Virginia Hamilton Adair Collection SC2006/1

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, University Library, Special Collections
3801 West Temple Ave.
Pomona, CA, 91768
(909) 869-2087
Title: Virginia Hamilton Adair Collection
Identifier/Call Number: SC2006/1
Contributing Institution: California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, University Library, Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 25.0 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1920-2004

General Physical Description note: The collection arrived in 25 boxes of assorted sizes, in no particular order, and they have been arranged into the following series: Poetry, Prose Writings, Artworks, Personal Papers, Publications, Recordings, Realia.

Collection Description: Virginia Hamilton Adair (1913-2004) was a poet and an educator. Her collection contains poems, book manuscripts, subject files, correspondence, personal papers, original drawings /illustrations, autobiographical accounts, notes, poem lists, and printed matter pertaining to her poetry and her life.

Biographical Note
Mary Virginia Hamilton was born in the Bronx on February 28, 1913 and grew up in Montclair, New Jersey. As a child she was surrounded by poetry. Her father, Robert Browning Hamilton, was a serious amateur poet who would read to her in her crib, from classics such as Pope's translation of Homer's Iliad; her mother, Katharine Temple Hopson, focused on Mother Goose rhymes. Mary Virginia began writing her own poems when she was six. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 1933 at the age of 20, already having twice won the distinguished Glascock Prize for poetry. A year later, she earned a master's degree at Radcliffe, after which she taught for one year at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She had many poems published before and after World War II. In 1936 she married Douglass Graybill Adair II, who was to become a respected American historian. The Adairs had three children: Robert "Robin" Hamilton, Douglass "D3" Graybill III, and Katharine "Kappa" Sidney. Throughout the years, she persisted in writing almost daily, mostly to please herself, without the dictates of publishers. Nevertheless, it is notable that she published more poetry before her celebrity and her three books than is usually recognized.

Access statement
Some materials have restrictions. Inquire with the Head of Special Collections for restrictions prior to research.

Publication Rights
Rights to this collection are held by California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, University Library, Special Collections.

Related Collections
John Gill Modern Poetry Collection located at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, University Library, Special Collections contains almost two thousand volumes of world poetry, many from small presses, with particular strength in twentieth-century American poets.

Scope and Contents Note
The Virginia Hamilton Adair Papers, 1920 - 2004, comprise much material: thousands of single poems (from the earliest to the latest) and poem collections and other works never published, which the poet produced over her lifetime from school days to two years before the end of her life; many poem collections by Virginia Adair into subject folders or binders; daily typed “journal” pages of notes, requests, poem drafts from 1994 to 2002; lists for public readings and lists of poems submitted to publications from the 1930s to the 1990s; publications containing her poems and/or interviews, reviews or biographical accounts and obituaries; family members’ poems, prose writings and other items; photographs; audio cassette recordings; video tapes of public media interviews and private readings; realia such as Adair's manual Olympia typewriter; her original drawings and artwork.

The Poetry Series comprises Adair’s personal and professional files of literary manuscripts: poetry fragments, single poems, poetry collections in subject folders and themed notebooks; poetry notes and lists.

The Prose Writings Series is composed of Adair’s own prose works such as plays, short stories, travel journals and sketches, and other prose works, essays, articles; typescripts with revisions; autobiographical accounts and musings, etc. Of special interest is a notebook ["Blindsight"] prepared for submission along with a letter to Oliver Sacks containing prose descriptions of recurring "visions" or "apparitions" during waking hours. These visions included human figures, buildings, objects, etc. that were like a movie on a screen inside her eyes.

The Artworks Series contains single drawings made at various ages; a calendar for the Christmas season of 1920-21 she hand-wrote and illustrated when she was seven; a set of handmade paper dolls with fashionable 1920s outfits she designed as a pre-teen; a set of hand-colored block prints created at Williamsburg with colonial admonitions to children for church and table etiquette; a hand-drawn, hand-crafted flip-book for children: "A Child’s Do-It-Yourself- Bestiary" that is undated,
but possibly from the 1950s.

The Personal Papers Series contains VHA's typed daily notes; business correspondence, permissions, contracts, translations, etc.; fan letters; newspaper clippings about VHA; lists of poems for public readings; honors, certificates; travel journals including drawings of scenes; photographs; log book pages and calendars kept by helpers of VHA (c.1996 - 2004); photographs of VHA and family and friends; miscellaneous family documents; poems and prose works of friends and family members.

The Publications Series contains journals/magazines that include VHA poems and/or interviews of VHA; musical compositions of VHA's poems by Gwyneth Walker and Terry Schlecter.

The Recordings Series contains: cassette recordings of VHA poems read by her editorial assistants to help her edit her poems for published books; video tapes of interviews with VHA, and poetry readings by her; miscellaneous audio tapes of music and subjects she enjoyed.

The Realia Series includes VHA's typewriter, large-print New Testament, etc.

**System of Arrangement**

The collection consists of 25 boxes and is arranged into 7 series: Poetry, Prose Writings, Artworks, Personal Papers, Publications, Recordings, Realia.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

American poetry -- 20th century

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1-8</th>
<th><strong>Poetry Series 1 1920-2004</strong></th>
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<td>Adair, Virginia, 1913-2004 -- Correspondence</td>
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<td>Hamilton Adair, Virginia, 1913-2004 -- Correspondence</td>
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<td>Mary Virginia, Hamilton -- Correspondence</td>
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<th>Box 9</th>
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<td>Physical Description: 1.0 Box</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: Box 9: Adair's prose works such as plays, short stories, and essays; non-fiction autobiographies, book reviews, etc. Of special interest is a notebook [&quot;Blindsight&quot;] prepared for submission along with a letter to Oliver Sacks containing prose descriptions of recurring &quot;visions&quot; or &quot;apparitions&quot; during waking hours. These visions included human figures, buildings, objects, etc. that were like a movie on a screen inside her eyes. Often they would reappear after a hiatus, and she would welcome them as familiar totems.</td>
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Box 10  **Artworks** Series 3 1920-1921
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.0 Box

General Physical Description note: Box 10: drawings, a calendar handwritten and illustrated by Virginia Hamilton Adair, handmade paper dolls in 1920s fashion, two hand-colored block prints created at Williamsburg as small posters with colonial-era admonitions to children for church and table etiquette; a handmade flip-book for children, featuring drawings of animals & people, with poems, cut into four strips to mix-and-match.

Box 11-16  **Personal Papers** Series 4 1920-2004
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 6.0 boxes

General Physical Description note: Box 11: VHA's typed daily notes (1994 - 2002) including instructions to helpers, random thoughts, ideas for poems and actual poems; autobiographical details, and musings Box 12: Biographical material such as helpers' logbook pages; calendars showing events, appointments, topics of discussion, etc. re VHA 1996 - 2004; lists of addresses; obituary notes, etc. Box 13: Personal correspondence to and from friends and family; fan letters, etc. arranged alphabetically by name Box 14: Business correspondence, permissions, contracts, translations, etc.; lists of poems for public readings etc. Box 15: Family miscellany, honors, certificates; books, travel journals and sketches; photographs Box 16: VHA's saved poems and collections of her "fortnightly poetry group" friends and others, such as family members; prose writings of friends, such as Elena DeLaurentis' Americane in Collegio (American Girls in College) translated from the Italian original, with chapters devoted to particular classmates, among them "Ariel" who represented Virginia Hamilton; publications and clippings of/about people and subjects that interested VHA, such as Billy Collins, Harvey Shapiro, Poetry and Writing, Religion, etc.

Box 17-22  **Publications** Series 5 1930-2000
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 6.0 boxes

General Physical Description note: This series is of publications that contain Adair's poems, which she collected from her college days, up till the year of her death; newspaper clippings about VHA, including obituaries; New York Times and NYT Review of Books with her Millennium poem, Harvey Shapiro book review and essay on Aging. Box 17: Publications containing early poetry 1930s - 1971 Box 18: Publications containing poetry 1972 - 1981 Box 19: Publications containing later poetry, book reviews, interviews (1990s - 2000s) Box 20: Ants on the Melon (1st book; some pre-publication material and publisher's "dead matter") Box 21: Beliefs & Blasphemies (2nd book; stages and publisher's "dead matter") Box 22: Living on Fire (3rd book; stages and publisher's "dead matter")

Box 23  **Recordings** Series 6
Physical Description: 1.0 Box

General Physical Description note: This series consists of cassette recordings and videos of VHA interviews and poetry readings. Of special interest are some examples from The Writer's Almanac program on PBS, which aired some of her poems. Box 23: Video and audio recordings of Adair's books, musical settings, interviews, etc. Audio cassette recordings of Adair's favorite music, poetry readings, etc.

Box 24, 24-A  **Realia** Series 7
Physical Description: 2.0 boxes

General Physical Description note: Box 24 (+24-a) Collected here are Adair's Olympia typewriter, her large-print New Testament; a writing template for the vision-impaired; other objects.