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Emmett Grogan Papers, 1965-1968

**Creator** Grogan, Emmett, 1942-1978

**Call number** Berg Coll m.b. Grogan P37 1965

**Physical description** .5 linear feet (2 manuscript boxes)

**Preferred Citation** Emmett Grogan Papers, 1965-1968, Henry and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library

**Repository** Henry and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature

**Location** Berg Coll m.b. Grogan P37 1965

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## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### SOURCE OF ACQUISITION

Purchase, BeatBooks, July 2014

## KEY TERMS

### NAMES

Berg, Peter, 1937-2011.

Metevsky, George (1903-1994).

Murcott, Billy.

Snyder, Gary (b. 1930).

Welch, Lew (1926-1971).

### SUBJECTS

Anarchism--United States--History--20th Century--Sources.

Beat generation.

Capitalism -- United States--20th Century--Polemical Literature.

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Counterculture—California—San Francisco.

Counterculture -- United States -- Sources.

Counterculture -- California -- San Francisco - History.

Counterculture in Literature.

Haight-Ashbery (San Francisco, Calif.)--Social Life and Customs--20th Century.

Hippies--California--San Francisco.

LSD (Drug)--Social Aspects.

Marijuana--Social Aspects.

Nineteen sixties -- Poetry.

Political Activists--California.

Popular culture -- United States.

Radicalism -- United States.

Rand, Ayn.

San Francisco (Calif.)--Social Conditions.

Situationiste Internationale

Sexual Freedom--United States--Controversial Literature.

Spiritual Life--New Age Movement.

Street Theater--United States.

MATERIAL TYPES

Manuscripts

Personal correspondence

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Typescripts

## USING THE COLLECTION

### LOCATION

Henry WITH and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature  
Stephen A. Schwarzman Building  
Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street, New York, NY 10018-2788  
Third Floor, Room 320

### ACCESS TO MATERIALS

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### PROCESSING INFORMATION

**Processed by** Jessie Barsin and edited by Isaac Gewirtz

### BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Emmett Grogan was born on November 28, 1942 as Eugene Grogan into an Irish-American family in the Bay Ridge neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. After high

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school, he attended Duke University for one year before moving to San Francisco. He sang back-up with Ramblin' Jack Elliott on Bob Dylan's song "Mr. Tambourine Man." Dylan would dedicate his album "Street Legal" to Grogan after he was found dead from a heroin overdose on an F Train subway car in New York City, on April 6, 1978. Grogan was a founder of the Diggers, a radical, community-action group of improvisational actors in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. They evolved out of two radical traditions that thrived in the Bay Area in the mid-1960s: the bohemian underground and the New Left, which focused its attention on civil rights and the peace movement. The Diggers combined street theater, direct action, and art "happenings" to advance their revolutionary goal of creating a Free City. They wore animal masks and stopped traffic in "down-with-money" demonstrations; they drove a flatbed truck of belly dancers and conga drummers into the financial district, where they passed out marijuana cigarettes to the crowd; they dispensed fake dollar bills printed with winged penises.

The Diggers emerged from the San Francisco Mime Troupe, an anarchist, guerrilla, street-theater group in San Francisco, and greatly enlarged the scope of their activities in the years 1965-1973, inspiring a sister group in London. They took their name from the mid-17th-century English Diggers (and Levellers)—revolutionary Utopians who exploited the dislocations of the Civil War to promulgate their vision of a propertyless, classless society. The best known services provided by the San Francisco Diggers were distributing free food every day in Golden Gate Park, free medical attention by volunteer physicians, and Free Stores, in which everything (clothing, tools, books, etc.) was free. The intent of the Free Stores was not just to meet a social need (Haight-Ashbury had been flooded by thousands of youths from all over the U.S.), but to insist that Americans were not primarily consumers, as they had been identified by the mainstream culture, but human beings. The Diggers coined various slogans that became popular in counterculture circles and soon after in society at large. The best known of these are "Do your own thing" and "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

### CONTENTS SUMMARY

The Emmett Grogan Papers is an archive of manuscripts and typescripts, comprising, articles, manifestos, screenplays, ideas for films, short stories, and poems by Emmett Grogan, accompanied by a group of similar writings by him and others that appeared in *The Digger Papers*—a collective publication published by the Diggers—both parts of the archive spanning the years 1965-1968.

Grogan's papers document his journey from a young writer, aspiring filmmaker, and actor with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, to his central role, with Peter Berg, as the Diggers' leading theoretician and activist. The archive contains early writings by

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Grogan from his time in Rome, Dublin, and London, and includes several of his most important Digger manifestos, some of them written with his boyhood friend and fellow New Yorker, Billy Murcott. Much of it bears his autograph annotations and corrections.

The archive features key documents in Diggers history, including:

- 1) The original lease for the first Digger Free Store, the Free Frame of Reference, signed by Grogan (November 17, 1966).
- 2) The original typescript of Emmett Grogan's blueprint for the Free City Collective's utopian notion of a free city ("The Post Competitive, Comparative Game of a Free City"), first published in *The Digger Papers*, August 1968, with holograph amendments.
- 3) A hand-edited typed transcript of "Dialectics of Liberation: A Speech," by Grogan, containing a significant number of sections that did not appear in *The Digger Papers*.
- 4) The original artwork for a Free City broadside.
- 5) The original preparatory layout and paste-ups for Peter Berg's Digger manifesto: *Trip Without a Ticket* (June 1967).

From the 17 items (including the cover) published in *The Digger Papers*, the archive contains 9 of the original typescripts, or paste-ups made in preparation for its publication, some of them with textual variations, and nearly all of them with autograph emendations.

### PROVENANCE

The archive was entrusted by Grogan to a friend and fellow-Mime Trouper and Digger in San Francisco for safe-keeping in 1968, where it remained until sold to the Berg Collection. Grogan left for New York soon afterwards, and never returned to retrieve it. An indication of his intention for these papers lies in a small slip inserted into one of the accompanying ring-binders. In his characteristically bold handwriting, it reads: "FOR THE ARCHIVES."

Titles of texts are presented without quotation marks; quotation marks are used for the first words of untitled texts.

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**Emmett Grogan Writings**

**Box 1, folder 1**

“After you get inside” [...]; an extract from “Rushes”. Typescript. A text on safe blowing (Emmett Grogan writes about his involvement with a safe blower from East Dulwich, South London in 1965 *Ringolevio*, p. 205-8). 1 page (1 leaf).

“An art may be born from the bones of America” [...]. Typescript. A text on radical theatre, SF Mime Troupe, etc., c. 1967. 4 pages (2 leaves).

The Brazen Head. Autograph manuscript, Dublin, Oct. 11, 1965. 1 page (1 leaf).

On a Bus to Ballivor. Typescript poem. Apr. 20 1965. 1 page (1 leaf).

Neal Cassady, San Miguel Allende. GTO - MEX 3-31-7. 1p. Typescript of Neal Cassady's letter to Allen Ginsberg made in preparation for a Com/co mimeograph, with autograph notes by Emmett Grogan. Mar. 1967. 1 page (1 leaf).

“dear brown: i caught myself in the brazen head” [...]. Typescript poem with sm. Autograph changes. The Brazen Head was the name of the residential pub where Emmett Grogan stayed in Dublin. Dublin. Mar. 10, 1965. 1 page (1 leaf).

“dear brown: i discovered i was lost” [...]. Typescript poem with sm. autograph emendations. (Emmett Grogan was in London to attend the International Poetry Incarnation at the Albert Hall, June 11). London. Jun. 8, 1965. 1 page (1 leaf).

The Decline & Fall of the Spectacular Commodity-Economy. Paris: Situationiste Internationale, Dec. 1965. An English translation, prepared by Guy Debord, and distributed in England by Alexander Trocchi; probably given to Emmett Grogan at the Dialectics of Liberation conference in London, Jul. 1967; inscribed with Trocchi's phone number; 8 pages (2 leaves).

Diocese of Little Rock (Elementary School Report)/The Magic Christian. Autograph manuscript (recto + verso). Dense, full-page texts on the Beats, capitalism, Christianity, and Ayn Rand. Both signed by Emmett Grogan using the Sanskrit swastika, "the universal signature of primitive man" (*Ringolevio*, p.380). 2 pages (1 leaf).

“don't wnt to kiss you” [...]. Typescript poem. Includes a title list of film projects. 3 pages (2 leaves).

Free city news #1 broadside: “fuck yourself” [...]. Preparatory artwork, with ink holog. and cut-out illustrations. Glue dried-out, with paste-ups loose. Sep. 1967. 2 pages (2 leaves).

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**Box 1, folder 1 (cont.)**

Emmett Grogan. Billy Brown: Sunday Afternoon ... Let Them Look Me Up And Take Their Own Sweet Time! Typescript 'photo play'. Emmett Grogan records in *Ringolevio* that the film was made while he was in Rome - "it ran for thirty-seven minutes with a magnetic musical sound track of jazz and it was chosen as an entry for the Student Film Festival of Salerno". Jan. 18, 1965. 3 pages (2 leaves).

**Box 1, folder 2**

Emmett Grogan. Brazen Heads. A Stage Treatment. Typescript 19pp., with autograph emendations. A play set in "a hip, shooting gallery-commune." Features the same central character, Swillbelly Logan, who appeared in the first piece Emmett Grogan wrote at the Brazen Head (ref. *Ringolevio*, p.187). Aug. 20, 1966. 19 pages (19 leaves)

Emmett Grogan. "Reading Vicente Huidoro between rehearsals" [...]. Autograph manuscript (recto + verso). Signed Refs. to Artaud, Brion Gysin, LSD. 2 pages (1 leaf).

Emmett Grogan. There Is a Great Deal To Be Silent About. Typescript. The first part of Emmett Grogan's first Digger Paper under his sole authorship (ref. *Ringolevio*, p.380), pub.by Com/co. Jan. 1967. 1 page (1 leaf).

**Box 1, folder 3**

Mick Grogan. "two short stories" [...]. Typescript, legal size. Dublin, 1965. 9 pages (9 leaves).

"He was sound asleep as she lay next to him crying" [...]. Typescript scenario of a short film, set in New York City. 4 pages (4 leaves).

"It was one of those Monday mornings after" [...]. Typescript scenario of local courts. 8" x 12". 2 pages (2 leaves).

"let me tell ya" [...]. Typescript poem with sm. autograph emendations. 1 page (1 leaf).

George Metesky. "In the afternoon, at a little before four" [...]. Typescript of Emmett Grogan's article printed in the *Berkeley Barb* (given the title "Delving the Diggers"). The Diggers (usually Emmett Grogan and Billy Murcott) signed some of their early papers with the name of George Metesky, the "mad bomber" of New York City. Oct. 21, 1966. 3 pages (3 leaves).

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**Box 1, folder 3 (cont.)**

A Mime for Crazy Nigger With Whiskers. Typescript 13" x 7". Title amended in autograph. c. 1966. 1 page (1 leaf).

"Now I Live and Now My Life Is Done" + "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" + 4 further titles. Typescript (recto + verso), with autograph note. Synopsis of six short films, at least two of which are set in London. "Now I Live" was made in Rome using an Arriflex camera (*Ringolevio*, p.170). c. June 1965 [?]. 2 pages (1 leaf).

No Work. Typescript poem. 1 page (1 leaf).

**Box 1, folder 4**

"Original lease for 1762 Page St. garage" [...]. Signed by Emmett Grogan. The 'Free Frame of Reference' and the first Digger Free Store. It opened on December 3, 1966, but lasted only 3 weeks when City authorities cited the landlord for several code violations and ordered the building closed. Nov. 17, 1966. 2 pages (1 leaf).

Pretzels For Peter Or Oratory Heckles. Typescript with autograph emendations. "If you want to call yourself a Digger, baby - become conscious of the ideology of failure; check your frame of reference.." 12-line autograph text to verso: Hell's Angel Parable (on Hairy Henry). c. Nov. 1966. 2 pages (1 leaf).

Stuart Z. Perkoff. Some Aspects of Prison - for Frank Rios. Three typescript copies (one of them carbon). Top copies with sm. autograph emendations in an unknown hand; carbon copy with printer's markings. Possibly intended for inclusion in *The Digger Papers*. Rios was a heroin addict in New York City before moving to California and meeting Stuart Perkoff, a central figure in the Venice Beat scene. Feb. 15-16, 1968. Each copy 5 pages (3 leaves).

Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone. Typescript (recto + verso). Scenario for a short film. 2 pages (1 leaf).

Possible Topics. Typescript list of 21 topics (for stories or films). 1 page (1 leaf).

Scripts to be Written. 16mm. Autograph manuscript list of 13 titles (short films). 1 page (1 leaf).

Selections. Typescript. 2 pages (2 leaves).

**Box 1, folder 5**

September 17, 1899 over New York. Typescript. The first part of the text appears on p.17 of William Burroughs' book, *Nova Express* (Grove Press edition),



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**Box 1, folder 5 (cont.)**

and ends half-way through the third paragraph on p.20. It continues from the last paragraph on p.22 and continues to the end of the chapter on p.23. The 'Clom Fliday' section follows (p.185) and continues to the end of the book. Emmett Grogan has crossed through the final 3 lines and added in autograph '*YOU ARE THE LEADER -- FREE*'.

Accompanied by another typescript carbon copy in which the final 3 lines are omitted and Emmett Grogan's addition is typed. 6 pages (7 leaves).

"Three film screenplays" [...]. Typescript. Two untitled, the third entitled "and the future, my man, is a long time gone" (screenplay written in Italian, probably translated by Emmett Grogan's then-girlfriend, Virna). 14 pages, (14 leaves).

"Time magazine memo, June 3 1967" [...]. Double-sided xeroxed sheet with Emmett Grogan's autograph note in red. 2 pages (1 leaf). Additional typescript copy of the memo with autograph emendations. The memo relates to *Time* magazine's planned issue on the Hippies (July 7, 1967). 3 pages (3 leaves).

"what ever i do" [...]. Typescript 4-line poem. 1 page (1 leaf).

"while everyone else is talking about art for art's sake" [...]. Typescript with Autograph emendations. A text on the SF Mime Troupe headed by an extract from Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*. c. September 1966. 1 page (1 leaf).

Two vintage 8x10 b/w photographs of Emmett Grogan.

**Digger Papers Articles**

**Box 2, folder 1**

Peter Berg. Free City Bloodlight. Typescript with autograph title by Emmett Grogan with emendations. 3 pages (3 leaves).

Dialects of Liberation: A Speech. Typed transcript of Emmett Grogan's speech delivered at the Dialectics of Liberation Conference in London, July 1967, containing significant autograph emendations by Emmett Grogan in preparation for publication in *The Digger Papers*, including the crossing through of entire paragraphs which were not printed in *The Digger Papers*. 13 pages (13 leaves).

Dialects of Liberation: A Speech. Carbon copy of the above transcript, with autograph emendations where carbon missed. Paragraphs not crossed out. 13 pages (13 leaves).

Kirby Doyle. The Birth of Digger Batman. Carbon typescript with autograph emendations;

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**Box 2, folder 2**

printer's note top of first page. July, 1967. 6 pages (6 leaves).

Garbage or Nothing. Carbon typescript with 2 small autograph emendations; 5 pages (3 leaves).

Emmett Grogan and Billy Murcott. Take a Cop to Dinner. Carbon typescript, ca. September 1966. 2 copies. Each copy 1 page (1 leaf).

“Just a few little known addresses, phone numbers, & information” [...].  
Typescript with autograph emendations. Emmett Grogan's blueprint for the Free City Collective's notion of a free city, and the summation of the Digger/Free City philosophy, first published in *The Digger Papers*, August 1968. 2 pages (2 leaves).

The Post-Competitive, Comparative Game of a Free City...Typescript with autograph emendations. Emmett Grogan's blueprint for the Free City Collective's notion of a free city, and the summation of the Digger/Free City philosophy, first published in *The Digger Papers*, August 1968. 9 pages (9 leaves).

The Post-Competitive, Comparative Game of a Free City...Carbon typescript with 1 autograph emendation (text differs from above; perhaps an earlier state). 5 pages (5 leaves) each 17.5" x 5.5".

Rushes. Carbon typescript with autograph emendations, and 4 lines blocked out in ink. 4 pages (4 leaves).

Rushes. Typescript with multiple pieces pasted -on and section cut from set #2 of the *Free City News*. Minor autograph emendations. Slight variations from the text printed in *The Digger Papers*. 4 pages (4 leaves).

**Box 2, folder 3.**

Gary Snyder. A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon. Mimeographed sheet + poem 'Some Time This Summer' (by Steve Tyler) printed to verso, crossed through twice in biro. Lower edges unevenly trimmed, with section printing Communication Company and date lacking, as printed in *The Digger Papers*. c. June 1967; 3 copies, each 1 page (1 leaf).

Peter Berg. Trip Without a Ticket. Preparatory layout and paste-ups for pamphlet, using Letraset, typescript sections and illustrations cut from magazines. Glue dried-out, with paste-ups loose. c. June 1967; 4 pages (4 leaves).

Lew Welch. Crack at the Bottom of It. Final City, Tap City; typescript with several autograph emendations; 2-line autograph by Emmett Grogan at foot of p. 8; 9 pages (9 leaves).

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**Box 2, folder 3 (cont.)**

Lew Welch. Crack at the Bottom of It. Final City, Tap City; later draft, typescript carbon copy with autograph emendations; 9 pages (9 leaves).

Box 2, folder 4.

Envelope.

Box 2, folder 5.

Miscellaneous papers.

Box 2, folder 6.

Leather three-ring binder.

Box 2, folder 6.

Black folder.

Emmett Grogan note: "FOR THE ARCHIVES"