Tom Sturak collection on Horace McCoy, 1918-1976

Finding aid prepared by Lori Dedeyan; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.
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Finding aid last modified on 2 May 2016.
**Title:** Tom Sturak collection on Horace McCoy

**Collection number:** 1995

**Contributing Institution:** UCLA Library Special Collections

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 5.8 linear ft. (11 document boxes, 1 flat box, and 1 record carton)

**Date (inclusive):** 1918-1976

**Abstract:** Tom Sturak was an English Department doctoral candidate and, later, professor at UCLA, whose dissertation on the life and work of 'hardboiled' fiction author Horace McCoy was published in 1966. This collection encompasses the materials collected by Sturak for his research, as well as his correspondence, drafts, and a completed copy of his dissertation. Collected materials include McCoy’s manuscripts, published articles, screenplays, personal and professional correspondence, and personal records and ephemera. They focus primarily on Horace McCoy’s work as a screenwriter and novelist while living in Los Angeles.

**Language of Materials:** Materials are in English. Some books are in French, Italian, Portuguese, Norwegian, Danish, and Bosnian.

**Physical Location:** Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

**Creator:** Sturak, John Thomas, 1931-

**Restrictions on Access**

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

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**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Tom Sturak Collection on Horace McCoy (Collection 1995). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

**UCLA Catalog Record ID**

UCLA Catalog Record ID: 7356575

**Provenance/Source of Acquisition**


**Processing Information**

Processed by Lori Dedeyan in 2014 in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT) with assistance from Jillian Cuellar.

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**Biography/History**

HORACE MCCOY

Horace McCoy was a writer of ‘hardboiled’ fiction, best known for his 1935 novel *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* McCoy was born in Tennessee on April 14, 1897 and later moved with his family to Dallas, where, after his service in the Air Force during WWI, he began his professional writing career. He was the sports editor for the *Dallas Journal* and for a time worked as editor on his own publication, *The Dallasite*. He also performed as an amateur actor in the Dallas Little Theater. Towards the end of this period, he began publishing stories in the famous ‘pulp’ magazine *The Black Mask*, which featured other ‘hardboiled’ writers such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. In 1931, he followed Little Theater director Oliver Hinsdell to Los Angeles, and began the work for which he is best known. Over the next two decades, he developed and wrote screenplays for various studios. His novel *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* was published in 1935 and was followed by *No Pockets in a Shroud* and *I Should Have Stayed Home*, in 1938. McCoy continued to work primarily as a screenwriter and did not publish another novel until 1948’s *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye*. As an author, he enjoyed much wider success abroad, particularly in France, where his works found critical acclaim. His final novel, *Scalpel*, was published in 1952. He died of a heart attack in his home in Beverly Hills on December 15, 1955. During that year, he had also submitted fifty pages of a new novel, which was developed into *Corruption City* and published posthumously in 1959. *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* was adapted into a 1969 film featuring Jane Fonda.
TOM STURAK (John Thomas Sturak)

Tom Sturak (b. June 29, 1931) was a track and field runner, sports journalist and agent, and literature professor. Sturak began his career as a runner at Point Loma High School and continued at San Diego State University, where he edited the college newspaper and graduated with a degree in Journalism. After two years in the Navy during the Korean War, Sturak pursued his postgraduate degree in English at UCLA. His dissertation, entitled *The Life and Writings of Horace McCoy, 1897-1955*, was submitted and approved in 1966. He was considered an authority on Horace McCoy and did on-set consulting for the 1969 film adaptation of McCoy’s novel *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* Sturak worked as chief editor of the computer sciences department at the Rand Corporation until 1970 and taught technical writing and literature at Santa Monica College, California State University, Los Angeles, and UCLA. In 1977, Sturak began working for Nike, where he served as the Director of Running Promotions from 1980-1983. After this, Sturak worked with athletes through Reebok and as an independent sports agent until retirement. Sturak died of Alzheimer’s disease in April 29, 2011, at the age of 79.

Scope and Content

Materials collected and generated by UCLA English Department PhD candidate Tom Sturak for his 1966 dissertation on the life and work of fiction writer Horace McCoy. The collection includes notes, correspondence, and research that informed his dissertation work, as well as drafts and a final version of the dissertation. There are also primary materials belonging to Horace McCoy, such as personal and business correspondence, personal ephemera, official records, scrap books, photographs, and press clippings.

Organization and Arrangement

This collection has been arranged in the following series and subseries:

- **Series 1: Horace McCoy Materials, 1918-1976**
  - Subseries 1.1: Drafts and Writings, 1930s-1955
  - Subseries 1.2: Professional Career, 1920s-1976
  - Subseries 1.3: Personal Materials, 1918-1955
- **Series 2: Tom Sturak Materials, 1959-1971**
  - Subseries 2.1: Drafts and Writings, 1959-1966
  - Subseries 2.2: Professional Career, 1959-1971

Related Material

*Horace McCoy Papers (Collection 794)*. UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Sturak’s dissertation, *The Life and Writings of Horace McCoy, 1897-1955*, is available at the Young Research Library. Call Number: LD791.9.E5 S935

Subjects and Indexing Terms

- Sturak, John Thomas, 1931---Archives.
- McCoy, Horace, 1897-1955--Archives.
- University of California, Los Angeles. Department of English--Faculty--Archives.
- Authors, American--20th century--Archives.

manuscripts for publication.


Scope and Content

Includes all materials either generated by or pertaining directly to Horace McCoy, such as manuscripts, screenplays, personal and professional correspondence, reviews and newspaper clippings, and personal ephemera. These materials were compiled by Tom Sturak for the purpose of researching his dissertation, and some bear his annotations. Transcripts of various forms of McCoy’s personal and professional correspondence, made by Tom Sturak, are also included.
Subseries 1.1: Drafts and Writings. 1927-1955.

Scope and Content
Includes McCoy's manuscripts and some photocopies for novels and short stories, such as *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, "Murder by the Master", and an untitled manuscript. The bulk of McCoy's writings take the form of screenplays and film treatments generated through various agencies for various studios, covering a span of roughly three decades, from the late 1920s to the mid-1950s. Includes complete copies of two short stories from 1927 and an article in Esquire from 1948. Also includes various editions of McCoy's novels and collected short stories.

Books in this file are cataloged individually and can be searched through the UCLA Library Catalog.

Organization and Arrangement
McCoy's scripts and treatments are arranged alphabetically by title. Printed copies of McCoy's magazine articles and photocopies and manuscripts of longer fiction follow and are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1
Scripts: *Be Still, My Heart* (Film Treatment). 1940s.
Box 1, Folder 2
Scripts: *Bonanza* (Film Treatment). 1940s.
Box 1, Folder 3
Scripts: *Flight to the End of the World* (Film Treatment). 1940s.
Box 1, Folder 4
Box 1, Folder 5
Scripts: *Gold!*. 1940s-1955.
Box 1, Folder 6
Scripts: *The Great Louisiana Lottery* (Film Treatment). 1955 December 11.
Box 1, Folder 7
Box 1, Folder 8
Box 1, Folder 9
Box 1, Folder 10
Scripts: *In Old Monterrey*. 1944 May 29.
Box 2, Folder 1
Scripts: *Llano Estacado* (Film Treatment). 1950s.
Box 2, Folder 2
Box 2, Folder 3
Box 2, Folder 4
Scripts: *Marry the Man* (Film Treatment). 1930s-1940s.
Box 2, Folder 5-6
Box 2, Folder 7
Box 2, Folder 8
Box 3, Folder 1
Box 3, Folder 2-3
Box 3, Folder 4
Scripts: *Texas Lady* (Film Treatment). 1955.
Box 3, Folder 5
Box 3, Folder 6
Scripts: *The Unexplained (Case History 1)*. 1930s-1955.
Box 3, Folder 7
Scripts: *The Unexplained (Case History 2)*. 1930s-1955.
Box 3, Folder 8
Box 4, Folder 1
*Murder By the Master* Carbon Copy. 1931.
*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* Holographs and Photocopies. circa 1935.
Box 4, Folder 2
Untitled Manuscript Holographs and Photocopies. 1935.
Box 4, Folder 3
Short Stories and Articles. 1927-1949.
Box 4, Folder 4
Published Works. 1930s-1970s.

Scope and Content
Includes published editions of McCoy's novels and short story collections in English, French, Portuguese, Italian, Norwegian, Danish and Bosnian.

Also includes published works by other contemporary authors in English, French and Spanish.

Also includes anthologies in which Sturak's work appears, in English.


Scope and Content
Includes correspondence pertaining to McCoy’s studio work as a screenwriter, his literary career, and one letter pertaining to his work with the Dallas Little Theater. Also includes literary working documents as well as collected press clippings pertaining to his various novels and activities as a public figure. This subseries also contains photographic prints and negatives from his work as a sports editor with the *Dallas Journal*; his acting with the Dallas Little Theater; of the staff for his paper, *The Dallasite*; and various personal and promotional photographs taken after arriving in California. Also contains a personal scrapbook filled with clippings pertaining to the publication of *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* Correspondence includes letters transcribed by Tom Sturak.

Organization and Arrangement
McCoy’s professional correspondence is arranged chronologically. Press clippings are arranged by work.

- Box 4, Folder 5: Photographic Prints and Negatives. 1920s-1954.
- Box 4, Folder 6: Dallas Little Theater Materials. 1920s.
- Box 4, Folder 7: Literary Correspondence: Short Stories and Articles. 1935-1948.
- Box 4, Folder 8-9: Literary Correspondence. 1935-1953.
- Box 4, Folder 10: Studio Correspondence. 1936-1955.
- Box 4, Folder 11: Press Clippings for *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?.* 1930s.
- Box 4, Folder 12: Scrapbook with Press Clippings for *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?*. 1935.
- Box 4, Folder 13: Press Clippings for *No Pockets In a Shroud, Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye and I Should Have Stayed Home*. 1930s-1940s.
- Box 4, Folder 14: Press Clippings for *Scalpel*. 1950s.
- Box 10, Folder 1: Miscellaneous Clippings. 1930s-1950s.
- Box 9, Folder 4: *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* Script Adaptation. circa 1969.
- Box 9, Folder 5: *Murder- Go- Round* by Craig Rice. 1947.
- Box 9, Folder 6: Miscellaneous Scripts and Treatments by Other Writers. 1930s-1940s.


Scope and Content
This subseries contains materials that document McCoy’s personal life, including official documents, personal correspondence, and personal income and expense reports from 1953-1955. It also includes cards and correspondence pertaining to the birth of his daughter Amanda McCoy; miscellaneous household cards, expenses, notes, and receipts; and brochures and business cards kept by his wife, Helen, mostly relating to the newborn Amanda. There is also a small selection of Helen McCoy’s personal correspondence. Also includes a personal scrapbook with photographs, clippings, and notes, mostly from the time predating McCoy’s California period. Correspondence includes letters transcribed by Tom Sturak.

- Box 5, Folder 1: Personal Correspondence. 1918-1955.
- Box 5, Folder 2: Personal and Official Documents. 1930s-1955.
- Box 5, Folder 3: Horace and Helen McCoy Notes. 1930s.
- Box 5, Folder 4: Wedding to Helen Vinmont. 1933.
- Box 5, Folder 5: Cards and Correspondence for Birth of Amanda McCoy. 1939-1940.
- Box 5, Folder 6: Household Miscellaneous Cards. 1930s-1950s.
- Box 5, Folder 7: Household Brochures and Business Cards. 1930s-1950s.
- Box 5, Folder 8: Miscellaneous Notes and Receipts. 1930s-1950s.
- Box 5, Folder 9: Income and Expense Reports. 1953-1955.
- Box 5, Folder 10: Letters Addressed to Helen McCoy. 1930s.
- Box 10: Personal Scrapbook. 1920s-1931.

Scope and Content
Includes preliminary and final copies of Sturak’s dissertation, as well as his notes, lists, and professional correspondence.


Scope and Content
Contains both a complete final copy of Sturak’s dissertation on the life and writings of Horace McCoy (later annotated by the author), various drafts and edits of each chapter of the dissertation, and early essays on McCoy. Notes and checklists are also included.

Organization and Arrangement
Dissertation drafts are separated and arranged by chapter.

Box 6, Folder 1-6

Box 6, Folder 7-8

Box 7, Folder 1-2

Box 7, Folder 3-4

Box 7, Folder 5

Box 7, Folder 6

Box 7, Folder 7

Box 7, Folder 8

Box 7, Folder 9

Box 7, Folder 10

Box 8, Folder 1-2

Box 8, Folder 3

Box 8, Folder 4

Box 8, Folder 5

Box 8, Folder 6

Box 8, Folder 7

Box 8, Folder 8

Box 8, Folder 9

Box 8, Folder 10

Box 8, Folder 11


Scope and Content
Contains Sturak’s professional correspondence including his correspondence with Horace McCoy’s relatives and personal and professional acquaintances.

Organization and Arrangement
Materials pertaining to Sturak’s various publications are arranged chronologically. Sturak’s professional correspondence with publishers and with McCoy’s family and acquaintances are arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Box 8, Folder 12
Materials for the Avon Reissue of They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?. 1965-1966.

Box 8, Folder 13
Materials for Tough Guy Writers of the 30s. 1966.

Box 8, Folder 14

Box 9, Folder 1-2
Correspondence. 1959-1965.

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