

AIKEN, CONRAD, 1889-1973.
Conrad Aiken collection, 1951-1962

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Aiken, Conrad, 1889-1973.
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

Purchase, 1977 with subsequent additions.

Citation

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

Processing

Processed by LMM, December 15, 1977.

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, 1974-1976: *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

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

Printed material

1	7	Newspaper clippings
1	8	Article: "The Poetry of Conrad Aiken," Calvin S. Brown, <i>Georgia Review</i> , Fall 1954
1	9	Article: "Letters of a Writer's Writer," review of Selected Letters of Conrad Aiken, reviewed by Harry Levin in <i>Saturday Review</i> , May 27, 1978
1	10	Press release: announcement of the 1969 National Medal for Literature to Conrad Aiken, October 24, 1969
