Finding aid to the Mary Austin Collection MS.605

Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
234 Museum Drive
Los Angeles, CA, 90065-5030
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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 Flethcer 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:
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
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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**
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. Zimmern sent a transcript of the interview to Lummis with hopes for publication.
Article about Austin, 1916-1933

Language of Material: English
Scope and contents
Articles include, in order of date:
“Mary Austin Divorced in Spirit Clash” San Francisco Examiner, 1916 March 19.
“Mary Austin’s Autobiography...” by Wilbur Needham, Touring Topics 1933 January.
“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.
“Mary Austin is Guest in Pasadena” Pasadena Star News, 1933 October 24.
“The Lee Side O’ L.A.”, by Lee Shippey, Los Angeles Times, 1933 November 1. Article was part of regular newspaper series.

Folder 3
Articles about Austin, 1934

Folder 4
Articles about Austin, 1939-1954

Language of Material: English
Scope and contents
Articles include, in order of date:
“Mary Austin's Casa Querida” by Ina Sizer Cassidy, New Mexico Daily Examiner, 1939 June 12.
“California’s Stately Hall of Fame” by Rockwell D. Hunt, Los Angeles Times, 1941 January 19.
“Genius Mary Austin’s Beloved House” by Perry Worden, Pasadena Star News, 1940 June 15.
Clippings in scrapbook, unknown publications, undated.

Correspondence and ephemera, 1899-1933

Language of Material: English

Folder 5
Prospectus for limited edition book on Taos by Ansel Adams and Mary Austin, circa 1930

folders 6-14
Frederick Webb Hodge correspondence, 1899-1933

Folder 15
Charles Fletcher Lummis correspondence, 1901-1908, 1924

Folder 16
Letter to Eve Lummis from Austin, 1908 September 7
Scope and contents
Written during Austin's first visit to Italy and Paris.

Folder 17
Partial letter from Austin to unknown person, undated

Published writings by Austin, 1899-1934

Folder 18
Fiction, 1902-1903, 1920
Scope and contents
Works include, in order of title:
Folder 19  
**Non-fiction, articles, 1914, 1931**

Scope and contents
Works include, in order of title:

"Points of View: New Mexican Spanish", *Saturday Review*, 1931 June 27.


Folder 20  
**Non-fiction, book reviews by Austin, 1931-1934**

Scope and contents
Works include, in order of title:


"Woman Sees Steel", *El Palacio*, volume 10, number 9, 1921 April 1.

"Fighting Men of the West", *Saturday Review*, 1932 June 25.

Folder 21  
**Non-fiction, editorials, 1911, 1929**

Folder 22  
**Non-fiction, Native American arts, 1928-1934**

Scope and contents
Works include, in order of title:

“American Indian Dance Drama”, *Yale Review*, volume 19, number 4, June 30

“Indian Arts for Indians”, *Survey Graphic*, volume 8, number 4, 1928 July.

“Indian Poetry”, *Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts*, 1931.


Folder 23  
**Poetry, 1899-1936**

Scope and contents
Works include, in order of title:


“Litany for New Mexico”, before 1936.

“Little Light Moccasin”, *Southern Workman*, volume 29, number 4, 1900 April.


“The Rocky Mountain Sheep”, *St. Nicholas*, volume 27, number, 1900 September 11.

“When I am Dead” posthumous publication by estate, circa 1934.

Folder 24  
**Reviews of Austin’s work, 1931, 1934**

Scope and contents
Reviews include, in order of title:
