
Finding aid to the Mary Austin Collection MS.605

Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
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Title: Mary Hunter Austin Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MS.605

Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet(1 box)

Date: 1868 - 1954

creator: Austin, Mary Hunter, 1868-1934.

Access

Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit <http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application> or contact library staff at rroom@theautry.org. An item-level inventory is available from library staff.

Scope and contents

The collection consists of published articles and biographies by Austin; reviews and interviews about Austin or her work; correspondence with Charles Fletcher Lummis and Frederick Webb Hodge; a book prospectus; and advertisements promoting her publications.

Biographical note

Mary Hunter Austin (born September 9, 1868 in Carlinville, Illinois; died August 13, 1934 in Santa Fe, New Mexico) was the fourth of six children born to George and Susannah (Graham) Hunter. Austin graduated from Blackburn College in 1888. Her family moved to California in the same year and established a homestead in the San Joaquin Valley. She married Stafford Wallace Austin on May 18, 1891 in Bakersfield, California. He was from Hawaii and a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley.

For 17 years Austin made a special study of Indian life in the Mojave Desert, and her publications set forth the intimate knowledge she thus acquired. She was a prolific novelist, poet, critic, and playwright, as well as an early feminist, suffragist, and defender of Native American and Spanish-American rights. She is best known for her tribute to the deserts of California, *The Land of Little Rain* (1903). Her play, *The Arrow Maker*, dealing with Indian life, was produced at the New Theatre, (New York) in 1911, the same year she published a rhapsodic tribute to her acquaintance H.G. Wells as a producer of "informing, vitalizing, indispensable books" in the *American Magazine*.

Mary Hunter Austin wrote about her Independence, California home in *The Land of Little Rain*.

Austin and her husband were involved in the local California Water Wars, in which the water of Owens Valley was eventually drained to supply Los Angeles. When their battle was lost, he moved to Death Valley, California, and she moved to Carmel, California. There, she was part of a social circle that included Jack London, Ambrose Bierce, and George Sterling and was one of the founders of the Forest Theater.

In 1929, while living in New Mexico, Austin co-authored a book with photographer Ansel Adams. Published a year later, the book, *Taos Pueblo*, was printed in a limited edition of only 108 copies. It is now quite rare because it included actual photographs made by Adams rather than reproductions.

Mount Mary Austin, in the Sierra Nevada, was named in her honor. It is located 8.5 miles west of her longtime home in Independence, California. A biography of Austin by Helen McKnight Doyle was published in 1939.

References:

Hammond, Ann (2002). *Ansel Adams: Devine Performance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

"Mount Mary Austin". *Geographic Names Information System, U.S. Geological Survey*. Retrieved from <http://geonames.usgs.gov>

McKnight Doyle, H. (1939). *Mary Austin: Woman of genius*. New York, NY: Gotham House.

Preferred citation

Mary Hunter Austin Collection, 1868-1954, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.605; [folder number] [folder title][date].

Processing Information note

Processed by Glenna Schroeder, circa 1977-1981. Revised by Sarah Buchanan, 2007. Finding aid updated by Anna Liza Posas 2012 July. Final processing of collection and publication of finding aid made possible by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

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Acquisition

Assembled by Southwest Museum Library staff circa 1977.

Custodial history

Several of the articles were originally from MS. 7 *Frederick Webb Hodge Collection*. Per a 1923 index for the Hodge Collection, the are articles were originally part of folder 622. Other parts of the Mary Austin Collection also comes from MS.4 George Wharton James Collection and the Southwest Museum Library general acquisition fund. The Mary Austin Collection was assembled by Southwest Museum Library staff circa 1977.

Biographical information, 1908-1954

Correspondence and ephemera, 1899-1933

Published writings by Austin, 1899-1934

Reviews of Austin's work, 1931, 1934

Related Archival Materials note

Related archival materials: Papers of Mary Hunter Austin, 1845-1950 (bulk 1920-1934) (mssAU 1-5456). The Henry E. Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California.

Carey McWilliams Collection of Material About Mary Hunter Austin (Collection 278). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Hodge, Frederick Webb, 1864-1956

Lummis, Charles Fletcher, 1859-1928.

Advertisements

Biography

Clippings

Correspondence

Poetry

Reviews

Biographical information, 1908-1954

Language of Material: English

Folder 1

Interview of Austin by Helen Zimmern, 1908

Scope and contents

Interview is about Mary Austin's first trip to Europe in 1908. Zimern sent a transcript of the interview to Lummis with hopes for publication.

Folder 2	<p>Articles about Austin, 1916-1933</p> <p>Language of Material: English</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Articles include, in order of date:</p> <p>"Mary Austin Divorced in Spirit Clash" <i>San Francisco Examiner</i>, 1916 March 19.</p> <p>"The American Rhythm" <i>El Palacio</i>, volume 14, number 7, 1923 April 2.</p> <p>"Mary Austin's Autobiography..." by Wilbur Needham, <i>Touring Topics</i> 1933 January.</p> <p>"Mary Austin: One of America's Distinguished Women", flyer printed by World Celebrities from Portland, Oregon in association with the National Recovery Administration (NRA). Flyer includes biographical information and a list of lecture subjects to be given by Austin, 1933 October.</p> <p>"Mary Austin is Guest in Pasadena" <i>Pasadena Star News</i>, 1933 October 24.</p> <p>"The Lee Side O' L.A.", by Lee Shippey, <i>Los Angeles Times</i>, 1933 November 1. Article was part of regular newspaper series.</p>
Folder 3	<p>Articles about Austin, 1934</p>
Folder 4	<p>Articles about Austin, 1939-1954</p> <p>Language of Material: English</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Articles include, in order of date:</p> <p>"Mary Austin's Casa Querida" by Ina Sizer Cassidy, <i>New Mexico Daily Examiner</i>, 1939 June 12.</p> <p>"California's Stately Hall of Fame" by Rockwell D. Hunt, <i>Los Angeles Times</i>, 1941 January 19.</p> <p>"Genius Mary Austin's Beloved House" by Perry Worden, <i>Pasadena Star News</i>, 1940 June 15.</p> <p>"State Marker Prepared for Writer's Home" <i>Los Angeles Times</i>, 1954 February 14.</p> <p>Clippings in scrapbook, unknown publications, undated.</p>
	<p>Correspondence and ephemera, 1899-1933</p> <p>Language of Material: English</p>
Folder 5	<p>Prospectus for limited edition book on Taos by Ansel Adams and Mary Austin, circa 1930</p>
folders 6-14	<p>Frederick Webb Hodge correspondence, 1899-1933</p>
Folder 15	<p>Charles Fletcher Lummis correspondence, 1901-1908, 1924</p>
Folder 16	<p>Letter to Eve Lummis from Austin, 1908 September 7</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Written during Austin's first visit to Italy and Paris.</p>
Folder 17	<p>Partial letter from Austin to unknown person, undated</p> <p>Published writings by Austin, 1899-1934</p>
Folder 18	<p>Fiction, 1902-1903, 1920</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Works include, in order of title:</p> <p>"The Crooked Fir", <i>El Palacio</i>, volume 8, number 7-8, 1920 July.</p> <p>"The Last Antelope", <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>, volume 92, number 549, 1903 July.</p> <p>"The Little Coyote", <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>, volume 89, number 532, 1902 February.</p> <p>"The Search for Jean Baptiste", <i>St. Nicholas</i>, volume 30, number 11, 1903 September.</p>

Folder 19	<p>Non-fiction, articles, 1914, 1931</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Works include, in order of title:</p> <p>"Points of View: New Mexican Spanish", <i>Saturday Review</i>, 1931 June 27.</p> <p><i>Suffrage and Government: the Modern Idea of Government by Consent and Woman's place in it, with special reference to Nevada and other Western States</i>. Published for the Nevada Equal Franchise Society by the National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1914.</p>
Folder 20	<p>Non-fiction, book reviews by Austin, 1931-1934</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Works include, in order of title:</p> <p>"Aboriginal Fiction: Review of Tales of the North American Indian", by Stith Thompson, <i>Saturday Review</i>, volume 6, number 23, 1929 December 28.</p> <p>"Woman Sees Steel", <i>El Palacio</i>, volume 10, number 9, 1921 April 1.</p> <p>"Fighting Men of the West", <i>Saturday Review</i>, 1932 June 25.</p>
Folder 21	<p>Non-fiction, editorials, 1911, 1929</p>
Folder 22	<p>Non-fiction, Native American arts, 1928-1934</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Works include, in order of title:</p> <p>"American Indian Dance Drama", <i>Yale Review</i>, volume 19, number 4, June 30</p> <p>"Indian Arts for Indians", <i>Survey Graphic</i>, volume 8, number 4, 1928 July.</p> <p>"Indian Poetry", <i>Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts</i>, 1931.</p> <p>"Indian Pottery of the Rio Grande", <i>Enjoy your museum</i> series booklet, 1934.</p>
Folder 23	<p>Poetry, 1899-1936</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Works include, in order of title:</p> <p>"The Burgher's Wife", before 1934.</p> <p>"Litany for New Mexico", before 1936.</p> <p>"Little Light Moccasin", <i>Southern Workman</i>, volume 29, number 4, 1900 April.</p> <p>"Little Light Moccasin", <i>Sunday Herald Baltimore</i>, 1899 September 24.</p> <p>"The Rocky Mountain Sheep", <i>St. Nicholas</i>, volume 27, number, 1900 September 11.</p> <p>"When I am Dead" posthumous publication by estate, circa 1934.</p>
Folder 24	<p>Reviews of Austin's work, 1931, 1934</p> <p>Scope and contents</p> <p>Reviews include, in order of title:</p> <p>"Can A Prayer be Answered", <i>New York Times Book Review</i>, 1934 July 29.</p> <p>"Starry Adventure" reviews, 1931. Includes reviews from by Oliver La Farge, <i>Saturday Review</i>, 1931 June 6; Mary Ross, <i>New York Herald Tribune Books</i>, 1931 May 17; and Margaret Wallace, <i>New York Times</i>, 1931 May 31.</p>
