

Anderson, Sherwood Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones

Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones
1916-1924, n.d.



Title Statement

Anderson, Sherwood Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones
Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones, 1916-1924, n.d. Ms.2015.044

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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>



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Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2023-08-07 13:44:42 -0400.

Language Usage: English

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2015.044

Unit Date

1916-1924, n.d.

Language

English .

Abstract

This collection consists of eight letters written by American author Sherwood Anderson to Llewellyn Jones between 1916 and 1924 with three undated (but likely from the same period). Jones was the literary editor for the Chicago Evening Post. The correspondence primarily discusses the reviews of Anderson's works by Jones and other critics.

Creator

Anderson, Sherwood (Sherwood Berton), 1876-1941

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

Permission to publish material from Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones must be obtained from Special Collections, Virginia Tech.

Acquisition Information

The Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones was purchased by Special Collections in April 2015.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones was completed in August 2015.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Sherwood Anderson Correspondence with Llewellyn Jones, Ms2015-044, Special Collections, 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 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 the beginning of his writing career. 1919 saw the publication of his short story collection, *Winesburg, Ohio*, one of his most well-known 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).

Biographical Note

Llewellyn Jones (July 13, 1884-July 1, 1961) was an American editor and author. He served as the literary editor of the Chicago Evening Post from 1914-1932. He later worked for book publisher Willett, Clark, and Company. He authored three books on writing, criticism, and reading. His personal and professional papers are held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. A [guide to the collection](#), including a brief biography, can be found online.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of eight letters written by American author Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) to Llewellyn Jones (1884-1961) between 1916 and 1924 with three undated (but likely from the same period). Jones was the literary editor for the Chicago Evening Post. The correspondence primarily discusses the reviews of Anderson's earlier works by Jones and other critics. Anderson and Jones appear to have also been friends and a number of the letters include queries about Jones' wife and personal updates on Anderson and his second wife, Tennessee Claflin Mitchell (1874-1929). In the "Contents List" below, items showing as "c." are the date from the postmark on the envelope. In these cases, the letters themselves did not have dates.

Although Anderson never mentions specific titles, the 1916 letters refer to *Windy McPherson's Son*. The note from April 1918 probably refers to Anderson's collection of poetry published that year, *Mid-American Chants*. The letter dated only "October 3" was likely written in 1918, since records indicate that was the fall in which Anderson had Spanish influenza. He writes, "Have made the draft of a new novel and written some fifty thousand words of it," probably referring to early work on the novel *Poor White*, which was published in 1920. This typed letter also describes a recent visit to Anderson by Carl Sandburg. The two letters from 1924 both include Anderson's comments on reviews of his 1923 novel, *Many Marriages*.

The collection also includes two undated letters, both of which can be placed in an approximate timeline. One was written from New York City. Although short, it mentions he will be there until the end of the year. This likely places the letter in either late 1922 or 1923, during which time he was living there (before he moved to New Orleans with his third wife in 1924). The other undated letter laments that the reactions "I have seen, for the most part, [are] not intelligent criticism but long dissertations on someone's notion of labor, writing, or intellectuality." This could place the letter in 1917, after the publication of *Marching Men*, which dealt with themes of labor issues and the intellectual figure in society.

Transcripts of the letters are available in print with collection and online with the digitized copies.

Related Materials

Books by and about Sherwood Anderson stored in Special Collections 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](#).

Special Collections houses multiple manuscripts relating to Anderson, including:

Ms1971-002, Dayton M. Kohler Papers, 1889-1972. [Finding aid available online](#).

Ms1973-002, Sherwood Anderson Collection, 1912-1938. [Finding aid available online](#). Some items in this collection have been digitized and are [available online](#).

Ms2011-004, Sherwood Anderson Photograph and Postcard, 1929, 1939. [Finding aid available online](#). This collection has been digitized and is [available online](#).

Ms2015-020, Welford D. Taylor Collection on Sherwood Anderson, 1918-2006, n.d. [Finding aid available online](#). Some items from this collection have been digitized and are [available online](#).

Ms2017-005, James T. Farrell Letters to Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson, 1952. [Finding aid available online](#). This collection has been digitized and is [available online](#).

Keywords

Correspondence

American Literature -- Virginia

Authors

Authors, American -- 20th century

Anderson, Sherwood (Sherwood Berton), 1876-1941

Jones, Llewellyn, 1884-1961

Alternate Form Available

The collection has been digitized and is available online.

Alternate Form Available

[Digital images with transcripts](#) available online.

Arrangement

The correspondence in the collection is arranged in chronological order. In the "Contents List" below, items showing as "c." are listed by the date from the postmark on the envelope. In these cases, the letters themselves did not have dates. Undated letters that cannot be clearly placed in the timeline are at the end, with a note about the possible year(s).

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit Date 1916-1924, n.d.

folder 1

July 26, 1916

c. September 9, 1916

c. April 26, 1918

October 3, [1918]

c. July 22, 1924

c. December 11, 1924

Undated [possibly after the publication of Marching Men (1917)]

Undated, from New York City [possibly 1922 or 1923]