
Roger Burford-Mason Collection on Roy Vernon Sowers MS.1997.006

Processed by Jamie Henricks.

William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

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Contributing Institution: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

Title: Roy Vernon Sowers Collection,

Creator: Burford-Mason, Roger

Identifier/Call Number: MS.1997.006

Physical Description: 0.21 Linear Feet1 box

Date (inclusive): 1940-1996

Abstract: This collection is the research material collected by Roger Burford-Mason for his book, Roy Vernon Sowers : a life in rare books (1997).

Clark Library

Language of Material: English .

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Roger Burford-Mason Collection on Roy Vernon Sowers, MS.1997.006, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Acquisition Information

Purchase, 1997.

Biography

Roy Vernon Sowers was born in Brantford, Ontario on August 7th, 1897. He spent most of his youth in the nearby town of London, Ontario, where he had a variety of odd jobs. Sowers attended the University of Toronto and graduated in 1921 before attending St. John's College at Oxford. Limited finances caused him to leave Oxford and travel to Germany before returning to Ontario.

He later moved to Pasadena, California and worked for Alice Millard, an antiquarian book dealer who lived in one of the area's Frank Lloyd Wright homes. Sowers eventually moved on to work at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. He later moved to San Francisco after marrying, but divorced his first wife and built a home in the mountains near Santa Cruz, California. Sowers was familiar with the owners of the Grabhorn Press and set up one of the first exhibitions about their press. He operated a rare book and fine print business out of his personal library until the late 1960s; he died in 1970.

Scope and Content

This collection is the research material collected by Roger Burford-Mason for his book Roy Vernon Sowers : a life in rare books (Toronto : Subway Books, 1997). It contains biographical material and requests for information about Sowers by Burford-Mason. The correspondence includes letters and interviews of individuals who knew Sowers, including his daughter and son.

The collection is arranged in thematic order.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Antiquarian booksellers -- California -- 20th century

Antiquarian booksellers -- Canada -- 20th century

Sowers, Roy Vernon, 1897-

box 1, folder 1

Book Club of California -- Quarterly Newsletter 11997 1953, 1964, 1969

box 1, folder 2

Photocopies of Prospectuses 11996

Scope and Contents note

Includes covers of catalogs, a short biography of Sowers, and invitations to various events held by Sowers.

box 1, folder 3

Typed Memoir of Roy Vernon Sowers 11995 early 1940s

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- box 1, folder 4
box 1, folder 5
- Photocopy of "An Excerpt from the Book Catalogues of Roy Vernon Sowers" 11994 1980
Correspondence 11993 1996**
Scope and Contents note
Includes a letter and memoir by Sowers' daughter, Lucia Frances Bridge Sowers Hyde, and other correspondence sent to Burford-Mason including a typed interview of Anthony Sowers (a son of Sowers).
- box 1, folder 6
- Biographical material about Sowers 11992**
Scope and Contents note
Includes photocopies of material from multiple sources.
- box 1, folder 7
- Correspondence 11991 1996**
General note
Includes letters asking about Sowers' mentors and place of death.
- box 1, folder 8
box 1, folder 9
- Copy of Sowers collection finding aid from Stanford University 11990 ca. 1996
Letter and two pamphlets 11989 1996**
Scope and Contents note
Includes a letter from Glen Dawson to Bruce Whiteman about Sowers. Also includes a brochure from the Huntington Library and a publications list from Dawson's Book Shop from 1905 to 1972.
- box 1, folder 10
box 1, folder 11
- Sowers List 11988 1972**
OCLC Printouts 11987
Scope and Contents note
Includes a list of books about the Huntington Library and the Pasadena area.
- box 1, folder 12
- Correspondence 11986 1996**
Scope and Contents note
Includes letters to and from Burford-Mason inquiring about holdings at various libraries for books and information about Sowers, his wife, and other people related to Sowers.
- box 1, folder 13
- Correspondence and photocopies of catalogs 11985 ca. 1996**
Scope and Contents note
Includes photocopies of catalogs of Sowers' books, and correspondence from Burford-Mason to and from individuals inquiring for information about Sowers.