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Charlie May Simon manuscripts and correspondence

Arkansas State University - Jonesboro

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Finding Aid of

CHARLIE MAY SIMON
MANUSCRIPTS AND
CORRESPONDENCE

1940s-1979

MSS 003

Archives & Special Collections
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Dean B. Ellis Library
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Summary Information

Compiled By: Matthew Mayton; July 27, 2023

Creator: Charlie May Simon

Date: 1940s-1979; Bulk, 1960s-1969

Physical Description: 0.625 linear feet. This collection consists of 14 folders in 2 document boxes.

Language: English

Abstract

Charlie May Simon was one of Arkansas's most prolific authors, having written over twenty-seven (27) books ranging from children's novels to biographies on contemporary figures. In honor of Simon's works, the Arkansas Department of Education named their children's literature award after her in 1971. This collection consists of a select number of manuscripts and notes pertaining to her biographical works.

Acquisition

These materials were originally bound and/or placed in envelopes as part of the Arkansas Collection and were recently unbound to create this collection. Further additions to this collection are not expected.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Matthew Mayton and completed in July 2023.

Conditions Governing Access

This manuscript collection consists of physical materials. This collection has not been digitized. This collection is open for research use only in the Reading Room. It is not available for request through Interlibrary Loan. Please contact the archive via email (archives@astate.edu) at least a week in advance of your arrival to ensure the availability of the material.

Rights Statement

Copyright has not been transferred to Archives & Special Collection. Standard copyright laws (U. S. Title 17) still apply.

Preferred Citation

Charlie May Simon Manuscript Collection, Item Name and Date, Box and Folder Numbers, Archives and Special Collections, Dean B. Ellis Library, Arkansas State University.
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Biographical Note

Charlie May Simon was born on August 17, 1897 to Charles Wayman Hough and Mary Gill Hough in Drew County, Arkansas. The family moved to Memphis, Tennessee, when Simon was young, where she attended public schools in Memphis and a course at Memphis Normal School (University of Memphis

today). Her early attempt at a literary career was unsuccessful, having her first manuscript rejected by a publisher. Thinking she lacked literary talent, Simon instead focused on graphic arts.

After the death of her first husband, Simon moved to Chicago, then Paris, France, studying at various schools and expanding her perspectives in art. While in Paris, she met and married her fellow artist, Howard Simon in 1926. The couple lived in Paris before moving to Arkansas, residing in a mountainside log cabin in Perry County. Out of dire financial necessity in the 1930s, Simon began writing again. Her second work, "Retreat to the Land," was well received and truly began her literary career. A year later, she wrote her first published novel, *Robin on the Mountain*.

While Simon embraced the hard work and life of Perry County, her husband did not. The two divorced in 1935, and he moved back to Paris, though Howard Simon served as Simon's illustrator for several years. Simon continued to write, catching the attention of John Gould Fletcher. The two admired each other's work and ran in the same literary circles. Simon and Fletcher married on January 18, 1936. They lived in Johnswood, on the western edge of Little Rock, overlooking the Arkansas River. There, they worked on their own literary pursuits; poetry for Fletcher and children's literature for Simon.

After Fletcher's death in 1950, Simon's literary career shifted from primarily focusing on children's literature to biographies. She traveled the globe, spent time with the subjects of her writing, and conducted extensive research. She published several biographies including philosopher-musician-physician Albert Schweitzer, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld, and the crown prince and princess of Japan.

In 1971, the Arkansas Department of Education named their children's literature award the Charlie May Simon Award, in honor of her body of work. Arkansas school children read and vote on books to be given this award. Simon's literary career spanned forty years, with her last work published in 1974 on Teilhard de Chardin. Charlie May Simon died on March 21, 1977 and was interred at the Mount Holly Cemetery in Little Rock.

Scope and Content Note

The Charlie May Simon Manuscript Collection primarily consists of manuscripts, notes, and correspondence to three of her works: *The Royal Road*, *Dag Hammarskjöld*, and *Martin Buber: Wisdom in Our Time; The Story of an Outstanding Jewish Thinker and Humanist*. This collection also includes correspondence with Eula McDougal and some biographical information pertaining to Charlie May Simon.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in four series:

Series 1: *The Royal Road* Manuscripts. The "*The Royal Road* Manuscripts" series consists of a workbook with notes and manuscripts pertaining to Charlie May Simon's book, *The Royal Road*. This series is arranged chronologically.

Series 2: *Dag Hammarskjöld* Manuscripts and Correspondence. The "*Dag Hammarskjöld* Manuscripts and Correspondence" series consists of notes, manuscripts, correspondence, and proofs pertaining to

Charlie May Simon's biography on Hammarskjöld, a Swedish economist, diplomat, and the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. This series is arranged chronologically.

Series 3: *Martin Buber* Manuscript and Correspondence. The "*Martin Buber* Manuscript and Correspondence" series consists of notes, a manuscript with edits, and correspondence pertaining to Charlie May Simon's biography on Martin Buber, an Austrian Jewish and Israeli philosopher. This series is arranged chronologically.

Series 4: Personal Correspondence and Biographical Information. The "Personal Correspondence and Biographical Information" series contains correspondence with Eula McDougal and biographical information on Charlie May Simon. Included in this series are a couple of photographs of Charlie May Simon.

Related Materials

Researchers interested in Charlie May Simon may also be interested in the following items held in Archives & Special Collections:

- "Arkansas Authors (S -T)" vertical file contains some information about Charlie May Simon.
- The Arkansas Collection holds a copy of twenty-four books written by Charlie May Simon, featuring a mix of children's books and biographies.

Researchers may also be interested in collections held at the following repositories:

- University of Central Arkansas, John Gould Fletcher & Charlie May Simon Fletcher Collection: This collection contains personal correspondence, depicting the daily lives of the couple and also includes insights to the origins of the Charlie May Simon Children's Book Award.
- University of Arkansas Little Rock, Charlie May Simon Materials: This collection contains materials related to Simon, including the original manuscript and galley proof of Albert Schweitzer's biography, book reviews, and memorabilia.
- University of Arkansas, Charlie May Simon Letter: This is a letter from writer Charlie May Hogue Simon to Miss Long's fourth grade students in Morrilton, Arkansas, in response to their letters.
- University of Arkansas, Charlie May Fletcher Papers: This collection contains Charlie May Fletcher's correspondence and manuscripts.
- University of Arkansas may have other collections related to Charlie May Simon.
- Arkansas State Library: The Arkansas State Library's website contains information, including recent winners, of the Charlie May Simon Children's Book Award.

Subjects

- Authors
- Biography
- Book editors
- Manuscripts
- Manuscripts—Editing
- Proofs (Printing)
- Publications

- Women authors
- Women editors

Names

- E. P. Dutton (Firm)
- Briley, Dorothy
- McDougal, Eula
- Simon, Charlie May, 1897-1977
- Taylor, Ann

Collection Inventory

Series 1: *The Royal Road* Manuscripts

Box 1:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
1	<i>Royal Road</i> Workbook and Holograph	Circa Mid 1940s
2	<i>Royal Road</i> Manuscript	Circa 1948

Series 2: *Dag Hammarskjöld* Manuscripts and Correspondence

Box 1:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
3	Notes Pertaining to Dag Hammarskjöld	Circa Mid 1960s
	Scope and content: Included in this folder are postcards and small notes.	
4	<i>Dag Hammarskjöld</i> Holograph	Circa Mid 1960s
5	<i>Dag Hammarskjöld</i> Manuscript	Circa 1966
	Scope and content: Chapters 1 and 2 are not present.	
6	Correspondence with Dorothy Briley	1966 July 22 – 1966 October 1
7	<i>Dag Hammarskjöld</i> Master Proof	1966 November 3
8	<i>Dag Hammarskjöld</i> Master Proof	1966 December 5

Series 3: *Martin Buber* Manuscript and Correspondence

Box 2:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
9	Notes on Martin Buber	Circa Late 1960s
	Scope and content: Included in this folder are postcards.	
10	<i>Martin Buber</i> Manuscript	Circa 1968
11	Correspondence with Ann Taylor	1968 June 17 – 1969 March 18

Series 4: Personal Correspondence and Biographical Information

Box 2:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
12	Correspondence with Eula McDougal	1948-1965
	Scope and content: Included in this folder are photographs of Charlie May Simon	
13	"News About Books and Authors"	Circa 1940s
14	<i>Childhood Education</i>	1979
	Scope and content: Volume 56, Issue 2. There is a small article about Charlie May Simon on page 128.	