

A Guide to the Ralph Cohen Papers, 1940s-2013 SC 0203

Ralph Cohen papers
1940s-2013



Title Statement

A Guide to the Ralph Cohen Papers, 1940s-2013 SC 0203

Author: Tiffany Cole

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820 Madison Drive
MSC 1706
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807
Telephone: (540) 568-3612
library-special@jmu.edu
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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0203

Unit ID

/repositories/4/resources/756

Unit Date

1940s-2013

Language

English , Hebrew , Yiddish .

Abstract

Correspondence, writings, notes, photographs, and ephemera of Ralph Cohen, the bulk of which was separated from printed materials in Cohen's study library.

Creator

Cohen, Ralph, 1917-2016

source

Cohen, Ralph, 1917-2016

Extent

0.65 cubic feet 2 boxes

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open to research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

Acquisition Information

Donated by Ralph Cohen in 2010 as part of a larger gift to JMU Libraries.

Processing Information

Much of the papers in the collection were inserted in Cohen's study library of books and offprint articles. The papers, comprising correspondence, ephemera, and photographs, were removed from the texts. The printed materials were then either retained and cataloged bibliographically or discarded depending on current collecting scope.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Ralph Cohen Papers, 1940s-2013, SC 0203, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Biographical / Historical

Dr. Ralph Cohen (1917-2016), inaugural Provost Distinguished Professor at James Madison University, joined the university faculty in 2010. Dr. Cohen established the Cohen Center of Technical Humanism at JMU, building on the foundation of the graduate program in Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication. Prior to his service at JMU, Dr. Cohen was William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of English at the University of Virginia (UVa) beginning in 1968. Between 1952 and 1967, he taught Philosophy and English at the University of California, Los Angeles. He authored six books, over 140 articles, and founded *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* at UVa in 1969. This journal remains the preeminent journal of its kind in the world. Dr. Cohen built a robust study library over the course of his life, donating all of these books to JMU upon his death in 2016. His wife, Libby Okun Cohen, who had a long career as a librarian, preceded him in death in 2013.

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, writings, notes, photographs, and ephemera of Ralph Cohen, the bulk of which was separated from printed materials in Cohen's study library. The correspondence primarily concerns books and articles that were sent to the Cohens and were for Ralph Cohen's review and consideration. A sub-folder of 1943 correspondence comprises letters and postcards written in either Hebrew or Yiddish to Libby Cohen from her mother. Some inserts are seemingly unrelated to the text they were filed in (invitations, postcards, photographs, ephemera, etc.) and may have only served as book marks.

The lectures and writings are largely papers written by Cohen that were presented by him in a public forum some of which are identified (Midwest Modern Language Association meeting, Indiana University Patten Foundation Lecture Series). Topics include George Barnwell, the subject of George Lilo's play *The London Merchant*, and genre theory. A draft copy of Cohen's *The Unfolding of "The Seasons": A Study of James Thomson's Poem* is heavily edited and annotated. In "Once Upon a Time," Libby Cohen recollects spending four summers at the Medem Sanatorium in Warsaw, Poland. The same folder includes a response titled "Echoes..." written by the Cohens' daughter Ruth Cohen Traister Morris.

A scrapbook comprises photographs and marketing material documenting programs and lectures held at the University of Virginia and sponsored by UVa's Commonwealth Center for Literary and Cultural Change.

Related Materials

RG-24/54/1.151, Ralph Cohen papers and New Literary History records, Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library

Keywords

Letters (correspondence)
Photographs
Scrapbooks
Printed Ephemera
Articles
Academic writing
English language
American literature -- History and criticism
Cohen, Ralph, 1917-2016
Cohen, Ralph, 1917-2016 -- Correspondence
Cohen, Ralph, 1917-2016 -- Written works
University of Virginia -- History -- Marketing
Midwest Modern Language Association
Medem-sanałorye (Miedzeszyn, Warsaw, Poland)

Appraisal

Widely available article reprints and offprints that were sent to Cohen by the authors were weeded. Cohen's UVa Lawn Society paperweight was not retained. Indecipherable computer printouts were not retained. A final manuscript copy of Cohen's *The Unfolding of "The Seasons"* was discarded. A second annotated/marked-up/draft copy was retained.

Description of Subordinate Components

Photographs

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30148
Unit Date 1940s-1970s
Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)
Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30146
Unit Date 1943-2013
Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)
Container 2 (folder)

Ephemera

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30147
Unit Date 1973-1997, undated
Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)
Container 3 (folder)

Notes

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30188

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Lectures and writings

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30151

Unit Date circa 1970-1990

Draft of The Unfolding of "The Seasons": A Study of James Thomson's Poem

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30191

Unit Date circa 1970

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 5-6 (folder)

"Once Upon a Time" by Libby Okun Cohen

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30190

Unit Date circa 1975

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Libby Cohen's recollections of spending four summers at the Medem Sanatorium in Warsaw, Poland. Includes a response titled "Echoes..." written by her daughter Ruth Cohen Traister Morris.

Tristram Shandy notes

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30152

Unit Date after 1978

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

"The Autobiography of a Critical Problem"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30157

Unit Date after 1980

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

"The Attack on Genre"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30153

Unit Date 1984 September 24

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Lecture given as part of Indiana University's Patten Foundation Lectures.

"The Regeneration of Genre"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30154

Unit Date 1984 September 25

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Lecture given as part of Indiana University's Patten Foundation Lectures.

"Literary History and the Ballad of George Barnwel"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30156

Unit Date 1984

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Keywords

Barnwell, George

"Narrative Transformations: The Stories of George Barnwell"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30155

Unit Date circa 1984

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Two copies. One labeled "As taken to Milwaukee."

Keywords

Barnwell, George

"Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916)"

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30189

Unit Date 1990

Mixed Materials [1000885999] 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Keywords

Aleichem Sholem, 1859-1916

Scrapbook

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/30145

Unit Date 1994-1995

Mixed Materials [1000897670] OV 1 (box)

Scope and Contents

Photographs and marketing material documenting programs and lectures sponsored by the Commonwealth Center for Literary and Cultural Change at the University of Virginia.