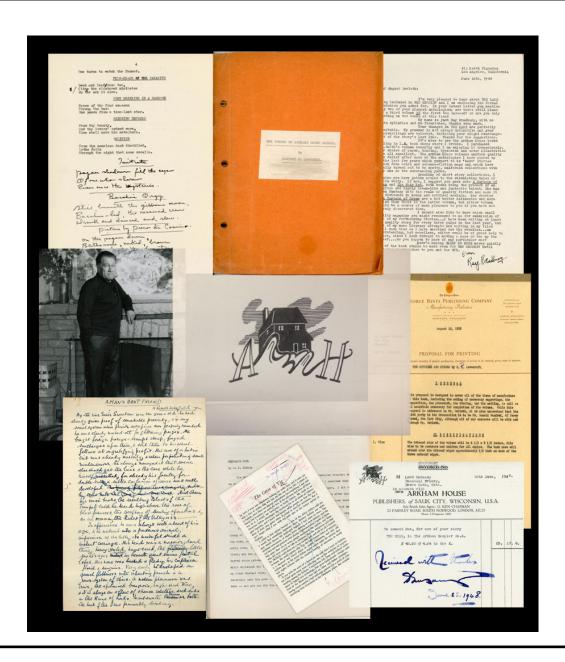
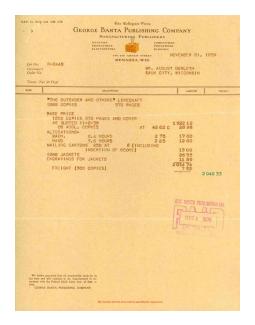
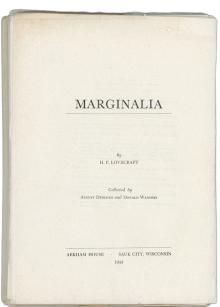
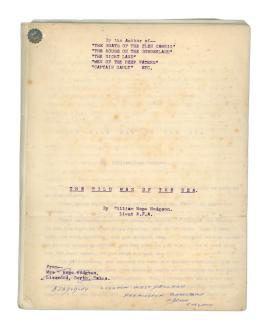
# ARKHAM HOUSE: AN IMPORTANT ARCHIVE FROM THE FILES OF AUGUST DERLETH



L.W. Currey, Inc. John W. Knott, Jr., Bookseller







- I. A Brief History of Arkham House
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- I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARKHAM HOUSE

In 1939 a promising Midwestern mainstream novelist and a popular Midwestern writer of pulp fiction co-founded a small press to publish a hardbound book to preserve the writing and perpetuate the memory of their dearly departed friend and mentor, Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Arkham House was officially in business when August Derleth and Donald Wandrei signed the George Banta Publishing Company's "Proposal for Printing" THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS by H. P. Lovecraft dated 25 August 1939. 1268 copies of this "landmark in the history of weird fiction and American publishing" (Joshi) were printed and most were sold for \$5.00 each (then a high list price for a book of fiction). THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS was the first of three projected volumes of Lovecraft's works Arkham House planned to publish. Derleth and Wandrei (with the considerable assistance of Robert H. Barlow) compiled a second omnibus volume, BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP, published in 1943, which was followed by MARGINALIA a lesser so-called "stop-gap" volume published in 1944 to satisfy readers until Lovecraft's letters could be located, transcribed and edited (the envisioned single volume of letters was ultimately expanded to five).

In the beginning neither Derleth nor Wandrei intended to publish books by any writer except Lovecraft, but at the suggestion of William C. Weber of Scribner's (then Derleth's publisher) Derleth published SOMEONE IN THE DARK, his first collection of weird fiction, under the Arkham House imprint, "since a specialized house could very probably do better with such a book than could Scribner's" (Derleth). Published in the Fall of 1941 in a tiny edition of 1115 copies, Derleth's book "had the effect of keeping the Arkham House imprint before the public eye while other Lovecraft books were in preparation" (Derleth). In 1942 Arkham House published OUT OF SPACE AND TIME, the first major collection of the fiction of Clark Ashton Smith, in a small edition of 1054

copies. In 1943 Arkham House published BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP, the second omnibus volume of Lovecraft's fiction, in an edition of 1217 copies.

Although THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS took four years to sell out its only printing and the other three titles sold slowly as well, Derleth was convinced "that there was a distinct -- if relatively small -- market for collections of weird, fantastic, science-fiction short stories, and I determined to publish as many such collections as possible, with emphasis on the hitherto unpublished, but not scorning works long out of print" (Derleth).

In 1944 Arkham House published four books: THE EYE AND THE FINGER by Donald Wandrei, JUMBEE AND OTHER UNCANNY TALES by Henry S. Whitehead, LOST WORLDS by Clark Ashton Smith, and MARGINALIA by H. P. Lovecraft.

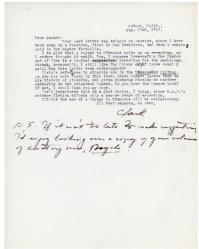
In 1945 Arkham House published five books: SOMETHING NEAR by August Derleth, THE OPENER OF THE WAY by Robert Bloch, WITCH HOUSE by Evangeline Walton (the first novel published by Arkham House), GREEN TEA AND OTHER GHOST STORIES by J. Sheridan Le Fanu, and THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD by H. P. Lovecraft and August Derleth.

In 1946 Arkham House published eight books: THE HOUNDS OF TINDALOS by Frank Belknap Long, THE DOLL AND ONE OTHER by Algernon Blackwood, THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND AND OTHER NOVELS by William Hope Hodgson, SKULL-FACE AND OTHERS by Robert E. Howard, WEST INDIA LIGHTS by Henry S. Whitehead, FEARFUL PLEASURES by A. E. Coppard, THE CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE by H. Russell Wakefield, and SLAN by A. E. van Vogt, plus Derleth's AUGUST DERLETH: TWENTY YEARS OF WRITING 1926-1946, a pamphlet given to friends and subscribers.

In 1947 Arkham House published five books: THIS MORTAL COIL by Cynthia Asquith, DARK OF THE MOON: POEMS OF FANTASY AND THE MACABRE edited by August Derleth, "perhaps Derleth's most original and valuable anthology" (Joshi), DARK CARNIVAL by Ray Bradbury, REVELATIONS IN BLACK by Carl Jacobi, and NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS by Fritz Leiber.

In 1948 Arkham House published six books: THE TRAVELLING GRAVE AND OTHER STORIES by L. P. Hartley, THE WEB OF EASTER ISLAND by Donald Wandrei, THE FOURTH BOOK OF JORKENS by Lord Dunsany, ROADS by Seabury Quinn, GENIUS LOCI AND OTHER TALES by Clark Ashton Smith, and NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD by





Clark Ashton Smith

August Derleth, plus the first four issues of THE ARKHAM SAMPLER (four more were published in 1949).

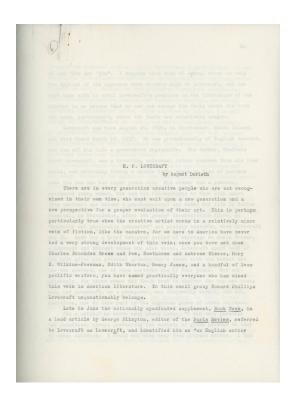
Between 1944 and 1948 Arkham House published twenty-eight books, four issues of THE ARKHAM SAMPLER, and a promotional booklet. Additionally, during this time, two books were published under Derleth's Mycroft & Moran imprint, and seven books were published under his Stanton & Lee imprint. This is an incredible feat for a small wartime and immediate post-war publisher, basically a one-man operation funded by loans from Derleth (his building loan for his home, Place of Hawks, and later mortgages on the property) and from Arkham House printer, the George Banta Printing Company. (Arkham House co-founder Wandrei served four years in the U.S. Army during World War II and limited his editorial responsibilities to the works of H. P. Lovecraft as well.)

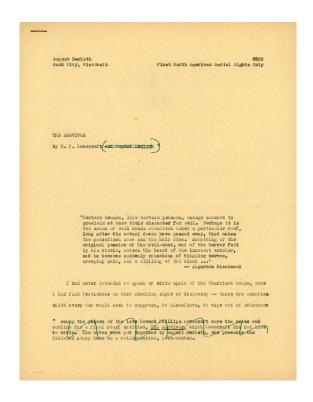
From 1944 through 1948, in addition to his duties as director of Arkham House and editor and publisher of Mycroft & Moran and Stanton & Lee, Derleth published twelve of his own books (novels, poetry and nonfiction) with other publishers, as well as editing five anthologies of fantastic literature.

Derleth published fourteen anthologies of fantasy and science fiction between 1944 and 1954, five with Farrar & Rinehart (Rinehart & Company in 1946 and after), eight with Pellegrini and Cudahy (one of which was copublished with Arkham House), and one with Farrar, Straus & Young. Since Derleth frequently revised the texts of stories previously published as magazine fiction, with the permission and often the collaboration of the author, the versions published in his anthologies are in many cases the definitive texts.

Three additional anthologies were prepared by Derleth during the 1950s, but Rinehart declined to publish them, and except for the sale of a rejected anthology of horror fiction, WHEN EVIL WAKES (1963), to a UK publisher, Derleth could not sell any anthologies of fantastic fiction to mainstream publishers after 1954. He was forced by market conditions to publish his anthologies of horror fiction himself, under his own Arkham House imprint.

In 1949 Arkham House published two books, SOMETHING ABOUT CATS AND OTHER PIECES by H. P. Lovecraft and THE THRONE OF SATURN by S. Fowler Wright, as well as the last four issues of THE ARKHAM SAMPLER, the "ill-fated" literary guarterly "which took an inexcusably large amount of the editor-publisher's time" (Derleth).





The 1950s were not good years for Arkham House. The mainstream market for anthologies and single author collections of short fiction was oversold and sales were declining. Additionally, there was fierce competition 5 among mainstream and small press publishers in the modest market for science fiction and fantastic literature. From 1950 through 1959 Arkham House published fourteen books, of which three were subsidized by their authors and a literary executor and two were co-published with Pellegrini & Cudahy. Among the handful of books published during this decade were two slim volumes of verse by Clark Ashton Smith, prequels to his mammoth SELECTED POEMS (1971), THE FEASTING DEAD, a very short vampire novel by British writer John Metcalfe, NINE HORRORS AND A DREAM, the first collection of weird tales by the American poet Joseph Payne Brennan, and THE SHUTTERED ROOM AND OTHER PIECES, a miscellany of work by and about H. P. Lovecraft with "an abundance of interesting matter" (Joshi).

Derleth and Arkham House survived the 1950s by combining Derleth's foresight of market conditions and savvy management skills with the sale of reprint rights to material controlled by Derleth or Arkham House, especially the sale of options and limited rights for Lovecraft stories to radio, film, and television studios. For a time, Derleth was deeply involved with representatives and principals in the radio, film and TV industries, especially the latter (he worked for Revue Productions during its early years, outlining and writing TV plays and pitching properties). But the big money was in films, and Derleth's biggest asset was a dead author whose work ultimately turned out not to be an Arkham House property -- it was in the public domain. The archive is rich in material pertaining to Derleth's involvement with the post-war entertainment industry.

Due to his heavy commitment of time and money to Arkham House and the writers who wrote for it -- both old hands (some of whom had outlived their diminished market and were experiencing hard times) and new aspiring writers (many of whom needed advice and encouragement), Derleth's own writing suffered. Much of what he wrote and sold between 1960 and his death in July 1971 was work for hire, much of it nonfiction written for the newspapers and the major magazines of the day. In addition to writing several regular newspaper columns, Derleth was appointed the Literary Editor of the Madison CAPITAL-TIMES in 1941, a post he retained, except for a brief period, until his death. Up market magazines, OUTDOORS, HOLIDAY, FORD TIMES, COUNTRY BEAUTIFUL and others, paid good money, sometimes \$1000 for his articles. Additionally, he recycled his unsold work, reoffering it to various publishers until it stuck (Despite his best efforts, some properties, like his omnibus collection of Solar Pons stories and his ANGLER'S COMPANION, did not sell during his lifetime).

With story reprint sales dwindling, few new novels to publish or reprint, and Lovecraft in the public domain, Derleth's agents (both at home and abroad) were hard pressed to make sales on his behalf. But Derleth's perseverance ultimately brought new, fresh literary talent into the Arkham House tent (including Ramsey Campbell, Brian Lumley and Basil Copper) and he managed to continue publishing the work of the older writers as well (including H. Russell Wakefield, John Metcalfe, Frank Belknap Long and Clark Ashton Smith).

Although suffering from reduced profit margins, high production costs, and competition from other genre publishers, Derleth resumed a vigorous publishing schedule in 1960. Between 1960 and 1971, the year of his death, Arkham House published fifty-three books, all ten issues of THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR and several booklets, Mycroft & Moran published eight books and a chapbook printing a single Solar Pons story, and Stanton & Lee published seven books, including several substantial regional anthologies.

Highlights from this productive period include five books by Clark Ashton, beginning with THE ABOMINATIONS OF YANDO (1960) and ending with SELECTED POEMS (1971), "a landmark volume whose importance to weird literature -- and perhaps to American literature in general -- cannot be overstated" (Joshi); twelve books by H. P. Lovecraft, including the first three volumes of SELECTED LETTERS (1965; 1968; 1971), a long-awaited, important work and one of Arkham House's major publishing achievements; PLEASANT DREAMS -- NIGHTMARES (1960), the second Arkham House collection of Robert Bloch's short fiction; FIRE AND SLEET AND

CANDLELIGHT (1961), a major anthology of weird verse from the 1930s to the 1960s edited by Derleth; THE DARK MAN AND OTHERS (1963), the second Arkham House collection of Robert E. Howard's tales; NIGHTMARE NEED (1964), the "first major volume" of Joseph Payne Brennan's "quietly understated but powerful weird verse" (Joshi); DEEP WATERS (1967), a selection of William Hope Hodgson's best weird tales, THE MIND PARASITES (1967) by Colin Wilson, "perhaps the most philosophically challenging Lovecraft pastiche ever written" (Joshi); 3 TALES OF HORROR (1967), three weird tales by Lovecraft richly illustrated by Lee Brown Coye; STRANGE GATEWAYS (1967), a long overdue collection of the best weird fiction of E. Hoffmann Price; and TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS (1969), an anthology compiled by August Derleth "that has come to be regarded as a definitive anthology of tales utilizing the framework of the "Cthulhu Mythos" (Joshi).

Other important Arkham House publications during this period were DARK MIND, DARK HEART, OVER THE EDGE, TRAVELLERS BY NIGHT and DARK THINGS, the four anthologies of original tales edited by Derleth and published between 1962 and 1971; the ten issues of THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR published from the Summer of 1967 through the Summer of 1971; and the debut books by Ramsey Campbell and Brian Lumley, two writers whose work was nurtured by Derleth and featured in his anthologies and various issues of THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR.

Following the death of Derleth in 1971, books completed earlier in manuscript by Campbell, Lumley and Copper were published, as were long-delayed collections of short fiction by Le Fanu, M. P. Shiel, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman and Marjorie Bowen, and Lovecraft's MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS (1995), a volume of non-fiction conceived decades earlier by Derleth.

This Archive documents extensively Derleth's work as a writer, editor, and publisher. The archive includes a wealth of correspondence pertaining to Derleth's editorial work on his landmark fantasy and science fiction anthologies of the 1940s and 1950s that featured stories by most of the major writers who wrote fantastic fiction during the first half of the twentieth century. The archive is also rich in material covering Derleth's involvement with the postwar entertainment industry an his business with many literary and artist's agents.

### II. THE IMPORTANCE OF ARKHAM HOUSE

Among America's most important and best known twentieth-century small publishers, Arkham House Publishers (named for the fictional Massachusetts city loosely modeled on Salem, Massachusetts, the setting for many of H. P. Lovecraft's stories) had an enormous impact on the course and development of the horror fiction genre, particularly in the United States.

"The modest success of Arkham House was a beacon to the small press movement in the United States. Derleth showed that a small specialty publishing house could make a place for itself along side the publishing giants" (Roald D. Tweet).

"Arkham House would deserve recognition in American publishing if it had done nothing but preserve the work of H. P. Lovecraft ... Derleth and Wandrei's confidence in Lovecraft's merit, and their faith in their own publishing enterprise, have been justified. Lovecraft is the only author from the weird fiction pulps to have secured a genuine place in the cannon of American literature, and Arkham House played a central role in continually keeping Lovecraft's work in the public eye. But it was Wandrei in particular who placed especial value on Lovecraft's letters, and here too his judgment has been vindicated ...." (S. T. Joshi).

"Arkham House, founded in 1939, played a crucial role in establishing the importance of the WEIRD TALES school of writers -- including Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, Henry S. Whitehead, and others -- by preserving their pulp fiction in book form for future readers, scholars and writers. Derleth also issued the first books of their immediate successors in the tradition, Robert Bloch, Fritz Leiber, Ray Bradbury and Joseph Payne Brennan. As well, he vigorously championed the British weird fiction tradition, presenting works by Sheridan Le Fanu, William Hope Hodgson, Lord Dunsany, and H. Russell Wakefield to the North American audience, in some cases for the first time" (Penguin Encyclopedia).



H.P. Lovercraft with Vrest Orton (L)



Robert E. Howard

"Those of us who are of a certain age can well recall the legendary status that Arkham House occupied for many years in the field of weird fiction. Since its establishment in 1939, initially for the purpose of rescuing the work of H. P. Lovecraft from probable oblivion in the crumbling pages of WEIRD TALES and other pulp magazines, the publishing firm founded by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, and run largely by Derleth alone after World War II, inspired among its devotees a level of awe and reverence that few other publishers have ever attained. It cannot be said the every one of its publications was, from an abstract literary perspective, of transcendent quality; but if it had issued nothing but the first books of Lovecraft, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, and Fritz Leiber, it would eminently deserve to be remembered. And it can take credit for launching the career of another writer -- one who perhaps secured a loftier status in weird fiction than any of those named, Lovecraft alone excepted: Ramsey Campbell" (S. T. Joshi).

#### III. THE IMPORTANCE OF AUGUST DERLETH AS EDITOR AND PUBLISHER



Derleth "possessed exceptional critical acumen backed by prodigious knowledge of supernatural literature. These accomplishments stood him in good stead as both a publisher and free lance editor, in which capacities he made several of his most important contributions to the field" (Penguin Encyclopedia).

Derleth "deserves credit not only for preserving Lovecraft, but for popularizing him -- and for rescuing a host of other WEIRD TALES writers from oblivion. As a result, Arkham House has inherited the following that "The Unique Magazine" once enjoyed and has published collections by many a WEIRD TALES stalwart whose name might otherwise have been for gotten in the yellowing pages of the pulps" (Penguin Encyclopedia).

"August Derleth had almost single-handedly kept weird fiction alive with Arkham House, the grandfather of all specialist science fiction and fantasy small presses ... Arkham House was essentially a book publisher, and Derleth was one of the first to develop original anthologies of weird tales, long before they became popular in the science fiction field. Starting with DARK MIND, DARK HEART (1962), Derleth encouraged a new generation of writers while sustaining the old school of WEIRD TALES contributors" (Mike Ashley).

"Derleth edited several horror anthologies for mainstream publishers in the 1940s that not only helped consolidate the contemporary market for such fare but also defined a state-of-the-art position for the genre in terms of literary quality ... Derleth's anthologies for Arkham House in the 1960s, beginning with DARK MIND, DARK HEART (1962) ... included stories by established authors such as Bloch, Brennan, John Metcalfe and Robert Aickman, as well as works by talented newcomers such as Ramsey Campbell and David Drake. Derleth's support of younger writers during this period was his last significant contribution to the genre. It stands, with Arkham House, as his enduring legacy" (Penguin Encyclopedia).

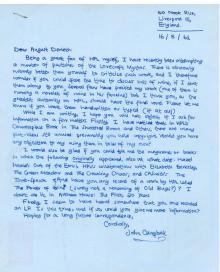
"It was as an editor and publisher that Derleth made his most significant contributions to weird fiction. When he expanded the scope of Arkham House's publishing ambitions beyond the preservation of Lovecraft's work, he helped to introduce the fiction of Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Donald Wandrei and other pulp colleagues to a new generation of readers. SLEEP NO MORE, THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD, WHO KNOCKS?, and many other anthologies he assembled in the 1940s and 1950s were seminal mixtures of pulp and classic horror fiction. Derleth brought out the first story collections of Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury and Fritz Leiber and was instrumental in exposing the fiction of L. P. Hartley, Cynthia Asquith, William Hope Hodgson, and other British writers to American audiences under the Arkham House imprimatur. It is well known that much of the fiction Derleth churned out after 1939 was designed to raise money for his publishing program. In so far as his stories help to subsidize Arkham House and ensure its continued survival, they may be among the most underappreciated weird tales of the twentieth-century" (Stefan Dziemianowicz).

Derleth's "biggest contribution to American literature came not from his own writings, but from the writings of others, carefully curated and edited ... For 32 years, Derleth oversaw Arkham House, a specialty publishing imprint that offered the rare opportunity for authors of weird fiction to have their works published in book form. From Derleth's office inside Place of Hawks came a catalogue of historically significant publications. The first book by Ray Bradbury, one of science fiction's most famed and widely read writers. The first book by Robert Bloch, the Wisconsinite better known as the man who wrote PSYCHO. An early work by Robert E. Howard, crafter of Conan the Barbarian; the U.S. debut of British horror writer Ramsey Campbell. And, most

significantly, THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS, the first published collection of stories by H. P. Lovecraft, a man who lived in poverty with his work largely unknown during his life, now considered second only to Edgar Allan Poe in his importance to American horror writing" (Ted Krulos).

"Derleth has received little recognition for either his own work or his encouragement of other writers. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1938, sponsored by Sinclair Lewis, Edgar Lee Masters, and Helen White, but for a lifetime of contributions to the field of fantasy, he has received but little mention in passing ... August Derleth died in Sauk City on 4 July 1971, with little of the recognition he deserved and wanted. He received no major awards other than the Guggenheim, and aside from accounts by friends, and features in Midwestern newspapers and magazines, there have been few serious treatments of his works and no attempts to publish any of his manuscript material and voluminous correspondence. Even before publication of WALDEN WEST in 1961, his reputation as a regionalist had begun to fade, and his most frequent mention in fantasy circles is in connection with Lovecraft" (Roald D. Tweet).





Ramsey Campbell







Ray Bradbury Brian Lumley Margery Lawrence



#### IV. DESCRIPTION AND CALENDAR OF THE ARKHAM HOUSE ARCHIVE

The Arkham House Archive contains over 4000 letters and documents related to publications issued by Arkham House, Mycroft & Moran and Stanton & Lee between 1939 and 1971, as well as correspondence and business papers related to Derleth's activities as writer and editor for other publishers, including his editorial work as an anthologist in the 1940s and 1950s, and as a TV scriptwriter in the 1950s.

This Archive is a highly important collection of letters and documents that compliment the papers held by the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS). These papers and those held by WHS are essentially all the Arkham House papers that survive. According to Mr. David Rajchel who preserved these papers: "there were boxes of financial records in the basement. April [Derleth] was convinced that the Wisconsin Historical Society took all relevant items. She recycled many boxes. Many of the items I kept I saved from disposal or recycling. I dug through the boxes and kept many of the items I believed to be important. If I hadn't they would have been lost."

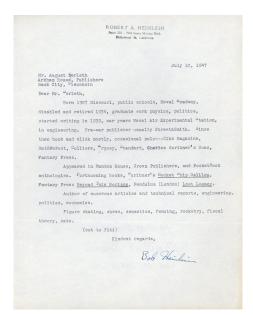
The business papers include printers' correspondence, quotes and invoices, beginning with the George Banta Company proposal for printing THE OUTSIDER, 25 August 1939 and the invoice for THE OUTSIDER, 21 November 1939. There is significant business correspondence from Derleth's literary agents: G. Ken Chapman, Robert Goldfarb, Otis Kline Associates, Scott Meredith Literary Agency, Renault and Le Bayon and others, as well as hundreds of letters pertaining to the sale of reprint rights (including audio and film rights) for literary property by Derleth and others. These business papers largely predate the August William Derleth Papers held by the Wisconsin Historical Society, as "most of the pre-1963 materials were destroyed when this collection was originally processed, so substantially complete records survive only for the years between 1963 and 1970."

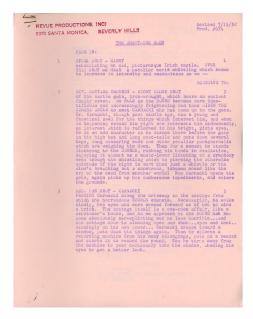
Additionally, the archive includes book production files for some publications, printer's blocks, fair copy typescripts of literary material by various writers made by Arkham House for book production or reference (like typewritten transcriptions of Lovecraft letters), complete and partial book proofs, and photographs of Arkham House authors.

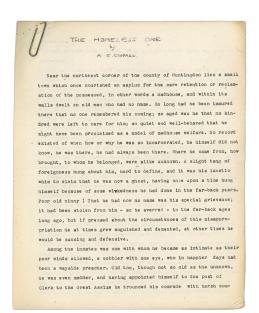
The core of the archive is correspondence, often extensive, from several hundred authors whose work Derleth published under his own imprints or in his highly important non-Arkham House anthologies published in the 1940s and 1950s, as well as manuscripts, mostly typewritten (including fair copies and carbons), submitted by Arkham House authors.

One of the most important twentieth century small publisher's archives offered for sale in the last several decades. The collection, \$415,000.00

Extensive 95-page calendar of the Arkham House Archive available upon request or via download at the website of L.W. Currey.







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## BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP

By H. P. Lovecraft

Collected by

August Derleth and Donald Wandrei

Arkham House · Sauk City, Wisconsin