Yenser
- Journal: Mayo Clinic
- Manuscript: "Tony: Ending the Life" and untitled poem addressing Elizabeth Bishop
- Ephemera: The Image Maker
- Videotape: Voices from Sandover
- Audio: Interview with Tom Vitale <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNW0qdQ1f44>
- Publication: For James Merrill; David Jackson: Scenes From His Life; Volcanic Holiday
- Journal: draft of letter to Hellen Plummer about A Different Person; last poem draft "The Next to Last Scene"
- Realia: Death mask

Now please take some time to browse the exhibit on your own and Justin will play more video and audio clips while you do that. Readings start at 4:00 in the Special Collections classroom. Thank you!

Entire YouTube playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPgEUBFA7A7ldd74_Zfly8hF8QDwTNpkC

JAMES MERRILL: LIFE AND ARCHIVE

Exhibit Guide

The exhibit guide contains brief descriptions of each item, citations for where the items can be found in the James Merrill Papers (or other collections), and page numbers from James Merrill: Life and Art by Langdon Hammer that reference the items and/or their subjects. Each item has a number on its exhibit label that corresponds with its entry in the guide.

I. Cases 1-2: Love and Money (1926-52)

A. Correspondence:

1. JM childhood note to Leila "Zelly" Howard, n.d. - B89/F2170 - circa 1930s - among the collection of notes and artwork which her daughter sent back to JM as a set in 1977, after Zelly died - pp. 29-31
2. Hans Lodeizen silhouette with correspondence from HL to JM on verso, Oct. 14, 1949 - B44/F1160 - the silhouette sat in JM's study for many years - pp. 100-1; 645
3. JM to Hellen Ingram Merrill, Aug. 5, 1950 - B80/F2055 - with elegy for Hans Lodeizen, which turned into "The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace" - a pastoral elegy that imagined a world "under the world" - pp. 126-8

B. Journals:

1. Journal 57 - B113/F2884 - Sep. 28, 1940 (JM's first diary) - recounting how he cleverly got out of being depantsed by David Mixsell, at Lawrenceville School - with one of JM's drawings laid in - (see also "Days of 1941 and '44" drafts) - p. 58
2. Journal 1 - B113/F2886 - Dec. 24, 1945 - recounting his mother's discovery of his love affair with Kimon Friar - pp. 89-90
3. Journal 59 - B117/F2907 - early holograph notes and drafts toward "The Broken Home," Mar. 18, 1964 - his most autobiographical poem to date, about his parents' troubled relationship - published in *The New Yorker* and then in *Nights and Days* - pp. 360-3

C. Manuscripts:

1. "Looking at Mummy," - B78/F2041 - first poem, age 6, written in his mother's hand, Oct. 29, 1932 - later influenced "The Broken Home" - pp. 12-14
2. "Days of 1935" - B129/F3106 - circa 1970 - published in *Braving the Elements* - fantasy narrative about being kidnapped as a boy, à la the "Lindbergh baby," - pp. 42-44
3. "Lost in Translation" - B133/F3338 - circa 1972 - published in *Divine Comedies* - reminiscing about the summer of 1937, waiting for and then working on a jigsaw puzzle with his governess, Zelly, and her teaching him "her languages" - often cited as JM's greatest short poem - pp. 521-2
4. "Days of 1941 and '44" - B129/F3101 - published in *Late Settings* - recalling Lawrenceville School - using his diaries to become a "poet of memory" - dedicated to David Mixsell, his arch-nemesis at Lawrenceville, who would die in Europe in World War II - (see also Journal 57) - pp. 58, 61-2

D. Audiovisual:

1. Photos:

- a. JM as a baby, 1926 - B183/S72 - with his parents, Charles and Hellen - after three weeks in the hospital, Hellen recorded JM's weight weekly, through December - p. 18
- b. JM as a boy on slide, circa early 1930s - B183/S25 - "As a child, Jimmy was always attended by someone...So it's striking that, as an adult, he remembered his childhood as painfully lonely...the loneliness of a young mind engaged with private thoughts of mortality, puppets, and romantic legends...Jimmy was essentially an only child." - pp. 33-4
- c. Lawrenceville School class photograph, circa 1939-43 - oversize - JM second row on far right; Tony Harwood top row, second from right - p. 56-9
- d. JM as a cadet, 1944 or '45 - B197/S34 - on verso: "I love you" in Greek, to Friar Kimon - JM was designated for "limited service only" because of poor eyesight - photo insert and p. 87
- e. Frederick Buechner, circa mid 1940s - B215.1/S34 - JM's good friend from Lawrenceville, hanging from tree - "Freddy was an enthusiastic reader and a talented writer, with a confident, energetic mind that reveled in words and stories." - pp. 64-5
- f. JM and Kimon Friar, circa mid 1940s - B197/S34 - JM's Amherst teacher and lover - "Short, wiry, and dark, he was a high-minded, charismatic man of letters and an unabashed self-promoter." -p. 88
- g. Leila "Zelly" Howard, not dated - B195.1/S19 - JM's beloved governess, with whom he remained close until her death in 1977 - pp. 29-31

E. Personal Papers:

1. Supplementary Report for JM - May 31, 1933 - B263/F5499 - from Southampton Country School - one of a number of schools he attended, due to the Merrills moving between houses seasonally - pp. 26-7
2. Program for the "Jimmy Merrill Marionettes" (performing "The Magic Fish-bone", August 1937) - B298/F5804 - an ambitious production of the Charles Dickens children's story, which JM staged at age 11 - puppets always fascinated Merrill and he created his own puppet theater at the Orchard - pp. 29, 48
3. Early artwork - dancing ladies cutouts - B270/F5562 - show a lifelong affinity toward drawing the female face and form, especially sophisticated, beautiful women, often in costume - pp. 29, 59
4. "*A la Recherche du temps perdu*: Impressionism in Literature" - B142/F3725 - JM's senior thesis on Proust, from Amherst, 1946 - at 106 pages, by far Merrill's longest piece of literary criticism and his most scholarly production - JM discovered Proust as a freshman and he immediately became an obsession - Proust's themes of memory and turning one's life into art would directly inspire JM's entire poetic oeuvre - pp. 81-3, 102

F. Ephemera:

1. "Among the Cottagers at Southampton" Summer 1933 - B296/F5780 - includes photo of and caption on "Master Jimmie Merrill" - JM most pictured Southampton and "the Orchard" when he thought of "home" - pp. 34-50

2. Three newspaper clippings related to Charles Merrill's and Hellen Ingram Merrill's divorce, 1938-9 - B296/F5780 - the "broken home" had a profound effect on JM feeling his childhood was a lonely one - pp. 45-6, 53, 60
3. "Amherst Bard wins Holyoke Poet Award" from *THE JEFF*, May 17, 1946 - B295/F5768 - the prestigious Glascock Poetry Prize - for "The Broken Bowl," "The Formal Lovers" and "The Black Swan," all written in Kimon Friar's class - a harbinger of many awards to come - p. 94

G. Realia:

1. baby book with birth announcement - B278 - noted in *A Different Person*, the book contains the list of gifts he received at birth, including stock shares, silver spoons, gold diaper pins, etc. - p. 18
2. baby cup and spoon - B303
3. baby shoes - B303 - bronzed
4. Portrait of Merrill as a child - from the Mary Boatwright Collection of James Merrill Papers

H. Publications:

1. *Jim's Book* - cataloged item - Charles Merrill's surprise gift for JM, Christmas 1942, privately printed, containing JM's poetry and prose written while at Lawrenceville School - pp. 73-9
2. *North Star: A Book of Poems* - cataloged item, donated by Gerrish Thurber - privately printed book (edition of 1) containing poems by JM and Frederick Buechner, dedicated to Gerrish Thurber, 1943, Lawrenceville, signed by the authors - contains 12 unpublished JM poems - JM and FB had established themselves as the school's top writers, and Thurber--school librarian and advisor to *The Lit*--took their work seriously - p. 78
3. *The Lit*, Feb. 1943 - Lawrenceville publication with "Death Masks" by JM - a dramatic monologue spoken by a man who sells death masks made from the faces of artists - p. 79
4. *The Black Swan* - cataloged item - Kimon Friar's privately printed book of JM's college poetry - probably at least partially financed by JM - pp. 97-9

II. Cases 3-4: Water Street (1953-61)

A. Correspondence:

1. JM postcard to David Jackson, June 10, 1953 - B4/F83 - one of the first mentions of DJ in JM Papers - JM is wondering when he will see DJ again - p. 163
2. JM to Hellen Ingram Plummer, Sep. 2, 1955 - B4/F83 - explaining Ephraim and what JM is learning about patrons, representatives, etc. – pp. 196-7
3. Harry Ford to Lawrence Condon, Mar. 4, 1962 - B97/F2413 - announcing that year's Ingram Merrill Foundation awards - pp. 290-2
4. JM to David Jackson, Sep. 16, 1962 - B4/F83 - poem and drawings and photo JM made for DJ's 40th birthday - p. 321

B. Journals:

1. Journal 4 - Sep. 16, 1955 - B116/F2899 - Ouija séance transcript regarding Wallace Stevens in the afterlife - p. 204
2. David Jackson Journal - June, 12 1959 - DJ Papers B23/F402 - about jealousy and promiscuity among JM and DJ - pp. 271-2

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3. Journal 64 - Oct. 26, 1961 - B117/F2903 - poem draft with examples of wordplay, such an important exercise for JM throughout his writing life – also notes on Ephraim and Cold War nuclear annihilation worries - p. 294
- C. Ouija Transcript:
1. Nov. 14, 1953 - B126/F2967 - JM and David Jackson's second séance (and the first JM transcribed and preserved) - reaching the spirit of "Kabel Barnes," a colonial farmer - p. 170
- D. Manuscripts:
1. *The Immortal Husband* - B146/F3845 - script for JM's play, 1954 - an update of the classical myth of Aurora and Tithonus - pp. 176-90
 2. "Mirror" - B134/F3368 - circa summer 1956 - published in *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace* - typescript with holograph notes and alternative titles - inspired by Ephraim séances and Merrill's "strongest, most original poem in the 1950s" – pp. 231-4
 3. "Voices from the Other World" - B140/F3656 - circa fall 1955 - published in *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace* - JM's first--and for many years, only--treatment of the Ouija board séances in a poem - the supernatural and domestic life with Jackson both enter his poetry here as subject for the first time - pp. 169, 213-15
 4. "An Urban Convalescence" - B140/F3643 - circa fall 1959-spring 1960 - published in *Water Street* - three typescript draft pages (among the 40 worksheets he saved) with holograph corrections and drawings showing his "engagement in verbal self-analysis" and reflecting "the intimate, brooding voice in Merrill's notebooks" - the finished poem shows the early influence of Elizabeth Bishop and a reaction to Robert Lowell and Confessional poetry - pp. 274-9
 5. "Stonington Novel" fragment, Sep. 24, 1962 - B145/F3832 - start of a never-completed novel about JM's and David Jackson's evolving relationship with Stonington and each other - p. 298
- E. Material Toward Book:
1. *The Seraglio* notes, March 21, 1956 - B171/F5342 - notes on alternative to castration scene in JM's "strange coming-of-age" novel - pp. 216-19
- F. Personal Papers:
1. Telegram from Charles Merrill to JM, Feb 12, 1955 - B281 - taken from "The Immortal Husband" scrapbook - includes advice on how to take it if the play fails - critical reception on p. 190
 2. "Happy Days in Stonington" - B277 - photo album with snapshots taken around 107 Water Street, along with colorful commentary, circa 1950s - pp. 180-3
 3. Drawing of 107 Water Street in Stonington by David Jackson, 1961 - B270/F5562
- G. Ephemera:
1. Program for "The Artists Theater," including *The Bait* - B298/F5803 - a one-act play by JM incorporating psychoanalysis - JM first met David Jackson after a performance - 1953 - pp. 158-9, 163
 2. Advertisement for the Feb. 15, 1955 opening of *The Immortal Husband* - B298/F5803 - including a laudatory statement by Tennessee Williams - pp. 176-80, 190

3. *Semi-Colon* vol. 1 no. 5 - B285/F5630 - circa 1953-6 - mimeographed literary magazine published by John Bernard Myers, who printed the first books of O'Hara, Ashbery and others - includes "Three Sketches for Europa" by JM and short story "Kritik K. and the Chateau" by David Jackson - pp. 174, 215

H. Realia:

1. Portraits of David Jackson and James Merrill, by Larry Rivers, 1955 - Rivers was an artist, musician and filmmaker - early beneficiary of the Ingram Merrill Foundation - pp. 174-6

I. Publication:

1. *Short Stories* - cataloged item - JM chapbook published by Claude Fredericks, a poet, printer, playwright and teacher who had a romantic relationship with JM in the early 1950s - all but one of the nine poems were later pub. in *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace* - 250 copies printed (60 for sale) in Aug. 1954 - pp. 184, 186, 188
2. *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace*, 1st ed. - cataloged item - 1959 - containing poems written over an eight-year period, which "are a collection of symbols and epiphanies drawn from experience but set off from it in an ideal, timeless space, a Switzerland of the imagination." - p. 251
3. *Water Street*, 1st ed. - cataloged item - 1962 - marks a turning point in JM's writing - the book is "local and particular: it calls attention to where, and by implication how, the poet is living." - p. 251

III. Cases 5-6: Greece (1962-72)

A. Correspondence:

1. Kimon Friar to JM - Jun. 14, 1962 - B27/F717 - KF airing of grievances to JM, and declaring simple friendship between them is impossible, coming after a decade of a "stiff, formal relationship" for the former lovers - p. 313
2. Mona Van Duyn to JM, Jun. 24, 1964 - B69/F1840 - MVD requesting on behalf of Washington University to start collecting JM's literary papers at Washington University – MVD's personal inquiry persuaded him to accept the invitation - p. 344
3. JM to Daryl Hine - Nov. 17, 1964 - B5/F73 - describes his and David Jackson's latest sexual partner - mentions JM's new relationship with Strato Mouflouzelis - also complains of spiritual/historical debates with Tony Harwood (see also Journal 58) - pp. 347-50
4. JM to Irma Brandeis - Feb. 18, 1965 - B1/F18 - explaining Psyche's realization in "From the Cupola," the drafts of which he had been sending to her (see also "From the Cupola" draft page) - pp. 368-72
5. JM to Daryl Hine - Jan. 17, 1969 - B3/F74 - JM realizing he's using psychoanalytic thinking as a tool for enchantment rather than demystification (see also "Under Libra" draft) - making life and art even more intertwined - p. 453

B. Journals:

1. Journal 62 - 1960 - B117/F2905 - early notes toward *The (Diblos) Notebook* - a novel-within-a-novel where life and art turn into each other - inspired by Kimon Friar's idea for "a poet's coming-of-age story and a prelude to a great work" - pp. 315-20

2. Journal 58 - Nov. 17, 1964 - B118/F2908 - draft of letter to Tony Harwood about JM's beliefs on soul and spirituality - feed into "The Broken Home," "From the Cupola," "Days of 1964" (see also 11/17/64 letter to Daryl Hine) - pp. 359-60
3. Journal 10 - Apr. 8, 1970 - B118/F2912 - early holograph notes and drafts toward the poem that would become "18 W 11th St." - about his childhood NYC home accidentally blown up by radicals living there and making homemade bombs in the basement - pp. 462, 478-80
4. Journal 7 - Sep 15, 1970 - B119/F2915 - notes on David McIntosh visit to Stonington coming to an end; includes first version of first two lines of "The Kimono" - pp. 488-9

C. Manuscripts:

1. "The Thousand and Second Night" - B139/F3598 - published in *Nights and Days* - notebook pages showing first title and early notes of this pivotal, experimental, multifaceted poem, based partly upon his Bell's palsy experience - typescript draft pages toward pseudo quote about the soul and abuse of the earth - two major themes of the epic Ouija board poems - pp. 323-9
2. "Days of 1964" - B129/F3105 - published in *Nights and Days* - two typescript draft pages with holograph corrections, drafts and sketches - documenting his life in Greece and love for Strato Mouflouzelis - pp. 365-7, 372-5
3. "From the Cupola" - B131/F3205 - published in *Nights and Days* - typescript draft page of JM comforting Psyche (and himself) over her (and his) realization of the limitations of love and self-knowledge (see also 2/18/65 note to Irma Brandeis) - p. 368-73
4. National Book Award Acceptance Speech, Mar. 8, 1967 - B144/3785 - JM's first NBA, for *Nights and Days* - there was a sideshow at that year's ceremony, with a large group in the audience walking out in protest of the Vietnam war when Hubert Humphrey spoke - pp. 409-10
5. "Under Libra: Weights and Measures" - B140/F3636 - published in *Braving the Elements* - dedicated to David McIntosh - typescript draft of poem through which Merrill realized, with the help of his therapist, that his life and art are equally present and giving each other meaning (see also 1/17/69 letter to Daryl Hine) - p. 453

D. Audiovisual:

1. Audio:
 - a. Reel-to-reel recording of JM reading in the Women's Building at Washington University, Dec. 12, 1971 - Recorded Multimedia Collection, #0021 - **listen to JM reading "In Monument Valley" and "Mandala" from this reading at: [youtube/user/ModernLitCollection](#)** - Merrill was a writer-in-residence at Washington University at the time - p. 501 (you can also hear clips of Merrill reading at WU in 1968 when he was a Visiting Hurst Professor)
2. Photos:
 - a. Maria Mitsotaki and JM - B200/S25 - Merrill's face is bound as a result of Bell's Palsy, an episode recounted in "The Thousand and Second Night" - "[Maria] was pert, pretty, small and sweet...and able to choose her friends. [Jimmy] adopted her [Maria] as a mock mother, making himself small in her presence, as if he were her boy, her puppet." - pp. 308-9

- b. Strato Mouflouzelis - B205/S7 - "...the bittersweet muse of [JM's] middle years..." - p. 348
- c. Judith Moffett - B204/S33 - "...she brought a strong moral idealism, sensitivity to the perspective of gay men, and an appetite for literature." - p. 416
- d. David McIntosh - B204/S20 - disciplined, reserved painter of abstract landscapes who drew a "'firm and gentle line' between love and friendship, and what he wanted was the latter." - p. 441
- e. Tony Parigory and JM - B198/S5 - "Tall, smiling, Alexandrian Tony...In his worldly wisdom, off-color jokes, and macaronic bons mots...he resembled none of Merrill's friends so much as Ephraim, the Familiar Spirit." - p. 307
- f. Stephen Yenser - B206/S25 - Merrill's student, friend, correspondent, literary executor, and "ideal reader" - pp. 494-6
- g. Mona Van Duyn - B205/S39 - fellow prize-winning poet, early champion and good friend of JM, she successfully solicited JM's literary papers for Washington University - photo inset and p. 344

E. Personal Papers:

- 1. Drawing of Athinaion Efivon 44, by David Jackson, 1964 - B270/F5562 - JM's and DJ's house in Athens, Greece for 15 years - sent to friends as a Christmas card in 1964 - photo inset
- 2. Painting of JM child bust on rooftop terrace of Athinaion Efivon 44 house in Athens, Greece, by David Jackson - B270/F5562

F. Publication:

- 1. "Violent Pastoral" broadside printed by Laurence Scott, 1965 - cataloged item - "set in a Greece of the mind"; unclear whether Mouflouzelis is the eagle and JM the lamb, or vice versa - p. 377
- 2. "Honorary Degree Citations" - Amherst Alumni News, Summer 1968 - cataloged item - the third honorary degree from Amherst for the Merrill family (Charles had received two) - they asked him about collecting his literary papers, which were already going to Washington University - p. 428
- 3. "The Poet: Private" - *Saturday Review*, December 1972 - cataloged item - Interview with literary critic and good friend, David Kalstone - they discuss "Yannina," which is printed on the previous spread - a poem about coming to terms with the past, and dedicated to Stephen Yenser - JM reveals he would rather cultivate an ideal reader than appeal to a mass audience - pp. 505-7

IV. Cases 7-8: The Other World (1972-83)

A. Correspondence:

- 1. Hellen Plummer letter to JM, Nov. 26, 1972 - B88/F2147 - in re "Lost in Translation" and how much his work keeps impressing her, and showing herself to be a "fair literary critic" (see also "Lost in Translation" drafts in Cases 1-2) - pp. 526-7
- 2. JM to Tony Parigory, Nov. 27, 1973 - B8/F138 - discusses typing the Ouija transcripts to make a prose memoir and mentions his problem of losing the novel manuscripts - p. 541

B. Journals:

1. Journal 8 - Feb 8, 1976 - B119/F2918 - Ouija séance transcript of Tony Harwood describing his recent death (see also TH photograph) - pp. 568-9
2. Journal 14 - Jan. 24 - Feb. 9, 1979 - B120/F2923 - JM coming up with names for the Ouija trilogy eventually titled "Voices from Sandover" - p. 625

C. Ouija Transcripts:

1. Mar. 29 & April 26, 1976 séances - B125/F2955 - when higher powers (over Ephraim) begin revealing the cosmology that JM would communicate in *Mirabell: Books of Number* and *Scripts for the Pageant* - pp. 570-1
2. Oct. 8 & 10, 1979 séances - B125/F2956 - finding out about and communicating with the recently deceased Elizabeth Bishop - p. 631

D. Manuscripts:

1. "Lost '70s Novel" - B145/F3828 - only surviving remnants of JM's attempted Ouija board novel - pp. 532, 541
2. "The Will" - B141/F3678 - published in *Divine Comedies* - contains the first mention of Ephraim in a poem - Ephraim explains why novel draft was lost twice - pp. 534-5
3. "The Book of Ephraim" - Section A - B174/F5395 - with corrections to the beginning which addresses his uncertainty over the format in which to tell this story - Claude Fredericks had convinced him it had to be in verse - pp. 541-2
4. "The Book of Ephraim" - Section P - B174/F5394.2 - important section, about power and apocalypse, foreshadowing the revelations in *Mirabell: Book of Numbers* and *Scripts for the Pageant* – pp. 552-3, 556

E. Material Toward Books:

1. *The Yellow Pages* - cover mock-up, 1974 - B173/F5379 - paperback edition of this limited edition volume that compiled uncollected poems composed between 1946 and 1971 - p. 501

F. Audiovisual:

1. Video:
 - a. Reading at Behrend College, 1973 - 5" video reel - B262 - **watch and listen to Merrill read "The Victor Dog" at [youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection](https://www.youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection)** (you can also watch and listen to Merrill a/v clips from other sources not featured in this exhibit)
2. Photos:
 - a. Tony Harwood and JM - B198/S14 - one of JM's first friends at Lawrenceville, who remained his friend, although their friendship became strained as Tony "grew progressively more detached and paranoid" - pp. 568-9
 - b. Maya Deren - B197/S7 - still from her film *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943 - Ukrainian immigrant, scholar of French Symbolism, progressive activist, avant-garde filmmaker and dancer - "Deren introduced Merrill to spirit possession not as a metaphor, but as a relation to the divine that an artist could directly experience" - p. 95 and photo insert
 - c. J. D. McClatchy - B204/S16 - admirer and then good friend of JM's; fellow poet and Opera lover; professor and critic; JM's co-literary executor - pp. 514-15

- d. Richard Howard - B200/S1 - fellow poet; a "poetry reviewer and editor with an ornate prose style and caustic wit...Social and generous, with a healthy measure of amour propre"; dedicatee of "Lost in Translation" - pp. 519-20 and photo insert

G. Ephemera:

1. National Book Award for *Mirabell: Books of Number* - B295/F5769 - second NBA win in 12 years - JM gave the prize money to Hubbell Pierce, inventor of the bat wallpaper at 107 Water Street where many séances took place - p. 621

H. Realia:

1. Homemade Ouija board - one of numerous boards JM and David Jackson employed through the years for their séances - they used a tea cup as a planchette - p. 194

I. Publication:

1. *The Metamorphosis of 741* - cataloged item - Banyan Press, 1977 - chapbook set and printed by Claude Fredericks & David Beekin - edition of 440 - the section of the poem when 741 reveals the hierarchy of the arts and the spiritual meaning of homosexuality, then turns into a peacock named Mirabell - includes dialog with the spirit of W.H. Auden - chapbook contains no author's name and was published in advance of *Mirabell: Books of Number* - pp. 580, 588

V. Cases 9-10: Love and Death (1983-95)

A. Correspondence:

1. JM to Peter Hooten, Jan. 5, 1986 - B4/F76 - written in Key West, to be read when PH wakes up, JM is begging PH to "get a hold of your feelings" and states that "the only permitted feeling is loyal clear-eyed love" - one of the first times JM addresses PH's anger and emotional outbursts in writing - pp. 688-9

B. Journals:

1. Journal 16 - Apr. 1, 1986 - B121/F2930 - captures the time at Mayo Clinic being tested for and getting the diagnosis of HIV positive, with haikus, some of which would appear in "Prose of Departure" - pp. 694-708
2. Journal 47 - not dated - B122/F2937 - draft of letter to Hellen Ingram Plummer, to prepare her for the publication of *A Different Person* - p. 771
3. Journal 50 - Feb. 5, 1995 - B122/F2938 - last poem draft: "The Next to Last Scene" - scribbled down (without his glasses) the day before he died of a heart attack - it was unusual for him to title the first draft of a poem in his notebook - p. 790

C. Ouija Transcript:

1. Mar. 8, 1986 - B126/F2967 - getting relationship advice from Ephraim concerning Peter Hooten - mention of the fight that led to JM pushing PH into the pool on p. 690

D. Manuscripts:

1. *An Evening at Sandover*, Feb. 6, 1988 - B144/F3796 - corrected typescript draft of JM's first stage adaptation of the Ouija board epic - performed as part of the revived Poets' Theatre at Hasty Pudding theater at Harvard - p. 725

2. "Self-Portrait in a Tyvek Windbreaker," Aug. 23, 1991 - B138/F3537 - published in *A Scattering of Salts* - one of the longest poems in his later years, and one of the strongest from any phase of his career. "...it is concerned not with personal memory, but with the present and the future of our culture." - pp. 749-51
3. "Elizabeth, you should have" - B130/F3147 - draft of an unfinished poem from winter 1992 - addressing Elizabeth Bishop - "uncharacteristically awkward" but powerful poem about "raw life" prevailing over "graceful art" - pp. 759-60
4. "Tony: Ending the Life," Nov. 1993 - B139/F3621 - published in *A Scattering of Salts* - an "expansive elegy for his friend" (Tony Parigory, who died in summer 1993 of AIDS), "and (it is all but explicit) himself" - JM had been largely silent about his AIDS diagnosis but it came out in his poetry - pp. 773-4
5. "Days of 1994" - B129/F3102 - published in *Collected Poems* - fifth in JM's "Days of" poems, completing his homage to Cavafy - about approaching death and what he will leave behind - p. 780

E. Audiovisual:

1. Audio:
 - a. Interview with Tom Vitale 1991 - "A Moveable Feast" #054 - Late Settings - cataloged item - **listen to a clip from the interview and JM reading "Ideas" at [youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection](https://www.youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection)** (you can also watch and listen to Merrill a/v clips from other sources not featured in this exhibit)
 - b. James Merrill at the Hill-Stead - Sunken Garden Poetry Festival, 1993 - B259 - **listen to JM reading "The Blue Grotto" at [youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection](https://www.youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection)** (you can also watch and listen to Merrill a/v clips from other sources not featured in this exhibit)
2. Video:
 - a. *Voices from Sandover*, Part 1 - Poetry Works - Feb. 26, 1991 - B260 - a made-for-TV adaptation of the stage adaptation of the Ouija board epic - generally considered a misfire for Merrill and Peter Hooten - "[T]he magical depth Sandover has on the page vanished with costumed human beings staring frontally into the frozen camera." - pp. 751-3
3. Photos:
 - a. Peter Hooten, not dated - B198/S21 - JM's last partner, starting in 1983, when he declared his love for JM "on Valentine's Eve," in Key West, FL - p. 666
 - b. Hooten, Merrill, Yenser, not dated - B204/S10 - capturing a happy moment between the three
 - c. Richard & Charlee Wilbur - B214/S40 - Key West neighbors - RW was a fellow Amherst grad and accomplished poet; a longtime friend and supporter of Merrill's work - CW played matchmaker with JM and Peter Hooten - RW celebrated his birthday with JM (March 1 and 3 respectively) for a decade by "trading deftly rhymed gift cards" - photo insert; p. 758
 - d. Jim Boatwright, not dated - B196/S4 - a.k.a. "the Colonel" - a professor at Washington and Lee University and editor of the literary magazine *Shenandoah*, whom JM had gotten to know in Athens - also lived in Key West and also died of AIDS - p. 622

- e. Peter Tourville, not dated - B205/S34 - "country-lean from outdoor labor, with a gravelly voice and easy laugh, a stoner's squint..." - knew Merrill since the early 1960s - JM bought him a small apple orchard, and the two of them spent many quiet weekends together - subject of multipart poem, "Peter" - pp. 586, 662
 - f. Shirley Baker, Helen Vendler, JM - B187/S50 - at "James Merrill: A Life in Writing" symposium at Washington University, Nov. 18-19, 1994 - Vendler is an esteemed professor and poetry critic who had been championing JM's work at least since 1972 - the symposium was organized by Holly Hall, Head of Special Collections at Washington University, and included speakers such as Rachel Hadas, Richard Kenney, Stephen Yenser, and Vendler - p. 784 - **watch and listen to Merrill discuss the origin of his literary archive at WU, as well as readings of various poems at [youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection](https://www.youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection)**
 - g. JM and David Jackson at Ouija board, 1983 - B234 - in Stonington - photo by Harry Pemberton, who took a roll of the mediums in action - pp. 663-4
- F. Ephemera:
- 1. *The Image Maker* advertisement, May 27, 1986 - B298/F5804 - a one-act verse play for two actors - about Santeria, the syncretic art and religion of the Caribbean - featuring Hooten, puppets, and a subtext about JM's mother - pp. 685-8 - **watch and listen to a clip from *The Image Maker* at [youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection](https://www.youtube.com/user/ModernLitCollection)**
 - 2. *Voices from Sandover* dramatic reading flyer, Apr. 11, 1989, UCLA - stage adaptation of Ouija board epic, which Hooten and JM toured for one-night performances in New Jersey, Los Angeles and Detroit. - pp. 732-3
- G. Realia:
- 1. *A Different Person* - OV Box - Knopf promotional poster, 1993 - JM continued revising the memoir into the galley stage and sent to friends chapters that included them, making changes accordingly - see also journal with draft of letter to his mother in anticipation of its publication - p. 769
 - 2. Death Mask - B304 - bronzed - the death mask was Peter Hooten's idea, "but the juvenile author of 'Death Masks'...would have appreciated it" (see Case 1-2) - p. 795
- H. Publications:
- 1. *For James Merrill: A Birthday Tribute* - cataloged item - 60th birthday present from J. D. McClatchy with tributes from friends, including Anthony Hecht, Robin Magowan, John Hollander, Mary McCarthy, Tony Parigory and Bernard de Zogheb - published by Jordan Davies, 1986 - p. 693
 - 2. *David Jackson: Scenes from his Life* - a "lavish chapbook" JM produced for DJ's 70th birthday, containing fourteen of David's sketches and paintings from the 1950s to 70s - each image paired with a related passage from DJ's or JM's writing - p. 762
 - 3. *Volcanic Holiday* - cataloged item - limited edition chapbook with stanzas printed on separate sheets accompanied by etchings by Dorthea Tanning - a "wary love poem" to Peter Hooten - pp. 727, 775
 - 4. *Lawrentian*, vol. 56 no. 1, Autumn 1991 - B285/F5630 - "The Uncertain Future of Poetry" - interview with JM for the Amherst alumni magazine

5. *Voices from Sandover* script, August 6, 1990 - final draft, with corrections - (see also V.E.2. *Voices from Sandover* description) - p. 741