Title: Ruth Comfort Mitchell collection
Identifier/Call Number: Mss 84
Contributing Institution: UC Santa Barbara Library, Department of Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.75 linear feet (2 document boxes and 1 oversize box)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1930-1949
Date (inclusive): circa 1879-1961
Physical Location: Del Sur and Del Sur Oversize
Language of Materials: The collection is in English.
Abstract: The collection contains correspondence, typescripts of articles and speeches, research files, photographs, and ephemera of American author Ruth Comfort Mitchell.
Access Restrictions
The collection is open for research.
Use Restrictions
Copyright has not been assigned to the Department of Special Collections, UCSB. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Head of Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Department of Special Collections as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which also must be obtained.
Preferred Citation
[identification of item], Ruth Comfort Mitchell collection. Mss 84. Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.
Acquisition Information
Gift from William Wreden, 1966.
Processing Information
Processed by Special Collections staff, 2003.
Biography
Ruth Comfort Mitchell, perhaps best known for her novel Of Human Kindness, which she wrote as a counterpoint to John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath, had a long and successful career as a writer, producing numerous novels, poems, short stories, and one-act plays.
Born on July 21, 1882 in San Francisco, Mitchell spent a good deal of time in Los Gatos, California, where her parents owned a summer home. It was here that her first poem was published in the local newspaper, when she was 14 years old. She pursued a literary career after her marriage to Sanborn Young in 1914, when the couple moved to New York City. Within two years, she had a play opening on Broadway and a published volume of poems, to be followed soon after by her first novel.
The Youngs soon returned to Los Gatos and began building their elaborate Chinese-styled home, which they dubbed Yung See San Fong, on a hilltop ranch. In 1925, Sanborn Young was elected to the California State Senate, where he would serve until 1938, becoming a close friend to President Herbert Hoover. Ruth proved to be a tireless campaigner and was active in a number of conservative organizations, even serving twice as a delegate to the Republican National Convention.
Sanborn Young returned to life as a cattle rancher after retiring from the Senate and, as such, he and his wife were upset by Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath, which appeared soon after, in 1939. Ruth Comfort Mitchell determined to tell their side of the story, the result being her novel Of Human Kindness, in which a gentleman farmer's family must overcome the tribulations brought by migrant workers, union organizers, liberal academics, and Communists.
Ruth Comfort Mitchell continued to write throughout the 1940s and was an active member of the Christian Science Church of Los Gatos. She died at home on February 17, 1954 of heart failure.
Scope and Content
The collection contains correspondence, typescripts of articles and speeches, research files, photographs, and ephemera of American author Ruth Comfort Mitchell. Correspondents include William C. Morrow, Robert W. Service, and Wendell Wilkie. Much of the collection relates to Mitchell's research and writing on the migrant question of the late 1930s, after the publication of The Grapes of Wrath, as seen from the perspective of the area farmers and ranchers.
The collection also contains a number of books, including some by Ruth Comfort Mitchell, which have been cataloged separately and which may be searched on Pegasus, the UCSB Libraries online catalog.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Mitchell, Ruth Comfort, 1882-1954

Correspondence Series 1.

Box-folder 1: 1 - 15
Box-folder 1: 1           Incoming
Anslinger, Harry J., 1961 (to Sanborn Young), n.d.
Box-folder 1: 2
Atlantic Monthly, 1943
Box-folder 1: 3
Council for Social Action, 1939
Box-folder 1: 4
D. Appleton - Century Co., 1923
Box-folder 1: 5
Garrette, Eve, 1943
Box-folder 1: 6
Morrow, William C., 1900-1915
Box-folder 1: 7
Rooney, Alicia L., 1939-1940
Box-folder 1: 8
Shepard, Arthur C., 1939-1940
Box-folder 1: 9
U.S. Department of Labor, 1939
Box-folder 1: 10
Wilkie, Wendell, 1943
Box-folder 1: 11 - 14
Box-folder 1: 11
A-F, circa 1921-1955
Box-folder 1: 12
G-L, circa 1939-1943
Box-folder 1: 13
M-R, circa 1940-1943
Box-folder 1: 14
S-Z, 1921-1940
Box-folder 1: 15
Unidentified, circa 1908-1940
Box-folder 1: 16
Outgoing, 1935, 1945

Legal Documents Series 2.

Box-folder 1: 17
Legal Documents (includes writing contracts), 1908-1913

Writings and Speeches Series 3.
Scope and Contents note
Includes typescripts, publishers' notices, and related material.

Box-folder 1: 18
Lists of Writings (stories, novels, plays), n.d.
Box-folder 1: 19
Analysis of The Grapes of Wrath, circa 1939
Box-folder 1: 20
Novel - Of Human Kindness, 1940
Box-folder 1: 20
Plays (includes Flags of California and Please Stand By), n.d.
Box-folder 1: 21 - 22
Poetry (typescripts and printed copies), circa 1916-1937, n.d.
Box-folder 1: 23
Reviews, 1939, n.d.
Box-folder 1: 24
Screenplay - "Perjury", 1922
Box-folder 1: 25
Short Stories, n.d.
Box-folder 1: 26
Speeches, n.d.
Box-folder 2: 1 - 3
Stories and Articles (printed copies), 1917-1941

Research Files Series 4.

Box-folder 2: 4 - 5
Migrant Question
Box-folder 2: 4
Clippings, circa 1939-1940
Box-folder 2: 5
Reports and Speeches, circa 1939-1940
Box-folder 2: 6
Mitchell Family (clipping, theatre programs), circa 1879-1880s

Ephemera Series 5.

Box-folder 2: 7
Guest Book, circa 1922-1947
Box-folder 2: 8
Miscellany (includes biographical sketch), n.d.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 9</td>
<td>Christmas greeting cards from Yung See San Fong and two clippings 1926-1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box-folder 2: 9</td>
<td>Photographs - Robert W. Service (2 items, including postcard with note from Service), circa 1910s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box-folder 3: 1</td>
<td>Scrapbook - mainly clippings relating to migrant issues, 1939-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box-folder 3: 2</td>
<td>Writings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box-folder 3: 2</td>
<td>Copies of stories for newspapers and magazines such as <em>Ladies' Home Journal</em>, 1928-1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box-folder 3: 2</td>
<td>List of Stories, n.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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