

A Guide to the Julia Davis Papers on "The Shenandoah," 1930-1945 SC 0401

Julia Davis papers on The Shenandoah
1930-1945



Title Statement

A Guide to the Julia Davis Papers on "The Shenandoah," 1930-1945 SC 0401

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0401

Unit ID

/repositories/4/resources/782

Unit Date

1930-1945

Language

English .

Abstract

The collection comprises correspondence, manuscript drafts, research materials, and printed ephemera relating to Julia Davis's book *The Shenandoah*.

Creator

Davis, Julia, 1900-1993

source

Jeffrey S. Evans & Associates

Extent

0.25 cubic feet 17 folders

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

Acquired from Jeffrey S. Evans & Associates, Inc. Winter Americana Auction, March 5, 2025.

Processing Information

Folders containing chapter drafts are titled according to their final chapter numbers and titles in the published version of *The Shenandoah* which may vary slightly from the draft title.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Julia Davis papers on *The Shenandoah*, 1930-1945, SC 0401, James Madison University Special Collections, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

Julia McDonald Davis (1900-1993) was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia to John W. Davis, a U.S. Congressman, and Julia T. Davis. She attended Wellesely College and graduated from Barnard College in 1922. Davis primarily wrote historical fiction for children and adults. Two of her children's books were awarded with the Newberry Honor Award. She wrote *The Shenandoah* (1945), as part of Farrar & Rhinehart's Rivers of America series. Davis also published under the pseudonym F. Draco.

Davis lived the bulk of her life in West Virginia and was married four times. While writing *The Shenandoah*, Davis was married to Paul West. Correspondence to her within this collection is addressed accordingly. Davis was the foster mother of Ramon and Andrea Sender, two siblings from Spain who came to the United States as refugees during the Spanish Civil War.

Scope and Contents

The collection comprises correspondence, manuscript drafts, research materials, and printed ephemera relating to Julia Davis's book *The Shenandoah*. The book focuses on the history of the Shenandoah River and surrounding Shenandoah Valley and was published as part of Farrar & Rhinehart's Rivers of America series. The books comprising the Rivers of America series were written by novelists, poets, and literary figures rather than historians.

The correspondence primarily comprises responses from librarians, historians, professors, local chambers of commerce, and other subject matter specialists discussing sundry topics covered in the book as well as suggested edits to the manuscript. The Native American presence and influence in the Shenandoah Valley is a common topic, as is the Civil War, European settlers, industries, farming, and agriculture. Correspondence from Davis's editors at Farrar & Rhinehart is also included.

Two letters from Stephen Vincent Benét, who was one of the editors of the series until his death in 1943, invite Davis to write *The Shenandoah* and discuss the timeline for publication.

A September 24, 1944 letter to Davis from John Yates McDonald of Orchard Lodge in Charles Town, West Virginia discusses edits to Chapter 24: Fool's Gold and True Gold, specifically in reference to apple growing.

A letter regarding applications for Voluntary Departure and Pre-examination on behalf of siblings Ramon and Andrea Sender is included but does not appear to have any relevance to Davis's writing. Davis was the Sender children's foster mother after they came to the United States from Spain as refugees.

The John Wayland correspondence, comprising 14 letters and a partial letter, is foldered separately.

The "Postscript" of *The Shenandoah* discusses two 1945 proposed dams on the Shenandoah River - one at Millville near Harpers Ferry and one on the North Fork at Brocks Gap. Reports and correspondence from Harry Flood Byrd discussing these proposed but ultimately not implemented flood control measures are included.

In the correspondence Davis is usually addressed as Mrs. West. She was married to her second husband, Paul West, from 1934 to 1949.

Research materials include brochures, postcards, and pamphlets and other printed ephemera documenting Shenandoah Valley destinations, geographical features, towns, families, and institutions covered in *The Shenandoah*. Notably, numerous brochures document Storer College, a historically Black college located in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. These items were provided to Davis by local chambers of commerce, libraries, authors, and historians to support her research. Other research materials include Library of Congress reading room slips, book lists, and bibliographies.

The collection also includes several full and partial chapter drafts with handwritten annotations and edits. It's presumed that some, if not all, of the annotated drafts were marked up and sent to Davis by people with whom she was corresponding.

Separated Materials

Two copies of *The Shenandoah*, including one paperback proof copy, were removed the collection and cataloged bibliographically. A two-volume set of *The Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, in which the two letters from Benét to Davis were laid in, was also cataloged bibliographically.

Related Materials

Julia McDonald Davis (1900-1993) Papers, A&M 1856, West Virginia and Regional History Center, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, West Virginia.

Keywords

Letters (correspondence)

Manuscripts (documents)

Printed Ephemera

Editing

Books -- History

Shenandoah River Valley (Va. and W. Va.)

Shenandoah River (Va. and W. Va.)

Jeffrey S. Evans & Associates

Library of Congress -- History

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31229

Unit Date 1942-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Creator Miller, Kenneth C., 1901-1974

Creator Bevan, Arthur, 1888-1968

Creator Allen, Hervey (William Hervey), 1889-1949

Creator Strickler, Harry M. (Harry Miller), 1881-1955

Creator Canby, Henry Seidel, 1878-1961

Creator Byrd, Harry F. (Harry Flood), 1887-1966

John Wayland correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31226

Unit Date 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Creator Wayland, John Walter, 1872-1962

Shenandoah Valley printed ephemera

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31231

Unit Date 1930-circa 1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Luray printed ephemera

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31232

Unit Date 1935-circa 1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Keywords

Luray (Va.)

West Virginia printed ephemera

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31233

Unit Date 1936-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Keywords

Storer College

Capon Springs and Baths (W. Va.)

Printed book lists

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31234

Unit Date 1941-circa 1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Shenandoah National Park and Skyline Drive printed ephemera

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31235

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Keywords

Shenandoah National Park (Agency : U.S.)

Library of Congress reading room slips

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31228

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

"Preface" drafts

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31236

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

"Chapter 2: The Unrecorded Past" draft

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31237

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

"Chapter 12: The Fateful Lightning" draft

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31238

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

"Chapter 24: Fool's Gold and True Gold" draft

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31239

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

"Chapter 27: Valley Tour II" draft

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31240

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

"Postscript" draft

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31241

Unit Date 1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Notes on the manuscript of The Shenandoah

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31242

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Bibliographies

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31243

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

Notes

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/31244

Unit Date circa 1943-1945

Mixed Materials [1000897471] 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)