THE JOSEPH HELLER PAPERS

an exhibition

curated by
Patrick Scott

Department of Rare Books and Special Collections
Thomas Cooper Library
University of South Carolina
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Joseph Heller’s connection with South Carolina began during World War II when he trained as a bombardier in Columbia and Walterboro. His connection with the University of South Carolina began when he participated in the 1980 Writers Series program. He returned in 1995 for the World War II Writers Symposium. In 1996 Joseph Heller came back to accept the Thomas Cooper Medal and to deliver the principal address at the University’s F. Scott Fitzgerald Centenary Celebration.

Joe made friends at USC. I remember his gentle handling of James Dickey, who felt possessive about World War II as his literary material; within a few minutes they were laughing. Joe was a connoisseur of barbecue, and I commenced dispatching him meals until he sent the Helleresque message: “Please stop sending barbecue. It’s beginning to taste like chasserai.”

When a dealer offered the Joseph Heller Papers to USC in 1997, Dean George Terry grabbed them for $135,000—which proved to be a steal. In October 2002, the day after this exhibit opened, a New York auction house sold Heller’s marked copy of *Catch-22*. The pre-sale estimate was $60,000–$80,000; the book realized $105,160, but USC did not bid. George got a bargain in the papers, but research collections are never complete. The Heller archive requires maintenance.

Valerie Heller, Joe’s widow, has donated hundreds of Heller translations, some of which are described in this catalogue. After Christopher Buckley came here to speak at the opening of this exhibition, he gave the Thomas Cooper Library his correspondence with Joseph Heller. Notable collections are magnets for benefactions. Strength begets strength.

There has never been a university better than its library. Money is the enabling ingredient in acquiring literary collections and enriching a university’s research resources. But money can’t do it without determination. The Joseph Heller collection at USC demonstrates what can be achieved with little money and much savvy. Literature is one big corporation, and everybody has a share.

Matthew J. Bruccoli

*Jefferies Professor of English*

*and Curator of American Literature*
A Note on the Exhibition

This catalogue records the first public exhibition from the University of South Carolina's Joseph Heller Papers. The Joseph Heller Papers, acquired by USC in 1997 with Mr. Heller's active involvement and support, are the largest collection anywhere for research on his work, preserving over 150,000 pages—drafts, typescripts and correspondence—that document the author's achievement over a period of 30 years.

The exhibition charts Heller's career, from his New York childhood; war service in North Africa, Corsica, and Italy; his early writing and plays; the great success of *Catch-22* (1962) as book, film, and play; and the succession of major novels that followed—*Something Happened* (1974); *Good As Gold* (1979); *God Knows* (1984); *Picture This* (1988); and *Closing Time* (1994), Heller's return to Yossarian and several of the characters of *Catch-22*. Alongside the manuscripts for several novels are the file cards on which Heller recorded ideas and shaped sentences for his novels. Also on display is Heller's scrapbook of publicity for *Catch-22* and lobby cards from the film. In the last section of the exhibition, two recently-published items by Professor Matthew J. Bruccoli and Dr. Park Bucker (USC Sumter), an authoritative descriptive bibliography and page-proof for a collection of Heller's short pieces, indicate the research use of the archive.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge some of those whose gifts, loans, work, and interest made possible this recognition of one of the library's most significant recent acquisitions. Materials in the exhibition from the Heller archive itself, from the library's own holdings of Heller's published books, and from the extensive collection of foreign-language editions donated by Valerie Heller, were supplemented by first editions and posters loaned for this exhibit from the collections of Prof. and Mrs. Bruccoli. At the exhibition opening, the library was honored to welcome the novelist Christopher Buckley, who spoke on Joseph Heller's achievement and on his own friendship with Heller. Mr. Buckley's talk was the library event in the University's 2002 Literary Festival, endowed by an anonymous donor. Initial cataloguing of the Heller Papers was conducted by Paul Schultz, and exploratory work toward the exhibition began during Prof. Bruccoli's spring 2002 honors seminar on Joseph Heller. Finally, publication of this catalogue, as a permanent record of this event, has been wholly funded by the Thomas Cooper Society.

Patrick Scott
*Associate University Librarian for Special Collections*
THE EXHIBITION

Introduction: Heller in South Carolina

Heller in Flight Training
Individual Flight Record: 0-759930, Heller, Joseph Nmi, 2nd Lt., January 1943, Columbia Army Air Base, S.C.

Heller in Columbia, S.C., 1996

Taken during the third of Mr. Heller's visits to the University, for the Thomas Cooper Library's F. Scott Fitzgerald Centenary Celebration.

The Thomas Cooper Medal for Distinction in the Arts and Sciences
During his 1996 visit, Heller received the Cooper Medal. Other recipients of the medal include Pat Conroy, James Dickey, John Updike, John Jakes, Matthew J. Bruccoli, William Styron, Ray Bradbury, and George Plimpton.

Heller's 1996 Address at the University of South Carolina
“The Literature of Despair,” typed outline and typescript, both with extensive manuscript revisions. Gift of Matthew J. Bruccoli.

The address Heller gave for the Fitzgerald Centenary was subsequently incorporated in his posthumous novel Portrait of An Artist, as an Old Man (2000), as a lecture delivered at the University of South Carolina by Heller's fictional alter ego Eugene Pota. Excerpts were first published in Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook: 1996 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1997): 120–123. Bruccoli-Bucker B22.

1: The Years Before Fame

A Coney Island Childhood I
Joseph Heller, manuscript draft c. 1996, for Now and Then, variously paginated.

Joseph Heller was born to immigrant parents in Brooklyn, N.Y., 1923 and lived there, in the Coney Island community, until the outbreak of World War II. These pages from an early draft for his autobiographical memoir, Now and Then (1998), describe the community in which he lived, the work ethic of his youth, and his childhood encounter with an earlier story of war, Homer's Iliad.
Among his family and friends during his youth in Coney Island, Heller was always known as Joey. Mr. Ehrenman, a contemporary at P.S. 188, comments: “Joey is in the lower row, holding the sign ... he is directly above the two S’s in CLASS.” Heller was 14 at the time of this photo.

Heller served during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Force as a bombardier with the 488th Bombardment Squadron. The fullest source on the squadron’s history, from its formation in Columbia, S.C. in August 1942, through service in Tunisia, Corsica, and Italy, to its formal disbanding in November 1945, again in Columbia, is given in this rare yearbook-style compilation, which also preserves something of the flavor of squadron life.
2nd Lt. Joseph Heller, USAAF
In 1943–44, Heller trained as a bombardier at Columbia Army Air Base and in Walterboro, S.C., subsequently flying 60 missions over Italy, from bases in Tunisia and Corsica.

From Heller’s Wartime Flight Records
These official monthly records, from the Joseph Heller Archive, detail Heller’s flying time both during training and for his 60 missions. Heller obtained these copies in preparation for writing his memoir, Now and Then.

Corsica, Christmas 1944
The snapshot from which this picture was enlarged differs from that printed in the 488th Squadron book, but was taken on the same occasion.

Loading Bombs for a Mission
Photo: The bespectacled figure on the right, supervising the loading, is Edmund J. Ritter (Orr in Catch-22).

Bombing a Rail Bridge,
Orvieto, Italy
Photo: from Round the World with the 488th (1946).

Between April 1943 and May 1945, Heller’s squadron flew a total of 479 missions, dropping bombs totaling over 12 million pounds.

Joseph Heller, c. 1944
A more informal wartime photograph, in leather flight jacket.
Heller’s First Published Story

The magazine Story, edited by Whit Burnet, provided a first venue for many writers of Heller’s generation. Heller’s story was about a discharged soldier. The biographical note states that Heller was then trying to establish himself as a playwright.

Heller in Collaboration

Following college at the University of Southern California and New York University, an MA at Columbia, and a Fulbright year at Oxford, Heller worked in advertising and promotions in New York. In addition to publishing magazine stories, he worked in collaboration with his boyhood friend George Mandel on this unproduced play and on several unproduced screenplays or preliminary film treatments.

2: From Catch-18 to Catch-22

Catch-18: The First Published Segment of Heller’s Novel

Six years before publication of the novel, Heller published the first chapter as a short story in this prestigious paperback series. A second rebound copy is opened at
Heller’s contribution. The subsequent title change was required to avoid confusion with Leon Uris’s forthcoming book, *Mila 18.*

_Catch-22 as Seen by Its First Reviewers_


Both the publishers and Heller’s literary agents, Russell and Volkening, put special effort into promobting Heller’s book with critics through distribution of advance review copies.

_The First Edition of Catch-22_


Heller’s novel appeared on October 10, 1961. The initial print-run was 4,000 copies only, and, though it gained respectful reviews, it was not an immediate bestseller.

_Joseph Heller’s Scrapbook_

The scrapbook shown here was used by Heller to keep newspaper clippings, reviews, publicity items, and other promotional material relating to the publication of his early novels. Shown here is a news item about the title change for his first novel. Both the scrapbook and most of the items in it are on highly acidic paper and pose significant conservation problems. Gift of Matthew J. Bruccoli.
Promoting *Catch-22* in Britain
The four postcards shown here, with cartoons by Tony Hart illustrating characters from *Catch-22*, were distributed by Heller’s British publisher, Jonathan Cape.

The First British Printing of *Catch-22*

Critical response to the British publication of Heller’s novel was more immediate and enthusiastic than in the U.S. It was hailed as “uniquely funny and grimly serious,” and as “the most striking debut in American fiction since *The Catcher in the Rye*.”

Recognition in America: Headlining a New Story Collection

British critical enthusiasm encouraged Heller’s American supporters. Just one year after publication of his novel, Heller was celebrated on the jacket of this collection as “the literary sensation of the year” and as one of “the most talented writers of our time.” Other contributors to the collection included Saul Bellow and Thomas Pynchon.
**Catch-22 in paperback**


It was in paperback that *Catch-22* made its greatest impact and was hailed as “a classic of its era.” By 1970 the Dell paperback had sold over 3.5 million copies, with changes to the cover design, and more than 10 million copies were eventually printed.

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**3: The Impact of Catch-22**

**Catch-22 in Translation**

The worldwide impact of modern American literature, and Joseph Heller’s international reputation, is evidenced by the items in this case, selected from a much larger group of translations donated in 2001 by Valerie Heller. Shown here are translations into Slovenian and Hungarian.

Translations of *Catch-22* into Danish, Swedish, and Finnish.

Translations of *Catch-22* into Spanish and Portuguese.

Translations of *Catch-22* into Czech and Polish.

**Worth Pirating: A Taiwanese Reprint of Catch-22**

This is one of three such English-text piracies in Thomas Cooper Library’s Heller collection. These copies are printed on thinner paper than the legitimate American edition shown in Case 2.

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**4: Stage and Screen**

**Heller as Screenwriter**


Following the success of *Catch-22*, Heller turned his attention to motion pictures and theatre. The unproduced screenplay and musical shown here, both written
in collaboration with the novelist George Mandel, seem not to have been noticed by Heller scholars. Screenplays by Heller, alone and in collaboration, that reached production during this period included *Sex and the Single Girl* (Warner Brothers, 1964), *Casino Royale* (Columbia Pictures, 1967), and *Dirty Dingus Magee* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1970).

**A Belgian Release of a Heller Movie**
*Un Beau Salaud*. Poster for Belgian release of *Dirty Dingus Magee*, dubbed in French.

For *Dirty Dingus Magee* (1970), the third of his Hollywood screenplays to be produced, Heller shared credit with Tom and Frank Waldman. Loaned by Matthew J. Bruccoli.

**Heller as Dramatist I: We Bombed in New Haven**

This two-act play was first produced at Yale in 1967 and again on Broadway in 1968, when it also appeared as a book published by Alfred A. Knopf. The two typescripts here are dated as "Revised January 8, 1968" (red binder) and "Revised January 6, 1969" (green binder). Also shown (open) are spiral-bound advance proofs for the Knopf edition and the 1969 Samuel French acting text.

**An Omitted Chapter from Catch-22**

This episode, one of two additional chapters from Catch-22 that Heller subsequently published separately, concerns the relationship between 2nd Lt. Edward J. Nately III, shortly to be killed on a bombing raid, and his conservative father. Other contributors to this issue of *Playboy* included Graham Greene, Eldridge Cleaver, Woody Allen, Leslie Fiedler, and Robert Graves.

**Catch-22: The Movie**
The movie rights for *Catch-22* sold quickly, but it was 1970, nine years after book publication, before Heller's novel was released as a motion picture. Although Heller had written several screenplays, he was not involved with the Paramount adaptation, which was directed by Mike Nichols from a screenplay by Buck Henry. This black-and-white publicity still, one of a group in the Joseph Heller archive, shows Milo Minderbinder (Jon Voight) explaining to Colonel Cathcart (Martin
Balsam) how their wartime supply operation can make a profit buying five-cent eggs for five cents and selling them for two.

*Catch-22: The Movie*

One-sheet poster, signed by Joseph Heller. Loaned by Matthew J. Bruckoli.

*Catch-22: The Movie*


**Joseph Heller on the Mike Nichols/Paramount Movie**


*Heller on filming Catch-22*

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**The Movie of Catch-22 and Book Sales**


By the time this new Dell edition was published, the original Dell paperback had already gone through 27 printings. After the movie release, the paperback sold a million copies in six weeks.
Heller as Dramatist II: *Catch-22* on Stage

Joseph Heller, *Catch-22, A Dramatization*. Manuscript and three stages of typescript with corrections in ink.

The materials here from the Joseph Heller archive show Heller at work in adapting scenes from his novel as a one-act play. The archive also includes a full-length typescript “First Draft” dated July 1971. The result was first produced at East Hampton on Long Island in 1971 and again in New York City by Apple Corps Theatre in 1981.

Heller as Dramatist III: *Clevinger's Trial*


This stage adaptation of a single episode, avoiding the structural problems posed by trying to adapt the novel as a whole, premiered in London in 1974.

5: *Something Happened*

The First Manuscript Drafts for *Something Happened*

Joseph Heller, manuscript draft, c. 1961.

After the critical success of *Catch-22*, Heller allowed 13 years to elapse before publishing his second novel, *Something Happened* (1974), a dark satire on the world of American business. The pages shown here, with two versions of a scene in which the hero discusses with his children the values of Mammon, are from his first draft for that novel, and an accompanying memo by Heller indicates that a completed draft had been sent to a typing service as early as 1961. An excerpt from the novel appeared in *Esquire* in 1966.

The Edited Typescript of *Something Happened*


This substantial pile of typescript represents only about half of the novel that Heller eventually submitted to his publishers in 1974. Although he described this as his “Final Typescript,” the autograph corrections go far beyond responding to editorial queries, and one of the pages shown here has clearly been retyped.
Heller's Own Description of *Something Happened*
Manuscript, red felt-tip on yellow paper, three pages.

One of the best introductions to *Something Happened* is this blurb, one of two that Heller himself wrote for his publishers, recognizing that readers and reviewers would inevitably approach the new book as his “first novel since *Catch-22.*”

Heller's draft jacket-copy for *Something Happened*

**Advance Proof**
Copy for *Something Happened*
Joseph Heller,
*Something Happened.*

**The First Edition of *Something Happened***
Joseph Heller,
*Something Happened.*

Heller’s second novel was eagerly anticipated by readers and reviewers, and even though the size of this first printing is unknown, it was certainly large. It was the success of this second novel, not of *Catch-22*, that encouraged Heller to give up college teaching and become a full-time writer.

**Joseph Heller at a Booksigning, 1974**
Unattributed publicity photograph.
Something Happened in Paperback


Heller’s success with this novel is seen in two of the blurb-quotes for this paperback: “The most important novel of the decade,” and “Heller has not repeated himself.” By 1983, this edition had reached its 15th printing.

6: Good as Gold

Joseph Heller in New York, 1976
Photographs by Hans Namuth.

Following the success of Something Happened (1974), Heller finally left his teaching position at New York University to become a full-time writer and established a separate office on West 57th Street. The unpublished photographs shown here are from a group commissioned to accompany Alden Whitman’s interview with him, “Something Always Happens on the Way to the Office,” in the Bruccoli Clark volume, Pages (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark/Gale Research, 1976).

Three Draft Stages for Good as Gold

For Heller’s third novel, Good as Gold (1979), the Joseph Heller archive provides a revealing variety of evidence about the author’s working methods. Shown here are three draft stages—the notecards on which (as for other novels) Heller tries out individual sentences; the outline of a scene to be fleshed out later; and a manuscript draft, written in blue, with a second layer of extensive revisions added.

From Heller’s index-cards for Good as Gold
in red. In these earliest drafts, the central character is named Weinberg, not Gold, and the novel was first registered for copyright in 1976 under the title *Moths at a Dark Bulb*.

The Timeliness of *Good as Gold*  

In the wake of the Watergate scandal, Heller turned for his setting from the worlds of war and business to the world of politics. The short episode shown here, conceived quite late in the novel’s composition, though before Heller had changed his hero’s name, was intended to heighten the timeliness of the novel’s political satire. Also shown is Heller’s covering note to his editors about possible publication of the segment in the *New York Times*.

An Advance Copy of *Good as Gold*  

The First (Trade) Edition of *Good as Gold*  

An Advance Copy of the British *Good as Gold*  

The First British Printing of *Good as Gold*  

Publicity for the Paperback  
*Good as Gold* was first issued in a mass-market paperback in January 1980 by Pocket Books. Shown here are two of the publicity items distributed by Pocket Books: a brochure with Mel Brooks interviewing Heller, and a “gold” medal commemorating publication.
Heller and Religion

Heller's fourth novel was planned as a rewriting of the Old Testament, presenting King David's sardonic perspective on biblical events and characters. As the materials here indicate, Heller took the preliminary research for this novel with great seriousness.

Quotes and Quips: Heller’s Card-Index for *God Knows*
Heller used traditional 3 x 5 index cards in writing several of his novels, but his cards for *God Knows* are of particular interest. The initial purpose seems to have been simply to sort basic information on the Old Testament characters, but there are also cards recording particularly vivid or resonant verses from the Authorized (or King James) translation and cards noting the sharp unbiblical quips Heller imagines for his narrator.

The Onset of an Unexplained Illness
Part way through the writing of *God Knows*, in December 1981, Heller experienced severe weakness in his limbs and other mysterious symptoms, soon leading to...
hospitalization. In due time, his illness was diagnosed as Guillain-Barre Syndrome. For a period of months, he was partially paralyzed and bed or chair-bound. The Joseph Heller archive contains full medical records of this illness, together with Heller’s own summaries and accounts of his progress.

The First Edition of *God Knows*

Drafts for *No Laughing Matter*

When Heller began to recover, and was able to complete his novel-in-progress, *God Knows*, he undertook a nonfiction project, an account of his illness and convalescence, written in collaboration with his friend Speed Vogel.

Character Sketches in *No Laughing Matter*

One of the strengths of Heller’s account is his close observation of the people he encountered, both in the hospital and during his long period of rehabilitation.

The First Edition of *No Laughing Matter*

The First British Printing of *No Laughing Matter*

8: Picture This

Researching the Novel
As he recovered from his illness, Heller planned an ambitious fifth novel, exploring the interrelationships between widely differing historical eras, from the Greeks to the present day. Its starting point is Rembrandt’s painting *Aristotle Contemplating*
the Bust of Homer, and the demands of his subject led Heller to adopt more formal methods of research than he had employed on previous books, including employment of a research assistant. The spiral-bound notebook and ring-binder, opened to show Heller’s work on Rembrandt, also include extensive notes on Aristotle and the Greeks.

The First Edition of Picture This


Joseph Heller
Photo credit: Valerie Heller

9: Closing Time

Joseph Heller on Location
This late signed photograph shows an ebullient Heller with a B-25 like those he had flown in during the war with the 488th Squadron. It was taken while Heller was on location for a television program about Catch-22 for The Learning Channel.

Turning Back to Old Friends
The final novel of Heller’s lifetime, Closing Time, published just after his 70th birthday in 1993, anticipated the renewal of interest in the war generation.
Presented as a sequel to his first novel, *Catch-22*, and following some of the same characters, it is not simply a return to the war itself, but a tracing of the characters’ individual post-war experiences, as their lives again intersect.

Mapping the Novel’s Setting

Much of *Closing Time* is set in the downtown New York Port Authority Bus Terminal, where Milo Minderbinder (now a billionaire) plans to hold his son’s wedding. In preparation for writing, Heller hired a researcher (whose report is displayed here) to walk about and observe people and events. Heller’s hand-drawn maps of each level in the PABT building show the care with which he built on this research.

Character and Structure in *Closing Time*

Sections of the novel are told in the first person by various characters, including this section told by a new character, an ex-infantryman, Lew Rabinowitz.

Yossarian and the “Untitled Novel”

During all the draft stages of the novel, Heller marked it as “untitled,” but the largest section, told in the third person, was titled “Yossarian.” Shown here are two different revision stages of the Yossarian section, showing a typical interim title-page, and a typescript passage where Heller discusses the special importance of the war in which his generation took part.
The First Edition of *Closing Time*

*Closing Time* as Trade Paperback

10: *Now and Then* and Portrait of an Artist
Joseph Heller at the University of South Carolina I
In September 1996, as part of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Centenary Celebration, Mr. Heller joined James Dickey and Matthew J. Bruccoli for a discussion of Fitzgerald’s achievement, televised live from the Graniteville Room to schools across the state through SCETV.

Two Draft Versions of Heller’s Autobiographical Memoir

Heller’s memoir looks back on his early life, his wartime service, and more briefly on his career as a writer.
Heller’s Autobiography


The trade printing of Heller’s memoir was published on February 10, 1998. It had been preceded on January 30 by a limited subscription printing of 2,000 copies issued for collectors by the Franklin Press.

Joseph Heller at the University of South Carolina II


This keepsake was issued for guests at a luncheon at the Century Association, New York City, on Wednesday, April 15, 1998, to celebrate the acquisition of the Joseph Heller archive. Reproduced in it are two pages from Heller’s autograph manuscript for his novel *Closing Time*.

Heller’s Posthumously Published *Portrait of an Artist*


This posthumously published short novel, wryly analyzing the difficulty of being a novelist when everything has already been done by earlier writers, includes the text of the talk Heller gave in Columbia in September 1996 (see p. 5 above).
Joseph Heller Research at the University of South Carolina I

There had been no full-scale scholarly bibliography of Heller's books and other published writings before this volume by two scholars at the University of South Carolina.

Joseph Heller Research at the University of South Carolina II

The first published collection of Joseph Heller's short stories, edited at the University of South Carolina.