

JOHN MASEFIELD ALBUMS

John Masefield Albums fonds	1
Biographical sketch.....	1
Scope and content	1
Immediate source of acquisition	2
Conservation notes.....	2
Items.....	3
ALBUM 1	3
ALBUM 2	8

John Masefield Albums fonds. – 1958 – 1977. – 0.6 m of textual materials, photographs and water-colour sketches.

Biographical sketch: John Masefield was born in 1878 in Hereford, near the Welsh border. The son of a solicitor, he went to sea as a young man and worked in New York as a manual labourer before working his passage home. Inspired by the Canadian poet Duncan Campbell Grant and by Chaucer, he began to write poetry, publishing his first book of poems in 1902. He married Constance de la Cherois-Crommelin in 1903, and was the father of Lewis, who died in action in 1942 at the age of 32, and Judith, who was her father’s companion in his old age. During World War I he worked with the Red Cross in France. He wrote drama, novels, essays and autobiography as well as poetry, moving away from epic dramas involving the sea and the English countryside as he grew older. He remained primarily a storyteller, writing to Miss St. John in 1961 that “...this impulse to make a lively art of storytelling is at the back of all my work...” In 1930 he was named Poet Laureate, a position he held, and for which he was widely admired, until his death in 1967. He was President of the Society of Authors from 1937 and the National Book League from 1944-1949. He was awarded the Order of Merit in 1935 and received the Honourary D.Litt from Oxford and an LL.D. from Aberdeen.

Scope and content: Fonds contains the correspondence received by Judith St. John from John Masefield. Miss St. John, the head of Boys and Girls House at the Toronto Public Library, received a letter from the Poet Laureate in 1958 who was searching for a text of *A Child Born to be King*. John Masefield had contacted Edgar Osborne with his question, and Mr. Osborne referred him to Miss St. John. The initial correspondence is not part of this collection, but Miss St. John’s referral to a book dealer who found the required item led to a further letter from Masefield and a friendly relationship grew between them, solidified by a visit from Miss St. John in 1960. The letters that form the background for their friendship are part of the Boys and Girls House Archive, and have been reproduced at the end of this Finding Aid. Over the years the topics covered by their correspondence ranged from books they admired, the difficulty of tracking down books, the publication of the Osborne Catalogue (Volume 1, published in 1959), the Yeats family and the Cuala Press, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the itinerary of Judith and Elizabeth St. John’s trip to England. Also included is a letter from Eleanor Farjeon, detailing plans for a visit in England, made impossible by Miss Farjeon’s glaucoma operation. Christmas cards, hand-written lines of poetry, and water-colour sketches were frequently enclosed with the letters, which began with “Dear Miss St. John” in 1959, progressing to

“My dear” as the years went by. Miss St. John’s draft response to some letters have been preserved, as well as two letters from Judith Masefield, one a brief response to Miss St. John’s note of condolence after her father’s death.

The fonds contains 53 letters from Masefield to Judith St. John, one letter from Eleanor Farjeon, with St. John’s reply, 8 photographs, 4 watercolour sketches by Masefield, 7 Christmas cards, 31 newspaper clippings, 7 draft letters from Judith St. John to John Masefield, 1 letter to Judith St. John from the CBC, 2 letters to Judith St. John from Judith Masefield and 1 page of an unsent letter.

Unless otherwise noted, all correspondence is written by John Masefield to Judith St. John. JSJ refers to Judith St. John. John Masefield often used his own personalized stationery in two sizes with his Burcote Brook, Abingdon address; ‘note’ refers to 4 x 7 inch cards; ‘letter’ refers to larger sheets. Standard blue airmail forms (aerogrammes) were often used, and occasionally he wrote on plain sheets of paper.

The fonds consists of a single series following the original arrangement of letters in an album. In the original album, many items were doubled up, making it difficult to see and read the documents; the archivist has spread the material over more pages in order to keep the items separate and allow them to be read. This has created the necessity for a second album, which has been purchased to resemble the first. A photocopy and list of the original arrangement is at the end of this finding aid. Sequential page numbers have been added to the two albums by the archivist.

Immediate source of acquisition: The fonds is the gift of Miss Judith St. John to the Osborne Collection in 2003.

Conservation notes: The letters were housed by Miss St. John in a green leather album printed “From John Masefield” on the front cover. The letters, photos, sketches, etc. were placed on plastic covered pages. The original acidic paper and non-archival plastic sheets have been replaced with archival quality pages of a slightly larger size and in some cases mylar corners have been added to prevent items from slipping.

Items

ALBUM 1:

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
3 colour snapshots	[1960]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Masefield 2. John and Judith Masefield with Elizabeth St. John 3. John Masefield and Elizabeth St. John 	1
2 black & white snapshots	1960	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Masefield with Judith and Elizabeth St. John. 2. John Masefield with Judith St. John 	2
Note on Burcote Brook stationery	Oct 22 [1958]	Note written on both sides to Miss Judith St. John, regarding the search for a copy of <i>A Child Born to be King</i> , and enclosing 2 water-colour sketches of ship, painted for her.	3-4
2 sketches	[1958]	Water-colour sketches enclosed with the above letter, on unstamped stationery, signed and described on the verso.	5-6
Note	Nov 5 [1958]	2-page note on Burcote Brook stationery, written both sides, asking about the date of her birthday and asking that their correspondence continue. He also sends best wishes for work on the catalogue, a reference to Volume 1 of the Osborne Collection catalogue, which she was then preparing.	7-8
Sketch and envelope	Nov 5 1958	Addressed envelope for the above letter, and a watercolour sketch of the Thames as seen from Masefield's window, as described in the letter.	9
Aerogramme	Nov 25 1958	Letter describing Masefield's first visit to W.B. Yeats in 1900.	10
Aerogramme	Dec 5 1958	Letter commenting on his unsuccessful search for a copy of <i>A Child Born to be a King</i> , but pleased that the search has "brought us into signaling distance".	11-12
Aerogramme	[Dec?] 19 1958	Letter asking what gift book she would like for a keepsake.	13-14
Note	[1958?]	Undated note on Burcote Brook stationery, with enclosed keepsake printed poems, "It's Christmas Eve", inscribed for "Judith. A most happy time to you."	15-16
2 Christmas cards	[1958?]	Printed, signed Christmas cards containing poems by John Masefield, sent by John and Constance Masefield: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Song of Gaspar, the youngest of the Three Kings 2. A Berkshire Carol Both inscribed to Judith St. John	17-18

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
Clipping	[1958?]	Clipping from the 'Radio Times' consisting of an article by John Masefield about the radio adaptation of <i>The Midnight Folk</i>	19
2 black and white photographs	1958	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Masefield holding a cat while reading; inscribed "To Judith St. John from John Masefield, Christmas 1958" 2. Masefield holding an open book, inscribed "For Judith St. John from John Masefield, Oct.er 22.1958" 	20
Christmas card and envelope	1958	The Royal Household Christmas card for 1958, signed "John Masefield", with original envelope.	21-22
Letter	Jan 14 1959	Letter on Burcote Brook stationery, both sides, sending Christmas greetings, with a 3-page enclosure consisting of a typed poem, <i>The Child Born to be King</i> , with annotations in Masefield's hand, and envelope	23-28
Aerogramme	Jan 18 1959	Letter thanking JSJ for her reference to Mr. Rogers, a book dealer in England	29-30
Letter	[1959?]	Letter on Burcote Brook stationery, congratulating JSJ on the publication of the Osborne Catalogue, and asking her permission to address her by her Christian name.	31-32
Aerogramme	Feb 13 1959	Letter with the salutation "My dear Judith", wishing her a speedy recovery from the flu.	33
Aerogramme	Apr 3 1959	Letter discussing Masefield's friendship with the Yeats family.	34
Note	June 15 1959	Note on Burcote Brook stationery with envelope, accompanied by a water-colour sketch, inscribed to Judith St. John on the verso. The letter thanks Miss St. John for her gift of an autographed copy of Lillian H. Smith's <i>The Unreluctant Years</i> .	35-36
Note	June 24 1959	Note on Burcote Brook stationery about the Coronation of Elizabeth II, with an enclosed copy of "Lines for the 26 th of June, 1959. <i>The Times</i> London... Written out for Judith St. John". Accompanied by an untitled, undated newspaper clipping (Canadian, from evidence on the verso), of Masefield's poem about Canada, "The greatest single land under the sun."	37-38
Aerogramme	July 23 1959	Letter thanking "My dear Judith" for her kind words about Masefield's verses written in honour of the opening of the Seaway, and asking about a rare Walter Crane title, <i>Chattering Jack</i> .	39-40

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
Aerogramme	July 27 1959	Letter wishing her a happy birthday.	41- 42
Note with clipping	Sept 6 1959	Note on Burcote Brook stationery, thanking her for help with <i>Chattering Jack</i> , with 7 pages of 'rough copies' of poetry: "Lines suggested by Her Majesty's Visit to Canada. June. 1959. written out for Miss Judith St. John. John Masefield. September the 6 th ". Also included is a clipping from the <i>Globe & Mail</i> , Saturday June 27 1959, "Hails Royal Visit in Verse: Country Boy, Sailor Boy and Now Poet Laureate."	43- 48
Aerogramme	Sept 30 1959	Letter thanking her for obtaining a photographed copy of <i>Chattering Jack</i> , and telling her about his recordings of 'Ossian', 'The Fox', and "some sea pieces".	49- 50
Note	[1959]	Note on Burcote Brook stationery, undated with smudged date stamp on the envelope, including a Canadian one dollar bill that had somehow come into Masefield's possession, saying, "please restore it to its native land."	51- 52
Letter	Oct 9 1959	Letter on Burcote Brook stationery, claiming that JSJ had never told him of the wonders of Toronto. The letter contains a poem on Toronto, written after Masefield read a 1959 clipping from <i>The Times</i> regarding a Torontonian who claimed to have invented shoes that enable to wearer to walk on water.	53- 54
Aerogramme	Feb 4 1960	Letter thanking her for helping him, through her contact Mr. Rogers, to acquire the complete poem <i>A Child Born to be King</i> .	55
Clipping	Feb 19 1960	<i>Toronto Star</i> article, "Special poems calls baby 'Promise of the Race'"	56
Aerogramme	Mar 21 1960	Letter thanking her for a letter and wishing her well in her new library at 60 St. George Street.	57- 58
Aerogramme	May 13 1960	Letter congratulating her on a planned visit to England, and asking what she would like to see.	59- 60
Aerogramme	July 10 1960	Letter wishing her a safe trip to England, and promising a "jolly welcome"	61- 62
Letter	July 17 1960	3-page letter to JSJ at The Royal Court Hotel, Sloane Square, "To await arrival", asking her to visit Abingdon, with envelope.	63- 66
Note	July 24 1960	2 note cards and envelope, address to JSJ in Cornwall, looking forward to her visit on her birthday [August 4].	67- 68

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
Note	Aug 8 1960	Note address to JSJ in Leigh Gardens, London, asking her to come again after the delightful visit she and Elizabeth made to the Masefield home on August 4.	69- 70
Note	Sept 16 1960	Note addressed c/o the Lansdowne Grove Hotel in Bath, hoping that she will have a visit with Masefield while staying in Oxford.	71
Notes	July 31 1960	One note to JSJ, with a second, short note to Elizabeth, addressed to the sisters in London.	73- 74
Note	Aug 25 1960	Note addressed to JSJ in London, urging them to visit the Maritime Museum in Greenwich.	75- 76
Letter from Eleanor Farjeon	Sept 7 1960	Letter on printed stationery, apologizing that a visit from JSJ will be impossible because of her cataract operation, with envelope	77- 78
Draft letter to Eleanor Farjeon	[Fall 1960]	Letter on Boys and Girls House stationery, from JSJ to Eleanor Farjeon with numerous corrections, probably copied onto a fresh sheet.	79- 80
Note	Sept 16 1960	2-page note addressed to JSJ at the Royal Oxford Hotel, asking them to tea at the Masefield home on Saturday, with envelope	81- 82
Note	Sept 19 1960	Note with envelope, addressed to the Royal Oxford Hotel, thanking her for the visit.	83- 84
Note	Oct 10 1960	Note, with envelope, inviting her to tea on Friday	85- 86
Note	Oct 18 1960	2-page note, with envelope, addressed to Leigh Gardens, London, thanking her for her second visit and wishing her a safe journey home.	87- 88
Aerogramme	Oct 17 1960	Letter to Toronto address, wishing her a safe return and containing a written-out version of an old sea chanty, the original of which Masefield wished to find.	89- 90
Aerogramme	Dec 17 1960	Letter thanking her for a Christmas gift, and asking if he might give money to her to sponsor storytelling sessions at TPL, such as Eileen Colwell had made successful in Britain.	91- 92
Card	Dec 13- 1960	The Royal Household Christmas 1960 card, filled out to 'Judith'. An enclosed card features a print version of Masefield's Christmas verses, with a hand-written message on the back wishing JSJ a Merry Christmas	93- 94
Aerogramme	Jan 5 1961	Letter referring to the storytelling program Masefield intended to fund.	95- 96
Letter from the CBC	Feb 1 1961	Letter to JSJ accompanying Masefields gift of his writing fee for a CBC program to her for the purpose of setting up a storytelling program at one or more of	97- 98

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
		Toronto Public Libraries. The letter is signed by Doug (J.D.) Nixon, Director of Programming, English Networks.	
Aerogramme	Feb 16 1961	Letter encouraging her to go ahead and enlist the aid of Mr. Campbell [Harry Campbell, then Chief Librarian] in setting up the Storytelling fund.	99- 100
Aerogramme	Jan 23 1961	Letter passing along suggestions that Masefield and Eileen Colwell had discussed about the Storytelling Festival.	101- 102
Aerogramme	Jan 26 1961	Letter discussing the Storytelling Festival arrangements.	103- 104
Aerogramme	June 28 1961	Letter asking what she would think of Masefield's proposal to invite a novelist and poet from England to attend the first Masefield Storytelling Festival at the Toronto Public Library.	105- 106
Aerogramme	Aug 1 1961	Letter wishing JSJ a happy birthday, "soon to be followed by a rousing feast of storytelling..."	107- 108
Aerogramme	Sept 28 1961	Letter promising to send a recorded tape from himself with Eileen Colwell, to bring to the Toronto Storytelling Festival.	109- 110
Aerogramme	[1961]	Letter, postmark illegible, wishing her well for the Storytelling Festival.	111- 112
Aerogramme	Oct 18 1961	Letter thanking her for flowers sent to him, and mentioning how he longs to hear that the Storytelling was a great success	113- 114
Card	Nov 6 1961	The Royal Household 1961 Christmas card, with envelope, signed 'from John Masefield'.	115- 116
Aerogramme	Jan 20 1962	Letter thanking her for all her efforts to get the original words of the sea chanty, "Rolling Home", which proved elusive.	117- 118
Aerogramme	Oct 24 1962	Letter to JSJ and Elizabeth, wishing Elizabeth a speedy recovery from a recent illness and discussing the importance of storytelling.	119- 120
Aerogramme	Nov 6 1962	Letter to JSJ and Elizabeth, thanking them for the flowers.	121- 122
Aerogramme	[196-]	Letter, postmark illegible, thanking JSJ for her good wishes and cards.	123- 124
Letter	June 5 1963	Letter on Burcote Brook stationery, thanking JSJ for her birthday greetings, and recommending <i>The Scouring of the White Horse</i> .	125- 126
Aerogramme	Nov 5 1963	Letter thanking JSJ for her letter and a book, with a discussion of Guy Fawkes, and the existence of fairies.	127- 128

ALBUM 2:

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
Card	Nov 28 1963	The Royal Household Christmas 1963 card, signed 'from John Masefield', with envelope.	129- 130
Aerogramme	Jan 30 1964	Letter congratulating JSJ on recent finds [probably for the Osborne Collection, of which she was the Curator].	131- 132
Card	Dec 18 1964	The Royal Household Christmas 1964 card, signed 'from John Masefield'.	133- 134
Note	Feb 28 1965	Note on Burcote Brook Stationery, thanking her for her gift of flowers, with envelope.	135- 136
Aerogramme	June 26 1965	Letter thanking her for kind remembrances.	137
Clipping	June 2 1965	"Masefield, 87, gets greeting on birthday", from the <i>Globe and Mail</i> .	138
Note	Nov 8 1965	Note on Burcote Brook stationery, thanking JSJ for her gift of flowers and lovely letter, which Masefield confesses he is unlikely to be able to read in less than a week, because of trouble with his eyesight, with envelope.	139- 140
Card	Nov 30 1966	The Royal Household Christmas 1966 card, signed 'John Masefield', with envelope.	141
Card	[1967]	Printed card with poem by John Masefield and a handwritten message from Judith Masefield, "So touched by charming message. J.M.". Obituaries clipped from newspapers, one identified as <i>The Telegram</i> , May 16, 1967.	142
Clippings	1961- 1968	17 clippings relating to John Masefield.	143- 150
Envelope	June 25 1959	Addressed to JSJ in Masefield's hand, to her Bayview Avenue home.	151
Envelope	Oct 22 1958	Addressed to JSJ at Boys and Girls House, in Masefield's hand.	152
Card	1961	Additional copy of The Royal Household Christmas 1961 card signed 'John Masefield', with envelope and printed enclosure of a poem and greetings from John and Constance Masefield.	153- 155
Photograph	[1960]	Black and white photograph of John Masefield and JSJ, an enlargement of the items on page 2, removed from its cardboard hinged frame.	156
Negative	[1960]	Negative of the above photograph, in an envelope labeled 'Negative of Judith & Dr. Masefield'.	157
Agenda	Oct 18 1961	Agenda of The John Masefield Story-telling Festival, one typed sheet reproduced on yellow paper.	158

Title	Date	Contents	Page No.
Aerogramme	December 1977	Letter to JSJ from Judith Masefield.	159-161
Clippings	1954-1967	7 newspaper clippings relating to John Masefield.	163-170
Poem	1959	7-line poem, hand-written on a torn piece of paper, signed and dated by John Masefield, beginning "It's Christmas Eve; the Kings are riding..."	171
Draft of a letter	[Nov 1958]	4 small sheets of paper with pencil handwriting on both sides in JSJ's hand, beginning 'Dear Doctor Mansfield' [sic]. Written in response to Masefield's letter of November 5, 1958 which contained his sketch of the Thames.	173
Draft of a letter	[Oct 1958]	3 small sheets of paper, written both sides in pencil, in response to Masefield's letter and gift of ship sketches.	174
Draft of a letter	[Dec 1958]	1 folded sheet written both sides in pencil, thanking Masefield for his Christmas gifts.	175
Draft of a letter	Jan 4 1959	Page 1, in ink, of a letter apparently unsent. With an addressed envelope to Fred Korn, Curator of the John M. Shaw Collection, Florida State University, marked as containing a picture of John Masefield with instructions to return to JSJ at her Cummer Avenue address.	177
Draft of a letter	Feb 5 1959	1 small sheet of paper, written in pen on both sides, with corrections and deletions.	178
Draft of a letter	Mar 14 1959	2 large sheets of paper, written in pen on 3 sides, with corrections and deletions.	179
Draft of a letter	May 1959	2 large sheets, written on both sides in pen, corrected.	180
Draft of a letter	1959	2 small sheets, written on both sides in pen, written in the early part of 1959, with many corrections and deletions.	181
Envelopes	1959	2 envelopes, one addressed to JSJ in Masefield's hand, postmarked 1 Dec 1959, the other labeled "Masefield" Clippings (handwriting not of Masefield or JSJ).	182