

# John Kieran Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

Prepared by Emily W. Zehmer



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2010

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/mss.contact>

Finding aid encoded by Library of  
Congress Manuscript Division, 2010

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms010207>

# Collection Summary

Title: John Kieran Papers

Span Dates: 1917-1985

ID No.: MSS61885

Creator: Kieran, John, 1892-1981

Extent: 400 items; 2 containers; .8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Naturalist, author, and sports columnist. Correspondence, annotated transcripts of his World War I diary, nature diary, ornithological notes, essays, notes and drafts of writings, clippings, and a photograph pertaining to Kieran's career as a sports columnist and panelist of the radio and television program, *Information Please*, as well as to his expertise in ornithology and natural history.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### People

Allen, Fred, 1894-1956--Correspondence.

Atkinson, Brooks, 1894-1983--Correspondence.

Beebe, William, 1877-1962--Correspondence.

Borland, Hal, 1900-1978--Correspondence.

Brooks, Paul--Correspondence.

Cagney, James, 1899-1986--Correspondence.

Croy, Homer, 1883-1965--Correspondence.

Davidson, Garrison H., 1904- --Correspondence.

Davis, Robert H. (Robert Hobart), 1869-1942--Correspondence.

Fadiman, Clifton, 1904-1999--Correspondence.

Farley, James A. (James Aloysius), 1888-1976--Correspondence.

Kieran, John, 1892-1981.

Krock, Arthur, 1886- --Correspondence.

Marquand, John P. (John Phillips), 1893-1960--Correspondence.

Masefield, John, 1878-1967--Correspondence.

McCord, David Thompson Watson, 1897-1997--Correspondence.

McFee, William, 1881- --Correspondence.

Mullin, Willard, 1902- --Correspondence.

O'Donnell, Emmett, 1906-1971--Correspondence.

O'Hara, John, 1905-1970--Correspondence.

Phelps, William Lyon, 1865-1943--Correspondence.

Phillips, H. I. (Harry Irving), b. 1887--Correspondence.

Reeder, Red, 1902- --Correspondence.

Rickenbacker, Eddie, 1890-1973--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1887-1944--Correspondence.

Saltonstall, Leverett, 1892-1979--Correspondence.

Smith, Ken, 1902- --Correspondence.

Swope, Herbert Bayard, 1882-1958--Correspondence.

Teale, Edwin Way, 1899-1980--Correspondence.

Thomas, Lowell, 1892-1981--Correspondence.

Van Tyne, Josselyn, 1902-1957--Correspondence.

Waring, Fred, 1900-1984--Correspondence.

White, E. B. (Elwyn Brooks), 1899-1985--Correspondence.

#### Organizations

United States. Army. Engineers, 11th.

#### Subjects

Ornithology.

Quiz shows.

Sports journalism.

World War, 1914-1918.

#### Occupations

Authors.

Journalists.

Naturalists.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The papers of John Kieran, naturalist, author, and sports columnist, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Margaret Ford Kieran in 1985.

### Processing History

The papers of John Kieran were arranged and described in 1987. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

### Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John Kieran is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

### Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Kieran are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

### Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John Kieran Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1892, Aug. 2	Born, New York, N. Y.
1908-1911	Attended City College of New York, New York, N.Y.
1912	B.S., Fordham University, New York, N.Y.
1913	Poultry farmer and rural school teacher, Dutchess County, N.Y.
1915-1917	Sports reporter, <i>New York Times</i>

1917-1919	World War I service in France with Eleventh United States Engineers
1919	Married Alma Boldtmann (died 1944)
1922-1925	Sports reporter, <i>New York Tribune</i>
1925-1927	Sports reporter, <i>New York American</i>
1927-1941	“Sports of the Times” columnist, <i>New York Times</i>
1938-1948	<i>Information Please</i> radio show panelist
1941-1944	Sports columnist, <i>New York Sun</i>
1947	Married Margaret Ford
1947-1953	Editor, <i>Information Please Almanac</i>
1952	<i>Information Please</i> television show panelist
1956	Retired to Rockport, Mass., on Cape Ann
1959	Published <i>A Natural History of New York City</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin
1964	Published autobiography, <i>Not Under Oath</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin
1974	Elected to Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, N.Y.
1981, Dec. 10	Died, Rockport, Mass.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Francis Kieran (1892-1981) cover the years 1917-1985 and consist chiefly of correspondence together with annotated typewritten transcripts of his World War I diary, nature diaries, ornithological notes, essays, notes and drafts of writings, clippings, and a photograph.

Kieran’s incoming correspondence is largely personal, reflecting his career in journalism and radio and his expertise in sports, ornithology, and natural history. Correspondents include Fred Allen, Brooks Atkinson, William Beebe, Hal Borland, Paul Brooks, James Cagney, Homer Croy, Garrison H. Davidson, Robert H. Davis, Clifton Fadiman, James A. Farley, Arthur Krock, Bernard Lintott, John P. Marquand, John Masefield, David Thompson Watson McCord, William McFee, Willard Mullin, Emmett O’Donnell, John O’Hara, William Lyon Phelps, H. I. Phillips, Red Reeder, Eddie Rickenbacker, Theodore Roosevelt (1887-1944), Leverett Saltonstall, Ken Smith, H. Bayard Swope, Edwin Way Teale, Lowell Thomas, Josselyn Van Tyne, Fred Waring, and E. B. White.

Kieran transcribed and annotated his World War I diary (1917-1919) shortly after the conflict (“looking back through a year of prohibitionism”). It reflects his daily routine while serving with the Eleventh United States Engineers, who were among the first American troops to land in France in 1917. His wartime experiences are also related in letters from Colonel Red Reeder and General Garrison Davidson, who reminisce in later years about their service with Kieran in France. In the miscellany section are drafts of the first chapter of a World War I narrative based on the diary.

Kieran's interests in ornithology and natural history are represented by typewritten transcripts of nature diaries kept in the 1960s and 1970s on Cape Ann in Massachusetts together with lists of birds observed there and in San Francisco. The diaries consist of brief entries, noting plants and animals, weather conditions, and seasonal changes.

The miscellany section contains essays, incomplete drafts and notes for books, list of "Information Please" panelists (1938-1948), newspaper clippings, and photographs.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Diaries
BOX 1	Annotated diary, 1917-1919 (4 folders)
BOX 1	Nature diaries, 1965-1975
BOX 1	Ornithological observations, 1960, undated
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	A-C (3 folders)
BOX 2	D-W (12 folders)
BOX 2	Miscellany
BOX 2	Essays, 1954-1964
BOX 2	Incomplete drafts and notes for books, undated (3 folders)
BOX 2	List of <i>Information Please</i> panelists, 1939-1949, undated
BOX 2	Newspaper clippings, circa 1930-1985
BOX 2	Photograph, 1975