

Walker Winslow correspondence

Section 25, Pages 721 - 750

This collection of papers largely consists of handwritten and typed correspondence between Walker Winslow (also under the name Harold Maine) and his third wife, Edna Mansley Winslow, the bulk of which dates from 1948-1951. The letters can be chatty and newsy, providing details about each of their daily lives and activities, what they were reading or music they were listening to, their work (his writing and therapy, her writing and painting), and other related topics. The letters could also be very self-reflective and analytical regarding their relationship to each other, discussing their sexuality and concepts of fidelity, relationships with others, their health and various injuries and illnesses they each had, money, their mutual loneliness, Edna's drinking, and other topics.

Some of the letters were written while Winslow was working at and writing in Topeka. They were also written while the Winslows lived separately in Santa Fe, New Mexico; various parts of California (especially Big Sur or Oakland); various parts of New York (especially Rochester and New York City); and in Kansas. The letters document the rise and fall of their brief and intense relationship.

Also in the materials are a few of Winslow's typed manuscripts and poems, many with copy-editing marks and annotations or corrections, including a copy of *If a Man Be Mad*, as well as two published versions of the book (one in French). There is also correspondence with friends and relatives of Winslow and/or Edna; Winslow family photographs; some sketches Edna drew, with her handwritten notes on the back, perhaps for letters to Winslow; a letter of recommendation from 1889 for Winslow's father; and extensive correspondence between Winslow and Dr. Karl Menninger. Some of this correspondence regards articles and the book Winslow wrote about the Menninger Clinic; there are also interview notes and transcripts from interviews Winslow conducted with Dr. C.F. Menninger. Topics of Winslow's writings include Henry Miller, psychiatry and life in asylums, and the Synanon Foundation.

Creator: Winslow, Walker, 1905-1969

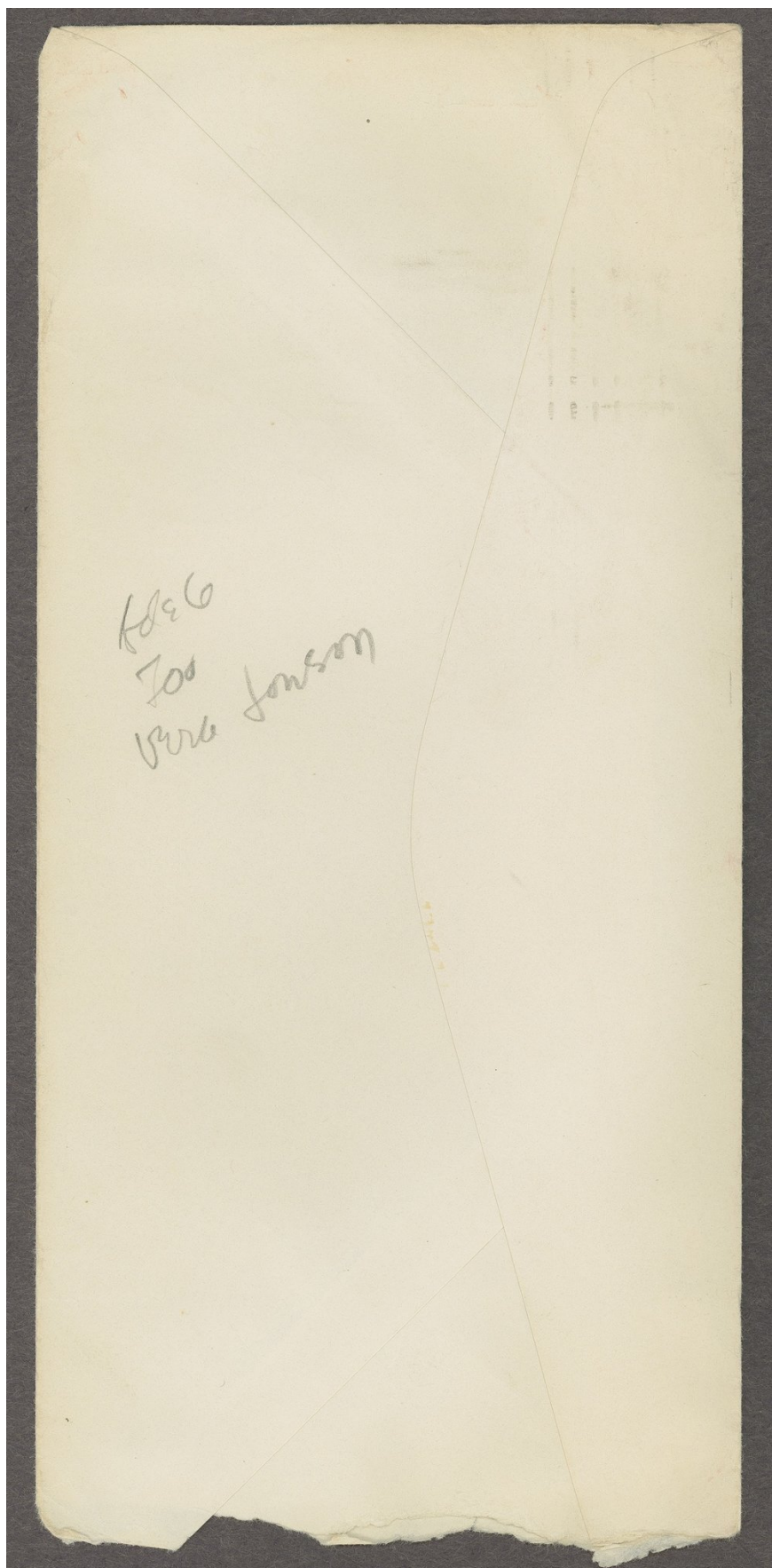
Date: circa 1943 - 1969, undated (bulk 1948-1951)

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Walker Winslow correspondence

Out Ere

Dearest:

I hope you meant
Oct. 15th in your
letter instead of Nov
15th. It would seem
so when you said
next week.
I won't be here Nov 15th.
My spine will be here
& even my cast Oct 15th.
It would be wonderful
to have you in my
little electric bed. I'm
near broke as usual
but will eat dumplings
with a spoon.

If you think the trip
is safe I'll have my
needles sharpened. Or
even have a lady dr.
give you the fullback
shots.

Walker Winslow correspondence

2
Here's a new development.
It is super-secret. Not
even Emil knows about
it & Henry doesn't want
anyone to know. Jepska
found herself another man
& is leaving Henry. He's
keeping the kids, apparently
[Jepska's agreement. If
I just want to work
dinner for him & be
around he'll let me have
his extra studio. Also,
he says that money is
coming out of France
& his servant & has
food in a food locker.
This is a real threat
for me, even if D.D.
don't come through at
once. I can try to raise
enough from H. and
to get by on until then.

Walker Winslow correspondence

I should ³ get out around
Nov. 1st. But there will be
the problem of ~~making it~~
easy driving & more
pain so I'm told. I'm
almost as limited as
you are.

As you see will have
to get together in the next
two weeks - or out on
the coast. I'm still going
to rent a place if the
D.D. advance comes.

Sunday
a delicious morning
outside. I'd go for a
walk in the fields if
I weren't afraid I'd
fall & break my arm
again. Perfect weather.
about time for your
dad to go after a deer
with it?

Walker Winslow correspondence

4

If you keep on you
have me believing that
conventional marriage
isn't for us, even though
I doubt if we ever thought
it was. As it is I get
a tremendous amount
of relief out of being
married to you, both
humanly & practically.
all of the girls are afraid
of little Edna & when I
talk about you or tell
stories of you, you
become a legendary
character, which you
probably are. This may
not keep everyone from
trying but it sure as
hell keeps them from
succeeding.

One would think that
I would like the calm
of a steady woman. But
I much prefer our kind



Walker Winslow correspondence

5

of steadiness.
 you might think that a certain
 kind of loneliness &
 desperation is needed
 for writing a book.
 I don't try to avoid
 that, being unable to
 let go of dreams of warmth.
 Finally it is forced upon
 me. I put distraction near
 at hand if I don't use
 myself as I should.

I won't argue about the
 other elements in my nature.
 Right now I know
 which one is predominant.
 I'm taking a plunge. And
 I'm even chary of the
 time (very many absences
 even though experience
 tells me it will be more.
 But I won't let myself
 have an excuse, an out.

Walker Winslow correspondence

6
Normally this capped
my world in an
endeavor to waste a
month or two. I'm not
even letting money get
in the way. I just
spent \$15.00 I don't
have to spare getting
the car ready. (some
brake & window).

About the book I will
write. I have a rough
plan. It may be rather
a novel or a straight
autobiography. I'll have
to create my own form.
I have much less experience
about writing when I'm
faced with it on my own
level. In fact I'm shaky.
I'll have to try & struggle
& wait for the slow birth
of a manuscript to come.



Walker Winslow correspondence

7
If you could come,
& it's physically possible
without hurting yourself,
it would be wonderful,
to talk all of this over
with you, and for you to tell
all of your own story.
That was certainly
a firm letter you wrote
Alita. I didn't know she'd
been to Rock. What did
she think you were
being disloyal to -
me? It's still difficult
for me to see you
as a lesbian, although in
the past you've told me
that you tried twice
without success.

I can see how two
beautiful women might
want to make love to
each other in some tentative,
preparatory sort of way,
you & Ruth for instance.



Walker Winslow correspondence

8

But to get connected
 one of the real ones is
 different, I don't blame
 you because I don't
 know the story. I
 suppose that either
 it can more easily
 arrange some sexual
 play in the other sex
 than in their own. Since
 I like women I can
 only think that everyone
 likes women, and yet
 I can imagine nothing
 sillier than two men
 trying to make love to
 each other.

It's one of the blights of
 our self-conscious culture
 that no good male friend-
 ships can exist & out
 the suspicion of homo-
 sexuality. No, men have
 to meet in clubs, gangs,
 tennis etc., etc.

Walker Winslow correspondence

I recently read Gorer's
7 in Americans. It's a
British anthropologist.
He remarked on the lack
of male friendships &
the sacrifices of such for
the sake of appearances
as one of the weak points
in our culture.

It's always been one
of the most irritating
things to me to have
damned near every
friendship beset
by having one of the
guys presume that
an hour's talk about
life & art must have
nearly been a evening
match. Right.

I know damned well
you went home. and I
know now that you
know that outside of
Bluddy they're disastrous



Walker Winslow correspondence

10
people.

I find two lines out
on marriage in the
non-conventional sense
I suppose we'll have to
get used to the young
& marriage of a lot of
people.

The most wrong thing
either of us can do to
each other is to not
a lot of comparative
morality. "I don't do this -
why do you have to?"
Our personal morality
will have to guide us.
How can I know what
you are really looking
for. I only know that
you are looking - that
it is desperately essential
to you to have variety -
more so than me. I
restrict you. I don't

Walker Winslow correspondence

11
I recognize. Restrict
you in one way &
demand too much
in another.

I used to be an adept
at getting into other
people's picture of life.
Now I find myself
strangely alone. Perhaps
my essential loneliness
has run me down &
driven me to a final
corner.

As you write of Scott
I see what he was to
you & what an
intruder I really was,
how I was doomed
to failure by impudence.

Probably he lifted
you from extinction
& animated you for
a way of life in which



Walker Winslow correspondence

12

I wouldn't participate. I
was doomed to be
half lover, half enemy.
Somehow you always
found it easy to
identify me & suspicions
& infections.

There is no blame
in what I say. Only
recognition. Perhaps
for you there is a
similar recognition.
But we still need each
other in a strange
way. No one that quite
has our vocabulary
of special terms that
apply to a special
quality of life we do
share in spite of
anything & which perhaps
is more vitally import-
ant than we think.

Walker Winslow correspondence

13

I'd know a lot
more after I write a
book than I know
now.

That you become
well & strong is
terribly important to
me. I didn't want to
mate our illnesses. I
wanted to mate our
health. For in the
past five years meant
good health to each
other.

you're right about the
need for loneliness. What
writing means to me
is a cell - six feet to
pace between the typewriter
& a window that opens
on the world - a lonely
struggle in which the
typewriter must emerge



Walker Winslow correspondence

14

as the opening to a
world greater than
that I see outside the
window or can
visit through the
door. This is no
immediate delight.
Each time it's a world
struggle.

That this opportunity
comes from Henry is
wonderful. But his
presence with me
is so lonely. I know
he is sheathed in
his own loneliness, that
will both be polite
as invisible as possible.
But it is a break.

Even now I'm wondering
my if Josephine will
go through to the apartment.
This has happened
before. I hope she stays
for the kids sake.

Walker Winslow correspondence

15

If you can come
safely & have enough
money I'll meet you
at the K.C. airport and
you get quick connections
on a plane for Topeka.
A week from Monday
my own car comes out of
the east, so you wouldn't
have a crutch on your
hands all the way, or
time.

It would be a mighty
interesting happening.
But make sure you're
up to the trip. Here you'd
really be taken care of.

I want to get this
off. I'll hold up the two
books I have to send
until I next hear from
you.

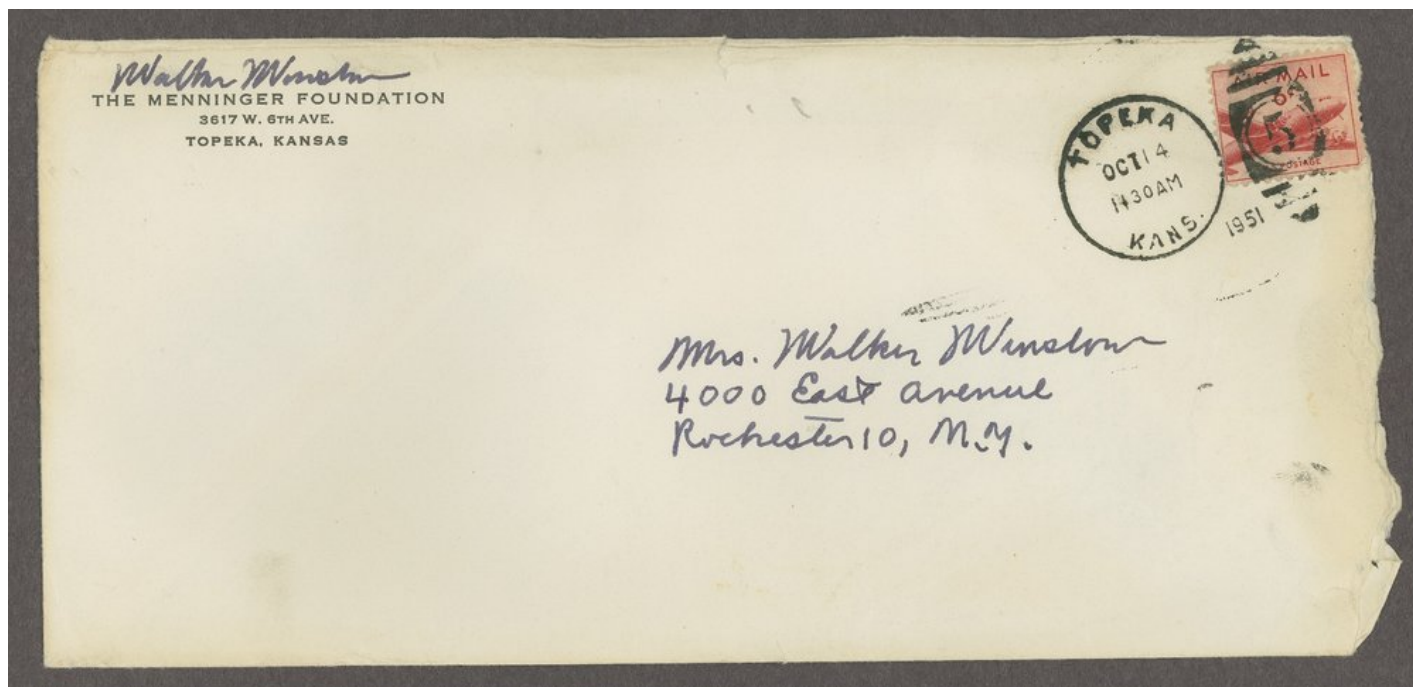


Walker Winslow correspondence

16
your old man is
hungry. if your men
here could make you
some pretty bacon
& eggs.

your
Walley
x x x x

Walker Winslow correspondence



Walker Winslow correspondence

Dear one: Monday

I wanted to write
to you right after
you phoned yesterday.
Your voice sounded
frail but your spirit
was still strong in it.
God damn weeds. I wanted
terribly to see you &
was only afraid of
your strength at this
moment. You're right
at the point of high
susceptibility to anything.
But I know that once
I had you I would
hatter you. It isn't a
process of food only, but
of an exchange of warmth
& a grave public with
words & ideas on the
map of men on earth.



Walker Winslow correspondence

2

This I know, you are
undergoing a reversion
both physical & psychical.
The frenzy created by
the stress is gone &
perhaps even missed
as a hot power might
be. In the interim the
energy has not yet
adapted itself to healing.
The shut habit settled.
The diffusion wanted.
It would be incredible
if this happened so
quickly.

I know your need
to get away from 4000
& how difficult it is
to be patient, shut or
relaxed. But if you
are only held still for
a couple of more months
the sun will be ready
for you & you for

Walker Winslow correspondence

the sun. I know the real
awakening process will
start. I think you are
in for a new epoch
& that most of the
desperate, hazy created
ideas, half dreams &
aborted plans will be
absorbed in a long
quiet flow.

It may be that you
have too much words
in you for a words
day to even get itself
a bearing. I wouldn't
let their effect or lack
of it bother me.

If my letter of yesterday
seemed a little torn in
spots I suppose, it was
because I couldn't under-
stand why that too,
should be reacting upon

Walker Winslow correspondence

energy, even though
I admired your fury.
And I'm always sadden-
ed & left a little hurt
by the clarity of what
Scott meant to move
us against the confusion
of all else. Although I
know that the confusion
about us is superficial
& passing.

and I do feel lonely
as I start towards
writing - lonely &
inadequate. But the
lpts come when I
think of sections of my
book. I can't yet hold
the thoughts too clearly -
there's still a little un-
reality to the idea
that I may have
a place & time to write!

Walker Winslow correspondence

5
I go to the Dr. today
to my arm. I'm hoping
he'll take the cast off
& put my arm in a sling.
People who should know
tell me that the worst
pain is coming because
the tendons & muscles
that are attached right
at the break have to
readjust themselves.

I can drive to a minimum
out of my ~~to~~ right arm
but I'll have to make
a slow trip of it & go
south to avoid ice &
snow. I can't wrestle
a car through the Rockies
which would be shortest.
My arm is really
shrumph.

I wrote a forceful
letter to my agent yester-
day but I imagine
I'll hear something
from her today.

Walker Winslow correspondence

6
Unless I can catch
Karl alone & in time &
get him to help me
out I'll only have my
last pay check to leave
on. But somehow I'll make
it.

I can't plan on Henry
too much. Deptha,
understandably is
going to break loose
very soon. But
I will use that extra
studio until I have a
place to move into.
I think big her is the
right place. I'm getting
neurotic as hell with
sleeplessness, nerves, etc.
and I haven't much
patience & people I'm
already staying about
most of the time.

Walker Winslow correspondence

Even if the arm were
well I couldn't get out
my writing. But it
symbolizes my loneliness.
This run since of the
past years has been
pitching me into black
depressions, and I know
better than anyone
that psychiatry is no
answer for me & my
personal feelings.

You are my only contact
in life.

All of this monkey
business & agents &
publishers is extraneous
too. I'll be glad when
I can forget them -
except to send or writing.



Walker Winslow correspondence

8 Tuesday
I got your very friendly
indignant letter yesterday.
Allen had begun to irritate
me. And as you say
there's the frustration.
I need some time to
take to you & where
there's a way I'll make
it.

The dr. says just one
more week. I'd rather
bumped his state the
cart off yesterday.

This morning I have
an appointment to Dr.
Hard. But it's always
a question of getting
to him alive & in a
mood in which he
can be talked to. I'll
report on the talk in a
P.S. to this letter.

I agree to you about
the Penny article being
a little true. Also that



Walker Winslow correspondence

9
article mine, as you
perceptively saw, apt
my heart in its methods
of communicating to
the reader, at my heart
I think I make the
case for myself, the
readers case. I was
trying to tell Henry
on some points that
were very important
to me.

my last writing with
always be that in
which I put myself
exposed to the reader,
responsible for clarity
& maintaining a part of
the mind that is usually
at rest.

your right that what
ever suspicion I get
into my words will
be that exposed my
man's struggle & his
own & nature's elements.

Walker Winslow correspondence

10
 My book as I plan
 it will be 1st person.
 I can come more directly
 to gaps & things in
 that way, have more
 impact & intimacy —
 the old business of not
 being able to talk to
 the multitude but being
 able to express myself
 as the individual to
 whom I'm talking.
 Just read Capote's
 stories in the tree of
 night. Good, very good.
 Evocations of a phantasmic
 world. Marvelous use
 of odd little observations.
 But here we have art
 cultivating its twinedness.
 The characters & situations
 are creative. The artist
 is not creative.

Walker Winslow correspondence

11
What a gap, say,
between him & Aunt
Sally's old of Tander's
7th night. Or a woman's
blundering glimpses
of human identity.

I got stuck on this
one \$21.00 for what
should have cost \$8.00.
But I have a pet about
this steering mechanism.
I want it small.

I heard a record last
night you might be
have someone get for
you - an old one, but
one that's kept in stock.
Pearl Bailey, singing
"I need." It would
help you tiredness.
and her expression
of why this tired is
apt.

Walker Winslow correspondence

16 (12)
I don't understand
what says to you.
Is he in danger?
I'm going to visit
every place there is in
the sun. Jack is in the
Ozarks & I'll get away
from him when he
comes back.

You thrived in Monterey
& you would in Big Bear.
Monterey has rights &
sands & people to feed
you. I think you all
especially will when
fish are being caught.
If I wished I could
get - you taking a rest
back to Honolulu. But
I don't wish. If we
could both take some
back - well?