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Paul S. Kahn Papers

- [Digital](#)

1918-2010 (*Bulk:* 1963-2010)
8 boxes (12 linear feet)
Call no.: MS 786



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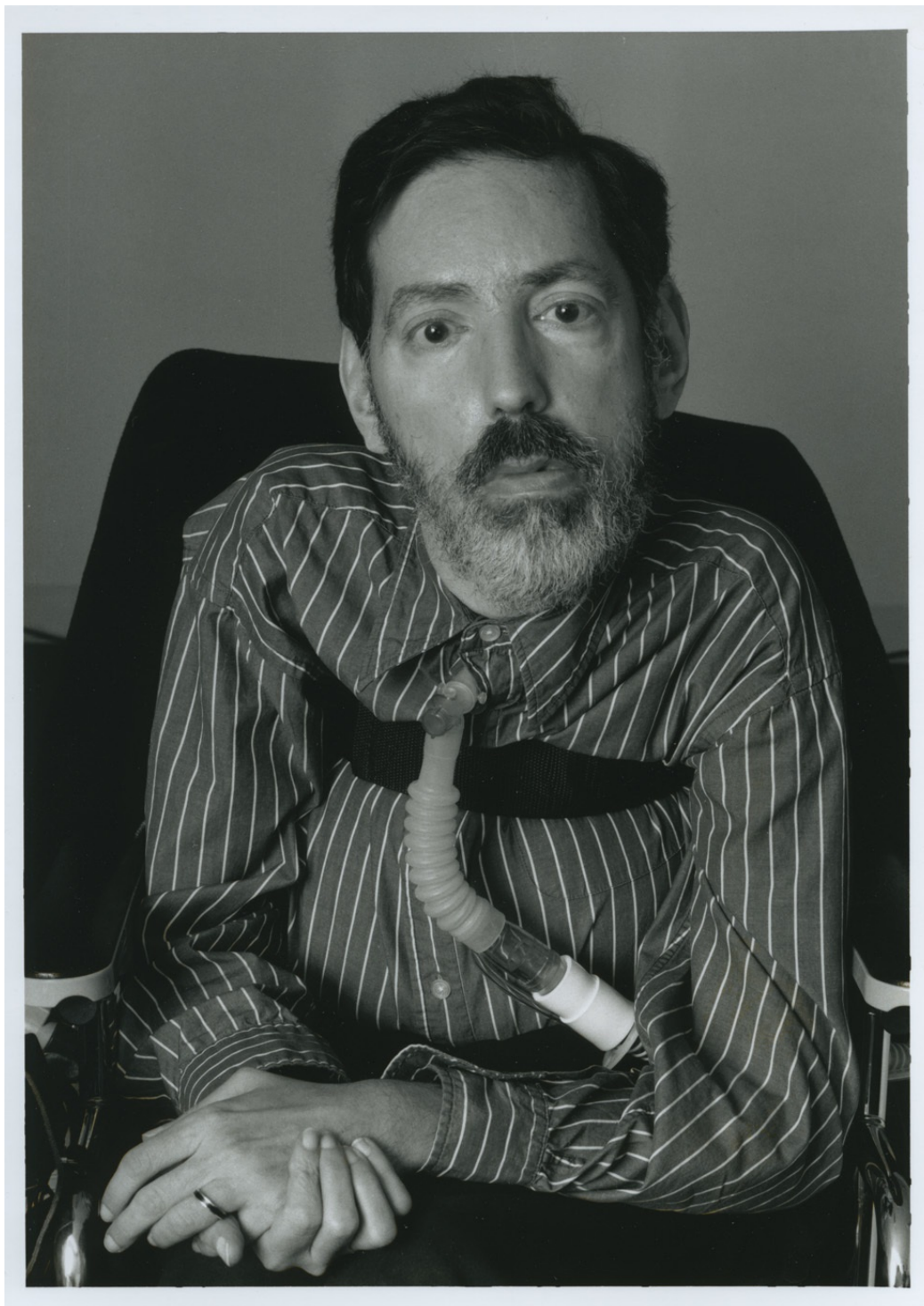
An artist, writer, and activist for the disabled, Paul S. Kahn was born on Nov. 6, 1945, into a second-generation family of Jewish immigrants in Auburndale, Mass. Early in life, Kahn rebelled against the perceived "powerlessness" of the neuromuscular disorder with which he was born, pursuing an artistic, academic, and activist life. While studying drawing, painting, and sculpture at Boston University and earning a MA in counseling at Northeastern (1982), Kahn became an activist in the independent living movement and a pioneer in advocating for personal care assistance. Living independently from 1979, he worked as staff therapist at the Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center, as leader of a support group for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and as a member of the Massachusetts Governor's Advisory Commission on Disability Policy. In 1980, Kahn met Ruth Stern, who would become his frequent collaborator and wife of 21 years. As Kahn's physical condition weakened after 1987 and he became dependent upon a ventilator, his creative focus shifted increasingly from art to writing and editing. The last two decades of his life were remarkably productive, resulting in over twenty plays and dozens of published essays and poems, and he was the long-time editor of the newsletter Disability Issues. Kahn died on Jan. 1, 2010.

Paul Kahn's papers are a reflection of the intensely creative life of a committed activist. The collection centers on Kahn's literary work, including manuscripts of his plays, essays, and poetry, but it includes numerous examples of his artwork and a number of home movies and tape recordings from his childhood.

See similar SCUA collections:

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Background on Science for the People



Paul Stanley Kahn was born on November 6, 1945 to David and Bernice Kahn in a second-generation family of Jewish immigrants in Auburndale, Massachusetts. Early in life, Kahn was confined to a wheelchair due to muscular dystrophy. Kahn pursued an artistic, academic, and activist life. He rebelled against the perceived "powerlessness" and the lack of choice given to him for being born with a neuromuscular disorder. Kahn actively challenged the beliefs that society held regarding people with disabilities in general, advocating for a better understanding of disabilities and the people who suffered from them. Kahn earned a Bachelor in Fine Arts at Boston University (1967) and a MA in counseling at Northeastern (1982). Kahn won many distinctions as an artist and became an activist in the independent living movement and a pioneer in advocating for personal care assistance. Living independently from 1979, he worked as staff therapist at the Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center, as leader of a support group for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and as a member of the Massachusetts Governor's Advisory Commission on Disability Policy. In 1980, Kahn met Ruth Stern. She became his frequent collaborator and wife of 21 years after they married in 1988. After Kahn's physical condition had weakened and he became dependent upon a ventilator in 1987, his creative focus shifted increasingly from art to writing and editing. The last two decades of his life were remarkably productive, resulting in over twenty plays and dozens of published essays and poems, and he was the long-time editor of the newsletter *Disability Issues*. Kahn died on January 1, 2010 at the age of 64.

Scope of collection

Paul Kahn's papers are a reflection of his intense artistic creativity and his passion in the movement for disabled rights. The collection centers on Kahn's written work,

including manuscripts of his plays, essays, poetry and other writings but it includes numerous examples of his artwork, personal items and a number of home movies and tape recordings from throughout his life.

The collection is organized into six series:

- [Series 1: Writings and Research](#)
- [Series 2: Subject Files](#)
- [Series 3: Published Media](#)
- [Series 4: Photographs](#)
- [Series 5: Art and Supplies](#)
- [Series 6: Audiovisual](#)

Series descriptions

[Series 1. Writings](#)

1963-2010

Collection of articles, stories, letters, plays, poems, and notes written by Paul Kahn as well as materials related to his writings or used as research.

[Series 2. Subject Files](#)

1947-2008

Letters, calendars, playbills and other documents and items related to Kahn's personal life that were neither published nor written by him.

[Series 3. Published Media](#)

ca.1977-2008

Series 3 contains published media related to, but not written by, Paul Kahn. This includes articles, books, and pamphlets.

[Series 4. Photographs](#)

1918-1998

1 boxes (1.25 linear feet)

Series 4 is a collection of photos of the Kahn family over the years.

[Series 5. Art and Supplies](#)

1979

2 boxes (2.5 linear feet)

Series 5 contains Kahn's artwork such as sculptures and drawings along with some of his art supplies. This includes sculptures, drawings and some art supplies.

[Series 6. Audio/Visual](#)

1947-1993

2 boxes (2.5 linear feet)

Series 6 contains film and audio reels, cassettes and picture slides. These contain pictures, videos and music of vacations and other events in the Kahn family.

Inventory

Series 1. Writings

1963-2010

Activism

undated

Box 1: 1

Advocacy: Healthcare and Disability Reform

1973-2001

Box 1: 2

Annual Reports: Boston Center for Independent Living

1984-1985

Box 1: 3

Application Acceptances and Denials

1969-1976

Box 1: 4

Articles

2004

Box 1: 5

Art Sales

undated

Box 1: 6

Arts Hub

2007

Box 1: 7

Boston Center for Independent Living Inc.

1979

Box 1: 8

Boston University School of Fine Arts

ca.1967

Box 1: 9

Christianity

2004

Box 1: 10

Essays

undated

Box 1: 11

Handouts/Procedures

1979

Box 1: 12

Holocaust

ca.1998

Box 1: 13

Ibbetson St. Poetry

ca.2005

Box 1: 14

Inglis House Poetry

2005

Box 1: 15

Inglis House Poetry

2006, 2009

Box 1: 16

Inglis House Poetry

2007

Box 1: 17

Inglis House Poetry

2008

Box 1: 18
Journal: Breath and Shadow
2004
Box 1: 19
Magazines: American Rehabilitation
1980
Box 1: 20
Magazines: Changing Men
1994
Box 1: 21
Magazines: Exceptional Parent
1999
Box 1: 22
Magazines: New Mobility
2000
Box 1: 23
Magazines: New Mobility
2001, 2002
Box 1: 24
Magazines: New Mobility
2003
Box 1: 25
Magazines: New Mobility
2005-2007
Box 1: 26
Magazines: New Mobility
2010
Box 1: 27
Magazines: Quest MDA
2000
Box 1: 28
Magazines: The Humanist
2001
Box 1: 29
Magazines: UTNE Reader
2010
Box 1: 30
News Articles
1992
Box 1: 31
Newsclippings
1998-2008
Box 1: 32
Newsclippings: Kahn, Paul
1983
Box 1: 33
Newsletter: Access Expressed
1996
Box 1: 34
Newsletter: Afterimage
2001
Box 1: 35
Newsletter: Disability Issues
2007
Box 1: 36
Newsletter: Disability Issues
2008-2009
Box 1: 37
Newsletters: Rehab Review
1993
Box 1: 38
Newsletters: Rehab Update
1994-1996
Box 1: 39
Newsletters: Rehab Update
1997-1999
Box 1: 40
Newsletters: Roll Call
1984-1993
Box 1: 41
Newsletters: Together
1980
Box 1: 42
Notepads
ca.1971-2000
Box 1: 43
Personal Care Assistant
1998, 1999
Box 1: 44
Play Drafts
ca.1973
Box 1: 45
Plays: Abraham's Sacrifice
1990
Box 1: 46
Plays: Abraham's Sacrifice (Revised)
1996
Box 1: 47
Plays: Abraham's Sacrifice (Revised)
2003
Box 1: 48
Plays: Antarctica
ca.2000
Box 1: 49
Plays: Camera Shy
1991
Box 1: 50
Plays: Camera Shy
1991
Box 1: 51
Plays: Carry That Weight
1993
Box 1: 52

Plays: Carry That Weight
1993
Box 1: 53
Plays: Carry That Weight (Revised)
2004
Box 1: 54
Plays: Connie's Great Escape
2000
Box 1: 55
Plays: Dead Men Don't Make Amends
1991
Box 1: 56
Plays: EEC Tommy
1996
Box 1: 57
Plays: Ethics of the Profession
2004
Box 1: 58
Plays: Ginsburg, Fisher of Souls
ca.2000
Box 1: 59
Plays: God's Dwelling
undated
Box 1: 60
Plays: Hallelujah Halloween
1991
Box 1: 61
Plays: Halloween
1991
Box 2: 1
Plays: Halloween, Mon Amour
1988
Box 2: 2
Plays: Holocaust Threnody
2002
Box 2: 3
Plays: I.L. Peretz Adaptations
ca.2000
Box 2: 4
Plays: In the Gray Zone
ca.2000
Box 2: 5
Plays: Lenyushka
ca.2000
Box 2: 6
Plays: Lucky
2000
Box 2: 7
Plays: Ranch on the Run
ca.2000
Box 2: 8
Plays: Speechless
2004
Box 2: 9
Plays: The Making of Free Verse
2006
Box 2: 10
Plays: The Making of Free Verse
2006
Box 2: 11
Plays: The Making of Free Verse
2006
Box 2: 12
Plays: The Making of Free Verse
2006
Box 2: 13
Plays: The Making of Free Verse
2006
Box 2: 14
Plays: The Me in the Mirror
2000
Box 2: 15
Plays: The Me in the Mirror (notes)
2000
Box 2: 16
Plays: The Me in the Mirror (project)
1999
Box 2: 17
Plays: The Me in the Mirror (Updated)
2000
Box 2: 18
Plays: The Offer
ca.2000
Box 2: 19
Plays: The Practice - A Matter of Trust
1999
Box 2: 20
Plays: The Practice - A Matter of Trust
1999
Box 2: 21
Plays: The Practice - A Matter of Trust
1999
Box 2: 22
Plays: The Sour Stench of Success
ca.2000
Box 2: 23
Plays: Yiddish Stories Adaptations
ca.2000
Box 2: 24
Playwriting Programs
ca.1992-2009
Box 2: 25
Playwriting Programs

ca.1994-2009
Box 2: 26
Playwriting Programs
ca.1994-2009
Box 2: 27
Poems
undated
Box 2: 28
Record of Play Submissions
1990-1994
Box 2: 29
Resource Guide for MHS Students
1984
Box 2: 30
Resource: Children and Disabilities
1996
Box 2: 31
Resources: Children and Disabilities
1999
Box 2: 32
Resources: Children and Disabilities
1997, 1998
Box 3: 33
Sahara Poetry
2002
Box 2: 34
Sahara Poetry
2003
Box 2: 35
Stories: Extreme Measures
2000
Box 2: 36
Stories: The Deepening Fog
ca.2008
Box 2: 37
"Teaching Tomorrow's Docs" Article
2003
Box 2: 38
Series 2. Subject Files
1947-2008
Advocacy
1983
Box 2: 39
BCIL Marie Feltin Award
undated
Box 4
Boston University Alumni Award
1989
Box 2: 40
Cat Calendars
1973, 1976
Box 2: 41
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1985-1997
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1963-1978
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1986
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2004-2010
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Governor' Advisory Commission
1999-2000
Box 2: 46
Grades/Awards/Recognitions
1967-1994
Box 2: 47
Identification
1968-1984
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Interview Material by Paul
undated
Box 2: 49
Letters of Employment
1982-1986
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Letters of Recommendation
1979
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Letters to Paul
1974-1993
Box 2: 52
Kahn, Bernice and David: Financials
ca.1963-1993
Box 2: 53
Kahn, Bernice and David: Financials
ca.1963-1993
Box 3: 1
Kahn, David: M. A. Thesis
1947
Box 3: 2
Kahn, Paul: Biographies
undated
Box 3: 3
Kahn, Paul: Cards and Birthdays
1963-1996
Box 3: 4
Kahn, Paul: Funeral/Memorial
2010
Box 3: 5

Kahn, Paul and Ruth: Wedding
1988
Box 3: 6
Kuppers, Petras
2002
Box 3: 7
Making a Difference Award
1994
Box 4
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
undated
Box 3: 8
Masters of Education
1982
Box 4
MDA Gold Star
1997
Box 4
Medicaid Correspondence
1991
Box 3: 9
Medical Notes
2008
Box 3: 11
Medical Paperwork
ca.1989
Box 3: 12
Medical Paperwork
ca.1990
Box 3: 13
Medicaid Paperwork
1991-1992
Box 3: 10
Medicare Paperwork
1993
Box 3: 14
Northeastern University Disability Guide
ca.1980
Box 3: 15
Outstanding Consumer Award
2007
Box 4
PCA Employment Exchange
1977
Box 3: 16
Playbills
2000-2001
Box 3: 17
Playbills
2003
Box 3: 18
Playbills
2004, 2005
Box 3: 19
Playbills
2006
Box 3: 20
Playbills
2007, 2008
Box 3: 21
Playbills: Festivals
2003
Box 3: 22
The Playwright's Center
2004
Box 3: 23
Programs for Disabled
ca.1990
Box 3: 24
Programs: Night at the Pops
1985
Box 3: 25
Programs: Night at the Pops
1987, 1989
Box 3: 26
Programs: Talks/Panels/Exhibitions
ca.1981
Box 3: 27
Programs: Theater
1994, 1995
Box 3: 28
Research: United Airline v. Sprague
1999
Box 3: 29
Rehab and Childhood Trauma
1999
Box 3: 30
Resources: Ventilators
2007
Box 3: 31
Resumes
ca.1967-1995
Box 3: 32
Sexuality
ca.1983
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Sexuality
1983
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1987
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undated
Box 3: 26
Wills
1971, 1974
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1977-2008
Annual Report: Mass Rehab Commission
2003
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Annual Reports: Boston Center for Independent Living
1986, 1987
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Articles about Paul
1977-1993
Box 3: 40
Arts Accessibility
1992
Box 3: 41
Arts Accessibility
1992
Box 3: 42
Boston Theater Marathon
2003
Box 3: 43
Calendar: Sister Kenny Institute
1978
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Info Center for Individuals with Disabilities
1996
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Magazines: Exceptional Parent
1997
Box 3: 46
Newsclippings: Medicaid
1990-1991
Box 1: 47
Newsletter: Disability Issues
2003-2004
Box 3: 48
Newsletter: Disability Issues
2005-2006
Box 3: 49
Newsletter: Partners for Disabled Youth
1998
Box 3: 50
PCA Manual
1983
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Reading Lips
2008
Box 3: 52
Research on Neuromuscular Disorders
undated
Box 3: 53
Resources: ALS
1997
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Resources: Art and Disability
1999
Box 3: 55
Resources: Brain Injury
1993
Box 3: 56
Resources: Children and Disabilities
1997
Box 3: 57
Resources: Disabilities
1997
Box 3: 58
Resources: German Dialect
undated
Box 3: 59
Sexuality
ca.1981
Box 3: 60
Stories: Children and Disabilities
1995
Box 3: 61
Yiddish Tales
ca.1990-2000
Box 3: 62
Series 4. Photographs
1918-1998
Abram's Family
ca.1943-1998
Box 4: 1
Friends
ca.1947-1993
Box 4: 2
Grandchildren
ca.1963-1993
Box 4: 3
Grandchildren (2)
ca.1963-1993
Box 4: 4
Headshots
1998
Box 4: 5
Kahn, Bernice: Retrospective at 80
1918-1998
Box 4: 6
Kahn, David

undated
Box 4: Kahn, David
Kahn, David
undated
Box 4: 8
Kahn, David and Bernice
undated
Box 4: 9
Kahn, Paul: Views
ca.1980
Box 4: 10
Kahn, Paul
undated
Box 4: 11
Kahn, Paul and Friends
ca.1990
Box 4: 12
Kahn and Barnes: Family (1)
1977-1996
Box 4: 13
Kahn and Barnes: Family (2)
1961-1996
Box 4: 14
Photo Album (1)
undated
Box 4: 15
Photo Album (2)
undated
Box 4: 16
Photo Album (3)
1946-1958
Box 4: 17
Photo Album (4)
1940-1953
Box 4: 18
Photo Album (5)
ca.1946-1956
Box 4: 19
Phot Album (6)
1944-1958
Box 4: 20
Photo Album (7)
ca.1943-1958
Box 4: 21
Photo Album (8)
1948-1953
Box 4: 22
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Photo Album (11)
1948-1956
Box 4: 25
Photo Album (12)
1954-1957
Box 4: 26
Photo Album (13)
1943-1957
Box 4: 27
Scenery and Houses
1938-1994
Box 4: 28
Series 5. Art and Supplies
1979
Fat Cat
undated
Clay sculpture titled Fat Cat
Box 5
Galhat
undated
A clay sculpture title Galhat
Box 5
Unnamed Sculpture (1)
undated
Clay sculpture of what looks like a Camel
Box 5
Unnamed Sculpture (2)
undated
A clay sculpture of what looks like a head in a hat
Box 5
Unnamed Sculpture(3)
undated
Clay sculpture that looks like a person with horns
Box 5
Unnamed Sculpture (4)
undated
A clay sculpture of what looks like a ram's head
Box 5
Bogart Poster
1979
Box 6: 1
Drawings
undated
Box 6: 2
Misc. Art Supply
undated
A small wooden stick wrapped in leather at the end with clay residue on it
Box 6
Misc. Art Supply 2
undated

A rectangular metal prism with wood around part of it

Box 6

Sculpting Base

undated

A circular base for making clay sculptures with clay residue on it

Box 6

Sculpting Supplies

undated

Tools used for carving and shaping small sculptures

Box 6

Wood and Linoleum Block Cutting Set

undated

A professional set of steel cutters

Box 6

Wooden Mannequin

undated

A small wooden statue

Box 6

Wooden Stick

undated

A thick wooden pole

Box 6

Series 6. Audio/Visual

1947-1993

Paul Kahn Artist's Foundation

1989

Slides

Box 7: 1

Phillips/Canada

1975-1987

Slides

Box 7: 2

Egypt

1985

Slides

Box 7: 3

Friends 1st Part

undated

1/4 inch audio reel

Box 7: 4

Biking-Cape and Vineyard/Nantucket

1974, 1978

16mm film reel

Box 7: 5

Cape Cod

undated

16mm film reel

Box 7: 6

Canada

1958

16mm film reel

Box 7: 7

Denmark

1978

16mm film reel

Box 7: 8

France

undated

16mm film reel

Box 7: 9

Golden Anniversary-Parents Kahn

1963

16mm film reel

Box 7: 10

Grads

undated

16mm film reel

Box 7: 11

Great Britain (1)

1968

16mm film reel

Box 7: 12

Great Britain (2)

1968

16mm film reel

Box 7: 13

Great Britain (3)

1968

16mm film reel

Box 7: 14

Greece

ca.1970

16mm film reel

Box 7: 15

Hobbit

1968

16mm film reel

Box 7: 16

Holland, Belgium, Switzerland

1964

16mm film reel

Box 7: 17

Italy (1)

undated

16mm film reel

Box 7: 18

Italy (2)

undated

16mm film reel

Box 7: 19

Munich

undated

16mm film reel

Box 7: 20
Camera Magic
ca.1947
16mm film reel
Box 7: 21
Anniversary
undated
1.5mm audio reel
Box 7: 22
Chinatown
1961
1.5mm audio reel
Box 7: 23
Europe
undated
1.5mm audio reel
Box 7: 24
P-Town
undated
1.5mm audio reel
Box 7: 25
China
undated
Audio cassette
Box 7: 26
Curran Litch
undated
Audio cassette
Box 7: 27
China (1)
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 28
China (2)
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 29
Ist City
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 30
Museum, Palaces, Wedding and Boston Chorus and Golden Horn
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 31
NY Horton Country, Disability Pride Day, Paul and Ruth Seder, NC, Inventory
1991-1992
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 32
PR
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 33
PR: Night Club Turkish Music
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 7: 34
Children 1st Part
undated
1/4 inch audio reel
Box 8: 1
Chorus Line
undated
5" audio reel
Box 8: 2
Europe
1964
1.5mm audio reel
Box 8: 3
Friends and Great Britain
undated
5" audio reel
Box 8: 4
Italy and Mexico
undated
5" audio reel
Box 8: 5
Have-Nots Art Work
1988
Slides
Box 8: 6
Padua
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 8: 7
Saudi Arabia, WTC, Bos., Chinese Music, Newton Library, NH Village Day, NC Greenham, Farmer's Market Newton
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 8: 8
Umass Grad, Oriental, Mod Dancing, Chinatown, Ralph's 70th, Portuguese, Chinese Esplanade, Edward's 50th, Question #3 Rally
undated
8mm video cassette
Box 8: 9
Williamsburg, VA
ca.1993
8mm video cassette
Box 8: 10
Mexico (Music Only)
1968
7" audio reel
Box 8: 11
7" audio reel
undated

Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Hawaii, China
Box 8: 12
Turkey
1989
7" audio reel
Box 8: 13
Abend Picnic
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 14
Anniversary
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 15
Kahn, David Movie Film
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 16
Paul K
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 17
Video Head Cleaning Cassette
undated
Cleaning cassette
Box 8: 18
Norway
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 19
Paul and Sharon
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 20
P-Town (1)
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 21
P-Town (2)
1968
16mm film reel
Box 8: 22
Southwest Indians
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 23
Spain
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 24
Sweden
undated
16mm film reel
Box 8: 25

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Ruth Kahn, July 2013.

Digitized content

Selected material from the Paul S. Kahn Papers is available online through [Credo](#).

Processing Information

Processed by Kiara Raposa, 2019 and Sebastian Rieckehoff-Strong, 2021.

Language:

English

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Cite as: Paul S. Kahn Papers (MS 786). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- People with disabilities and the arts
- People with disabilities--Civil rights

Contributors

- Paul S. Kahn [main entry]
- Kahn, Paul S.

Genres and formats

- Paintings (Visual works)

Link to similar SCUA collections

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