Conrad Aiken collection, 1951-1962

Emory University
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
Atlanta, GA 30322
404-727-6887
rose.library@emory.edu

Descriptive Summary

Title: Conrad Aiken collection, 1951-1962
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 126
Extent: .25 linear ft. (1 box)
Abstract: Collection of materials relating to American poet and critic, Conrad Aiken including correspondence and printed material.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Related Materials in Other Repositories
Henry E. Huntington Library (San Marino, CA) and Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Source
Purchased from George Minkoff Booksellers in 1977. Additions were purchased from Charles Apfelbaum Rare Manuscripts and Archives in 2006.

Custodial History
Purchased from dealer, provenance unknown.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Conrad Aiken collection, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Emory Libraries provides copies of its finding aids for use only in research and private study. Copies supplied may not be copied for others or otherwise distributed without prior consent of the holding repository.
Appraisal Note
Acquired by Director of the Rose Library, Linda Matthews, as part of the Rose Library's holdings in American literature.

Processing

This finding aid may include language that is offensive or harmful. Please refer to the Rose Library's harmful language statement for more information about why such language may appear and ongoing efforts to remediate racist, ableist, sexist, homophobic, euphemistic and other oppressive language. If you are concerned about language used in this finding aid, please contact us at rose.library@emory.edu.

Collection Description

Biographical Note
Conrad Potter Aiken (August 5, 1889 August 17, 1973), poet and critic, was born in Savannah, Georgia, one of three sons of William Ford Aiken, a physician and surgeon, and Anna Potter Aiken. Aiken spent his early years in Savannah, but at the age of eleven, upon the deaths of his parents, went to live with a great, great aunt in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He was educated at Middlesex School in Concord, Mass., and Harvard University, receiving his A.B. degree in 1912.

Aiken's first book, Earth Triumphant and Other Tales, a collection of poems, appeared in 1914. During his long career, he published forty-two volumes of verse, fiction, and criticism. Although known primarily as a poet and critic, Aiken's published works included five novels and several volumes of short stories. He wrote columns and reviews for magazines and newspapers, among them The New Republic, The New Yorker (under the pseudonym Samuel Jeake, Jr.), and the Chicago Daily News. His list of literary honors and awards includes the Pulitzer Prize in 1930 for the best volume of verse published in 1929, the National Book Award in 1954 for his Collected Poems, and the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1958. Aiken was poetry consultant to the Library of Congress, 1950-1952. In April 1973, he was named Poet Laureate of Georgia.

Aiken married Jessie McDonald in 1912; they were divorced in 1929. In 1930 he was married to Clarice Lorenz (divorced, 1937), and in 1937 to Mary Augusta Hoover. There were three children from the first marriage. After living most of his life in New England and England, Aiken returned to Savannah in 1962 to make his home there. He died in Savannah on August 17, 1973, and was buried in Bonaventure Cemetery. Biographical information was taken from Frederick J. Hoffman, Conrad Aiken (Twayne, 1962); Who Was Who in America, vol. VI, 19741976: Contemporary American Authors, v. 5-8; and the obituary in the Atlanta Journal, August 18, 1973.

Scope and Content Note
This small group of Conrad Aiken letters and notes includes 2 TLS from Aiken to "Mr. Cole" (September 27 and October 14, 1951); 9 TLS and 1 postcard from Aiken to Arthur A. Cohen of Meridian Books (May 4, 1958-August 10, 1959); 1 TLS from Aiken to Mary
Louise Vincent of World Publishing Company (1962); 5 TLS from Aiken to J. Edgar Simmons, (1964-1968) and 1 typed note (3 lines), signed.

The two earliest letters relate to Aiken's service as a judge for the National Book Award in 1951. The letters to Arthur Cohen, 1958-1959, mainly concern publications and publishing prospects, with occasional personal news. In a letter of June 14, 1958, Aiken queries Cohen about a possible reissue of *The Reader Over Your Shoulder* by Alan Hodge, Aiken's son-in-law, and Robert Graves. A letter of June 18, 1958, relates to publication of *A Reviewer's ABC* (Meridian Books, 1958). On April 18, 1959, Aiken explores the possibility for publication of a "collected poems" and in a letter of August 10 discusses the future, publication of a volume of his collected short stories. Other letters mention reviews and reviewers, royalties, writers, and various publishing negotiations.

**Arrangement Note**
Arranged by record type.
## Container List

### Correspondence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Conrad Aiken to Mr. Cole, 1951 (2 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conrad Aiken to Arthur A. Cohen, 1958-1959 (10 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Conrad Aiken to Mary Louise Vincent, 1962 (1 item)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conrad Aiken to Claire McAllister, 1954-1970 (17 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conrad Aiken to J. Edgar Simmons, 1964-1968 (5 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conrad Aiken to unknown, comments on Ford Madox Ford's <em>The Good Soldier</em> (1 item)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Printed material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Press release: announcement of the 1969 National Medal for Literature to Conrad Aiken, October 24, 1969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>