Guide to the Louis Mertins Papers, 1912-1984

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Note
Arts and Humanities --Literature --American Literature
Guide to the Louis Mertins Papers, 1912-1984

Collection number: BANC MSS 84/151 c

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Completed by:
Mary Morganti
Date completed:
July 1985; August 1997
Encoded by:
Michael C. Conkin

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Louis Mertins Papers, 1912-1984
Collection Number: BANC MSS 84/151 c
Creator: Mertins, Louis, 1885-
Extent: Number of containers: 7 boxes, 1 carton, 1 volume, 1 oversize folder
Linear feet: 4.25
Repository: The Bancroft Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Abstract: Papers are devoted to Mertins' study of Robert Frost and his life. The collection includes correspondence, chiefly letters from friends and associates concerning Robert Frost and the writing of Mertins' books on Frost, as well as his original manuscripts. Other than a scrapbook containing reviews of Mertins' book, Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking, and newspaper articles relating to its publication, the remainder of the collection consists of materials gathered in the course of Mertin's research, and his extensive clipping files on Frost. Of particular note is a copy of Frost's will and a genealogy of his family, along with newspaper articles recounting many important events in Frost's life. Also of interest are references to the work of Lawrance Thompson, Frost's "official" biographer, in the letters of Daniel Smythe.

Languages Represented: English
Access
Collection is open for research, with the following exceptions:
Manuscripts of Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking, in Boxes 6-7 and Carton 1 RESTRICTED until January 1, 2000.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Louis Mertins Papers, BANC MSS 84/151 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Related Collections
Robert Frost letters and telegrams ... to Louis Mertins, 1932-1960, BANC MSS 73/56 z
Louis Mertins drafts, printed copies of poems, etc., [ca. 1938-1943], BANC MSS C-H 1
Mertins Collection of Robert Frost [book collection, various call numbers]

Materials Cataloged Separately
Photographs have been transferred to Pictorial Collections of The Bancroft Library.

Acquisition Information
The Louis Mertins Papers were given to The Bancroft Library by Esther Mertins in June 1984.

Biography
Louis Mertins was a man of great diversity. He attended the William Jewell College from 1905 to 1910, while simultaneously attending the Kansas City Seminary in 1906 and 1907. From 1911 to 1916, Mertins served as a Baptist minister in Missouri, and in the years following, was a poet, lecturer on Western literature, columnist, and radio commentator.

In 1939, Mertins and his wife, Esther Pedersen Erickson, began compiling a critical bibliography of the work of Robert Frost, a personal friend of the Mertins, a project which would occupy much of the rest of their lives. Published in 1947 as The Intervals of Robert Frost, the bibliography was highly praised for its personable, intimate approach to Frost and his work. Following publication of the bibliography, Mertins began gathering material for a biography on Frost, Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking, which was published in 1965. The title refers to the numerous walks Frost and Mertins enjoyed during Frost's visits to the Mertins' home in Redlands, California. The book was much more than the usual biography with its reminiscences on a friendship that lasted many years.

The Mertins were also avid collectors of "Frostana," including letters, books, and other memorabilia of Robert Frost. Much of their collection has been donated to the University of California, Berkeley.

Scope and Content
The Louis Mertins Papers are almost exclusively devoted to Mertins' study of Robert Frost and his life. The collection includes correspondence, chiefly letters from friends and associates concerning Robert Frost and the writing of Mertins' books on Frost, as well as his original manuscripts, including several edited and revised copies and galleys. Other than a scrapbook containing reviews of Mertins' book, Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking, and newspaper articles relating to its publication, the remainder of the collection consists of materials gathered in the course of Mertin's research, and his extensive clipping files on Frost.

Of particular note in Mertins' files on Frost is a copy of Frost's will and a genealogy of his family, along with newspaper articles recounting many important events in Frost's life. Among these are his 1947 trip to the University of California, Berkeley where he was awarded an honorary degree, his 1958 visit to the campus which coincided with the arrival of much of Mertins' Frost material, and President John F. Kennedy's inauguration, at which Frost recited his poem, "The Gift Outright". Also of interest are the many references to the work of Lawrance Thompson, Frost's "official" biographer, in the letters of Daniel Smythe.

Boxes 1-2


Scope and Content Note
Contains letters and telegrams of Louis and Esther Mertins concerning Robert Frost and the writing and publication of Mertins' books on Frost, including some correspondence with Frost and members of his family.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Correspondent</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Scope and Content Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Atherton, Gertrude Franklin Horn, 1857-1948</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bernheimer, Earle J.</td>
<td>1942-47</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>1 letter by L.M.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Carter, Harvey Lewis, 1904-1966-77</td>
<td>1942-47</td>
<td>4 letters by L.M.; includes copy of R.F.'s will</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>The Christian Science Monitor</em> 1950</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Christman, Henry</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>1 letter by L.M.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cranston, Earl 1895-1970</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Culver City, [Calif.], Unified School District</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>With enclosures relating to dedication of the Robert Lee Frost Auditorium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>The Current Company</em> 1972</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>1 letter by L.M.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fisher, Dorothy Canfield</td>
<td>1879-1958</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Frost, Lillian</td>
<td>1949-76</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>Includes 13 Christmas cards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Frost, Robert, 1874-1963</td>
<td>1935-60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1935-60</td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>3 letters by R.F., with photograph of a poem in Frost's writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Frost, William P. [and family]</td>
<td>1947-68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1947-68</td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>Cards, many with poems by R.F.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

folder 13  
Gahagan, George William 1964-70  
Physical Description: 15  
Scope and Content Note  
2 letters by E.M.; with enclosures from California Friends of Robert Frost

folder 14  
Gebo, Dora R. 1963-76  
Physical Description: 7

folder 15  
Gethyn-Jones, Eric, 1909-1965-66  
Physical Description: 6  
Scope and Content Note  
1 letter by L. M.

folder 16  
Gould, Jean, 1909-1966-84  
Physical Description: 22  
Scope and Content Note  
1 letter by L.M.

folder 17  
Grade, Arnold E. 1966-68  
Physical Description: 8  
Scope and Content Note  
3 letters by L. M.

folder 18  
Green, Charles R. 1947-66  
Physical Description: 37  
Scope and Content Note  
2 letters by L. M.; with enclosures relating to the dedication of the Robert Frost Room in the Jones Library

folder 19  
Haines, John Meade, 1924-1949-65  
Physical Description: 8  
Scope and Content Note  
Includes questionnaire on Frost

folder 20  
Henry Holt and Company 1951, 1957  
Physical Description: 2  
Scope and Content Note  
Christmas cards, containing poems by R. F.

folder 21  
Jeffers, Robinson 1947  
Physical Description: 4

folder 22  
Kerr, Clark, 1911-1958  
Physical Description: 2

folder 23  
Llewellyn, Richard 1947  
Physical Description: 1

folder 24  
Lottinville, Savoie, 1906-1958-74  
Physical Description: 63  
Scope and Content Note  
20 letters by L. and/or E. M.

folder 25  Parke-Bernet Galleries 1950-51
 Physical Description: 3
 Scope and Content Note
 With catalog of rare R. F. writings

folder 26  Perry, A. E. 1964-67
 Physical Description: 13
 Scope and Content Note
 6 letters by L. M.; for Univ. of Oklahoma Press

folder 27  Smith, Paul Jordan, 1885-1942-57
 Physical Description: 3

box  Box 2, folder 1-2  Smythe, Daniel 1963-75
 Physical Description: 93
 Scope and Content Note
 10 letters by L. and/or E. M.; includes transcripts of letters by Lesley Frost

folder 3  Sproul, Robert Gordon, 1891-1975 1649-58
 Physical Description: 9

folder 4  Stanhope, Barbara 1948-50
 Physical Description: 7

folder 5  Stegner, Wallace Earle, 1909-1947-58
 Physical Description: 3

folder 6  Stewart, George Rippey, 1895-1947
 Physical Description: 1

folder 7  Sutton, William Alfred, 1915-1970-77
 Physical Description: 10
 Scope and Content Note
 2 letters by E. M.; with enclosures relating to R. F

folder 8  Thompson, Lawrance Roger, 1906-1973 1947-58
 Physical Description: 14

folder 9  Vernon, Ivan 1964-65
 Physical Description: 30
 Scope and Content Note
 13 letters by L. and/or E. M.; for Univ. of Oklahoma Press

folder 10  Warren, Earl 1947
 Physical Description: 1
 Scope and Content Note
 To Robinson Jeffers, regarding a dinner party for R. F.

folder 11  Western College Association 1947
 Physical Description: 1
 Scope and Content Note
 With enclosure relating to R. F.

folder 12  Letters concerning publication and reviews of *The Intervals of Robert Frost* 1947-52
Physical Description: 27
Scope and Content Note
1 letter by L. M.

folder 13  Letters concerning Robert Frost's 1947 visit to California and birthday celebration for him at the University of California, Berkeley 1946-47
Physical Description: 19
Scope and Content Note
1 letter by L. M.; enclosures include copies of speeches given at the presentation

folder 14  Letters concerning Frost's visit to California in 1958, and presentation of Frost collection to the University of California, Berkeley 1957-58
Physical Description: 13

folder 15  Letters concerning Robert Frost's trip to California 1959-60
Physical Description: 12

folder 16  Requests for permission for use of material in Frost biography 1953, 1964-65
Physical Description: 18
Scope and Content Note
11 letters by L. M.

folder 17  Letters from reviewers 1965
Physical Description: 6
Scope and Content Note
1 letter by L. M.

folder 18-20  Miscellaneous letters to Louis Mertins 1941-73
Physical Description: 58
Scope and Content Note
2 letters by L. M.

Scope and Content Note
Contains original manuscripts, typescripts, carbons, galleys, and reviews of *The Intervals of Robert Frost*, and *Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking*, including *Those Dark Trees; The Life and Conversations of Robert Frost* (an early version). Also includes other miscellaneous writings by Mertins, including a talk, a poem, an article, an essay, and a review.

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The *Intervals of Robert Frost*, A Critical Biography

box Box 3, folder 1-9
Reviews 1947

Robert *Frost Life and Talks-Walking*

Those *Dark Trees; the Life and Conversations of Robert Frost* (early version)

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Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking

- Box Box 6, folder 1-9
  Carbon with annotations, typescript n.d.
  Access Information
  [RESTRICTED]

  **Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking**
  Access Information
  [PARTIALLY RESTRICTED]

- Box Ctn. 1, folder 1-22
  Original manuscript, edited copy, 1964 and edited, annotated, and revised carbons 1964
  Access Information
  [RESTRICTED]

- Box Box 7, folder 1-3
  Galley and page proofs 1964
  Access Information
  [RESTRICTED]

- Folder v. 1
  Scrapbook of reviews and articles relating to Robert Frost Life and Talks-Walking 1964-65

**Miscellaneous**

- Box Box 3, folder 11
  “Talks-Walking with Frost in California” n.d
  Scope and Content Note
  Typescript of talk given by Mertins

- Folder 12
  "Share Cropper In Memory of Elinor Frost” n.d
  Scope and Content Note
  Carbon of poem by Mertins

- Folder 13
  "Robert Frost and His Haystacks” n.d
  Scope and Content Note
  Typescript of article by Mertins

- Folder 14
  "Interpreting a Poet to Himself” n.d
  Scope and Content Note
  Typescript of letter to Frost

- Folder 15
  Review of Come In and Other Poems by Robert Frost n.d
  Scope and Content Note
  Carbon of review by Mertins

**Series 3: Research Files and Memorabilia, 1912-1968, n.d.**

- Box 4, folders 1-19; Oversize folder 1
  Contains miscellaneous materials relating to Robert Frost, including programs, invitations, brochures, advertisements, and other memorabilia, as well as autographs and a facsimile of a handwritten poem by Frost.

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**The Intervals of Robert Frost, A Critical Biography**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box/Box 4, folder</th>
<th>Source material for Frost biography 1912-65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, folder 1</td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes genealogy of Frost family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Folder 2         | Grocery list of Robert Frost 1932         |
| Folder 3         | Will of Louis Mertins, witnessed by Robert Frost 1941 |
| Folder 4         | Notes of Louis Mertins, Master of Ceremonies at Frost birthday dinner 1947 |
| Folder 5         | Program of 79th Annual Charter Banquet at 1947 University of California, Berkeley, and invitation to Frost birthday celebration 1947 |

| Folder 6         | "Mountain Interval Robert Frost" 1949     |
| Scope and Content Note | Paper by college student, Sharon R. Bruns |

| Oversize         | Amherst Massachusetts Guide Map 1953      |
| Oversize, folder 1 | Scope and Content Note                     |
|                  | Featuring the Frost home                  |

| Box 4, folder 7  | Guest list of Frost Dinner in Amherst, Mass. March 26, 1954 |

| Folder 8         | Transcript of "Meet the Press" with Frost as guest Dec. 25, 1955 |
| Folder 9         | Programs, announcements, other items from the Amherst Bicentennial 1959 |

| Folder 10        | Notes taken by Esther Mertins at Amherst Bicentennial 1959 |
| Folder 11        | John F. Kennedy's Official Inaugural Program 1961 |

| Folder 12        | Robert Frost Memorial Service 1963         |
| Scope and Content Note | Programs, addresses, invitations |

| Folder 13        | The Robert Frost Library brochure n.d.     |
| Folder 14        | Programs of plays 1968, n.d.               |

| Folder 15        | Advertisements, announcements for books on Frost n.d. |
| Folder 16        | Programs, sermons, etc. featuring work of Robert Frost n.d. |
| Folder 17        | Programs, tickets, etc. to lectures on or by Robert Frost n.d. |
| Folder 18        | Catalog of first and rare editions of Frost n.d. |
| Folder 19        | Envelopes and mailing wrappers with Frost's signature n.d. |
| Oversize         | "My Butterfly" by Robert Frost n.d         |
| Oversize, folder 1 | Scope and Content Note                     |
|                  | Facsimile of handwritten copy              |

| Box 4, folders 20-27; Box 5; Oversize folder 1 | Series 4: Clippings, 1932-1978, n.d. |
| Scope and Content Note | Consists of newspaper clippings and periodical articles about Robert Frost. |

| Box 4, folder 20 | Newspaper clippings on Robert Frost n.d |
| Folder 21-27    | Newspaper clippings on Robert Frost n.d |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>box</th>
<th>Box 5, folder 1-13</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>folder 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>othercontainertype</td>
<td>Oversize, folder 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Newspaper clippings on Robert Frost 1955-78**

**Periodical articles on Robert Frost 1954-74**

**Clippings and periodical article on Frost 1950-63**

**Scope and Content Note**

Some initialled or signed by Frost