

Anderson, Sherwood, Collection

Sherwood Anderson Collection

1912-1938



Title Statement

Anderson, Sherwood, CollectionSherwood Anderson Collection, 1912-1938 Ms.1973.002

Author: Amy Vilelle, Archivist

Publication Statement

Publisher: Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries (0434)
560 Drillfield Drive
Newman Library, Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
Business Number: 540-231-6308
specref@vt.edu
URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



2008 (CC0 1.0)

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-08-20 07:01:53 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1973.002

Unit Date

1912-1938

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains correspondence between author Sherwood Anderson and family members, most notably letters written by Anderson to his daughter Marian, as well as some of his professional correspondence. It also includes research material about Anderson gathered by Ray White and notecards--compiled by Dr. Charles Modlin--documenting the annotations in the books within Virginia Tech Special Collections' Anderson book collection.

Creator

Anderson, Sherwood (Sherwood Berton), 1876-1941

Creator

White, Ray

Creator

Modlin, Charles E.

Extent

1 Cubic Feet 2 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

The copyright status of this collection is unknown. Copyright restrictions may apply. Contact Special Collections and University Archives for assistance in determining the use of these materials. Reproduction or digitization of materials for personal or research use can be requested using our reproduction/digitization form: <http://bit.ly/scuareproduction>. Reproduction or digitization of materials for publication or exhibit use can be requested using our publication/exhibition form: <http://bit.ly/scuapublication>. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives (specref@vt.edu or 540-231-6308) if you need assistance with forms or to submit a completed form.

Source of Acquisition

The Sherwood Anderson Collection was created through various donations and purchases in 1973, 1980, and 1997.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement and description of the Sherwood Anderson Collection took place from October to December 2006.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Sherwood Anderson Collection, Ms1973-002, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) was born in the small town of Camden, Ohio to Irwin McClain Anderson (d.1919) and Emma Jane Smith (d.1895). While Anderson excelled as a student, he quit school at the age of 14 to help support his family, taking on a wide variety of jobs. After his mother's death, he relocated to Chicago for the first time, working and taking a few night classes. He served briefly in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, but was sent there after combat had ended. A few months later, he returned to Clyde, then moved to Springfield, Ohio, in 1899, where he completed his senior year at Wittenburg Academy, a prep school. His graduation speech resulted in his being offered a job as an advertising solicitor and he moved to back to Chicago.

In 1903, work travels took him to Toledo, Ohio, where he met Cornelia Pratt Lane, his first wife. The couple married in 1904 and had three children: Robert Lane (1907-1951), John Sherwood (1908-1995) and Marion (Mimi) (1911-1996). In 1906, they relocated to Cleveland when Anderson became the president of the United Factories Company, a mail-order firm. The following year he departed the company, took his family to Elyria, Ohio, and started the Anderson Manufacturing Co., another mail order business.

In 1912, Anderson suffered a nervous breakdown. He returned to Chicago yet again and began work writing advertising copy and becoming part of the writer and artist scene of the city. In 1916, he divorced Cornelia Pratt and married Tennessee Mitchell, a sculptor. He also published his first novel, *Windy McPherson's Son*, the first of three books in a deal with publisher John Lane. It was beginning of his writing career. 1919 saw the publication of his short story collection, *Winesburg, Ohio*, one of his most well-know works. In 1924, he divorced Tennessee Mitchell and married Elizabeth Prall. They lived in New York and New Orleans, and traveled in Europe, too. With profits from his novel 1925 *Dark Laughter*, Anderson bought Ripshin Farm, later just Ripshin, as a summer home, in 1926. He also acquired both local newspapers, the *Smyth County News* and the *Marion Democrat*. His son, Robert, helped with, and eventually took over management of the newspapers in 1929. Around the same time, Anderson began a tour of the south and its factory towns with Eleanor Copenhaver, which shaped several of his later non-fiction publications.

In 1932, Anderson divorced Elizabeth Prall and the following year, married Eleanor Copenhaver (1896-1985). Southwest Virginia was a powerful influence on his later stories and novels. His life in around Marion and Troutdale, Virginia, was the focus of his writing for the newspapers, as well. At the same time, he was still writing novels and short stories for magazines. In 1941, Sherwood and Eleanor Anderson left for a trip to South America. During the trip, after ingesting a toothpick, Anderson developed peritonitis and was

hospitalized in Panama, where he passed away on March 8, 1941. He is buried in Round Hill Cemetery in Marion, Virginia.

Over his lifetime, Anderson published 8 novels, 4 collections of short stories, 2 collections of poetry, 1 collection of plays, and 12 works of non-fiction. Following his death, publishers and scholars have produced memoirs, critical editions, and several volumes of his collected letters. During his life, he was influential on the careers of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway, and maintained extensive correspondence and friendships with authors, artists, publishers, and critics (though he later wrote that he had given up reading reviews).

Scope and Contents

This collection contains materials relating to author Sherwood Anderson. The collection is notable for the personal letters written by Anderson to family members. The largest group of letters (about 78 of them) were written to his daughter, Marian Anderson ("Mimi") Spear, between 1912 and 1938. While discussing personal and family matters, Anderson often speaks of his difficulties, failures and successes in publishing, and his interactions with other notable authors of the period. Transcripts of the letters, probably made by Anderson scholar and retired Virginia Tech English Department faculty member Dr. Hilbert Campbell, are invaluable as Anderson's handwriting can be very difficult to read. Additional correspondence includes letters between Anderson and other family members. Other correspondence reflects Anderson as a writer and includes a typescript of a speech delivered by Anderson to striking workers at Danville, Virginia in 1931.

Supporting sets of documents include two researchers' work on Sherwood Anderson. Material donated by Anderson scholar Ray Lewis White, author of more than a dozen titles related to Anderson, includes photographs of Anderson and his family members, book covers from a project to gather covers (or reproductions of covers) not already in his collection, pages that were prepared for publication, and other materials used by White in his Anderson books. Notes made by Dr. Charles Modlin, a retired professor from the English Department at Virginia Tech and author of seven books about Anderson, are also included. The notes mostly concern the Anderson book collection in Virginia Tech Special Collections and the books related to Anderson.

Related Archival Material

Various materials related to the Sherwood Anderson Collection are available in other locations.

Books by and about Sherwood Anderson stored in Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives and the general collection of Newman Library are cataloged and can be located using the library's catalog.

Microfilmed and bound theses and dissertations about Sherwood Anderson and his work that were collected by researcher Ray White are cataloged and can be located using the library's catalog.

A 1904 wedding dress that belonged to Sherwood Anderson's wife, Cornelia Platt Lane, is part of the Glisson Historic Costume and Textiles Collection located in Virginia Tech's Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management department.

Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives houses multiple manuscript collections relating to Anderson:

Sherwood Anderson Photograph and Postcard, Ms2011-004

Welford D. Taylor Collection on Sherwood Anderson, Ms2015-020

Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones, Ms2015-044

James T. Farrell Letters to Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson, Ms2017-005

Keywords

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Authors, American -- 20th century

Anderson, Sherwood (Sherwood Berton), 1876-1941

Existence and Location of Copies

Some items in this collection have been digitized and are available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series. Each series is further subdivided by subject.

Series I. Sherwood Anderson and Anderson Family Correspondence contains original personal and professional Sherwood Anderson documents as well as Anderson family materials. Included in the series are letters (both handwritten and typed) from Anderson to daughter Marian ("Mimi"), 1912-1938. These letters mostly relate to personal and family matters, though Anderson sometimes mentions interactions with other authors of the day, his travels, and the current state of his works in progress. (Notable is the affectionate tone of the letters.) Also included in this series are letters to Marian from other family members, as well as letters among other members of Anderson's family. Contained here among Anderson's professional correspondence are letters to John Road; correspondence with Lee Brian concerning Brian's effort to publish a short story; correspondence with Helen Candill regarding her request for an editorial for the Marion College *Squib*, December 1940; and an editorial titled "Chance Rules Us All," penned by Anderson on the verso of a letter. Also included is a typescript of a speech Anderson gave to striking cotton mill workers of Danville, Virginia in 1931.

Series II. Research Materials about Sherwood Anderson contains materials about Anderson collected by two researchers. Included are research and publication materials used in *Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio*, edited and annotated by Ray Lewis White (Ohio University Press, 1997). The materials consist mostly of undated reproductions of photographs of people and documents from the Newberry Library and other sources, and book dust jackets. (Included is a list of 39 microfilm reels and four reprinted theses and dissertations regarding Anderson's work that were transferred to the general library collection. Also in this series are a set of notes compiled by Charles Modlin on the annotations found in the Anderson book collection in Virginia Tech Special Collections. The project was not completed and notes have been preserved in their original order within seven envelopes.

Description of Subordinate Components

Series I. Sherwood Anderson and Anderson Family Correspondence

Family Correspondence

Letters to Daughter Marian ("Mimi") from Sherwood Anderson

Postcard

Unit Date 1912

box 1

Container 1 (folder)

Letters

Unit Date 1927

box 1

Container 2 (folder)

General Physical Description note [11 items]

Letters

Unit Date 1929-1934

box 1

Container 3-8 (folder)

Letters**Unit Date** 1938**box** 1**Container** 9 (folder)**Transcripts of Letters****box** 1**Container** 10 (folder)**Letters to Marian from Family Members****From Cornelia, John, and Robert Anderson****Unit Date** 1927, 1932, n.d.**box** 1**Container** 11 (folder)**Letters to and from Anderson Family Members****To Cornelia Anderson from John Anderson****Unit Date** 1930**box** 1**Container** 12 (folder)**To Russel Spear from John Anderson****Unit Date** 1932**box** 1**Container** 13 (folder)**To Mary Anderson from Sherwood Anderson****Unit Date** n.d.**box** 1**Container** 13 (folder)**To Sherwood Anderson from Robert Anderson****Unit Date** n.d.**box** 1**Container** 14 (folder)**Professional Correspondence****Letter to John Road****Unit Date** n.d.**box** 1**Container** 15 (folder)**Letters to and from Brian Lee****Unit Date** 1931**box** 1**Container** 16 (folder)

Letters to and from Helen Candill

Unit Date 1930

box 1

Container 17 (folder)

Letter on The Royalton (New York) letterhead; salutation unintelligible

Unit Date n.d.

box 1

Container 18 (folder)

Typescript of Speech Delivered by Sherwood Anderson to Striking Cotton Mill Workers of Danville, Virginia

Unit Date Jan 13, 1931

box 1

Container 19 (folder)

Series II. Research Materials about Sherwood Anderson

Material from Ray White

Photos and Negatives of Anderson from Boyhood Through 1920s

box 2

Container 1 (folder)

Photos of Anderson from 1930s and 1940s

box 2

Container 2 (folder)

Photos of Eleanor Anderson

box 2

Container 3 (folder)

Photos of Anderson's Mother and Father

box 2

Container 4 (folder)

Photocopies from Father's and Mother's Diaries

Unit Date 1872

box 2

Container 5 (folder)

Photo of Anderson's Father and Step-Brother

box 2

Container 6 (folder)

Photo of Anderson with Siblings

box 2

Container 7 (folder)

Photo of Anderson with His Sons

box 2

Container 8 (folder)

Photo of Anderson with the Copenhavers

box 2

Container 9 (folder)

Photographic Copy of Anderson article "Business Types" in Agricultural Advertising

box 2

Container 10 (folder)

Photographic Copy of "My Word to You," written by Anderson as an advertisement for his company, the United Factories Company

box 2

Container 11 (folder)

Photos and Tourist Brochures for Clyde, Ohio; color photos of paintings by local artist Kenn Bower (commissioned by Robert Good) of the characters in Winesburg, Ohio

box 2

Container 12 (folder)

General Physical Description note [26 items]

Photographic Copies of Manuscript Pages for Winesburg, Ohio

box 2

Container 13 (folder)

Photographic Copies of Maps of Clyde, Ohio and Winesburg, Ohio

box 2

Container 14 (folder)

Photos of Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein, maps of and buildings in Ohio towns, copies of Anderson's signature, and other items for use in the publication of White's book

box 2

Container 15 (folder)

Photographic Plates Removed from a Copy of Anderson's Hello Towns

box 2

Container 16 (folder)

Photographic Copy of a Document Written by Anderson in New York

Unit Date July 26, [19]32

box 2

Container 17 (folder)

Book Dust Jackets

box 2

Container 18 (folder)

Original Dust Jackets for Sherwood Anderson's Notebook, Perhaps Women, The Face of America, and Home Town

Photographic Copies of Dust Jackets for Winesburg, Ohio and Marching Men

Photocopies of Dust Jackets for Puzzled America, The Triumph of the Egg, Mid-American Chants and Death In the Woods and Other Stories

Correspondence about White's Dust Jacket Project

box 2

Container 19 (folder)

Photographs of Interior and Exterior of Anderson's home, Ripshin, includes a photographic copy of a painting of Ripshin by Karl Anderson

box 2

Container 20 (folder)

Photo of a Wood Carving by Buck Fever

box 2

Container 21 (folder)

Photo of Anderson's Grave Monument

box 2

Container 22 (folder)

Photo Identified as Labor parade

box 2

Container 23 (folder)

Miscellaneous Photographic Negatives

box 2

Container 24 (folder)

List of Dissertations and Theses on Anderson (most cataloged and available in Newman library general collection)

box 2

Container 25 (folder)

Material from Charles Modlin

Notes by Modlin on Annotations within Special Collections' Anderson Book Collection

box 2

Container 26-32 (folder)