



MG 476 – Aiken, Conrad Potter fonds

MSS 30

Dates: 1930-1975 (inclusive); 1970-1975 (predominant)

Extent: 4 cms of textual material

Biography: Conrad Potter Aiken was born in Savannah, Georgia, on August 5, 1889, the eldest of four children of a prominent doctor from New York, William Aiken. The author's mother, Anna, was the daughter of a prominent Massachusetts Unitarian minister. When Aiken was eleven, Aiken's father killed his wife and then shot himself—without any warning. The young Aiken was sent to live with an aunt in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He later attended Harvard University, where he met the young T. S. Eliot, who became a lifelong friend and literary associate.

Aiken married Jessie McDonald in 1912. They had three children but divorced in the late 1920s, after they had settled in England.

In the 1920s Freud himself knew of Aiken's novels and wanted to psychoanalyze the poet. Aiken actually embarked for Europe on a visit to see Freud. Aboard ship, however, he met one of Freud's disciples, Erich Fromm, who cautioned against psychoanalysis unless Aiken seriously needed it. Aiken took Fromm's advice and thus never met Freud, the psychologist who influenced him more than any other modern thinker.

Aiken remained private about his psychological problems, which grew largely out of the trauma of his parents' death. Such problems emerge clearly in two of his most famous stories, "Strange Moonlight" and "Silent Snow, Secret Snow." Aiken's second wife, Clarissa M. Lorenz, vividly described in her book *Lorelei Two: My Life with Conrad Aiken* the psychological difficulties the author had in the 1930s, when the couple was living in England. She wrote of having once saved the poet from suicide.

In 1937 Aiken divorced Clarissa and married Mary Hoover, an accomplished painter. The couple lived in Rye until the beginning of World War II when they returned to America and settled in a house on Cape Cod, in the small town of West Brewster, Massachusetts.

In 1952 Aiken published a spiritual autobiography describing his destroyed childhood in Savannah, his journey to Europe, and his rediscovery of a new America during and after World War II. Dedicated to Mary and to a literary friend, Edward Burra, *Ushant* contains the most profound statement Aiken made about himself during a writing career of more than fifty years. The book contains brilliant portraits of the literary scene in Boston, London, and New York

during the first half of the century. [retrieved from <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/conrad-aiken-1889-1973/>, March 24, 2022]

Arrangement:

This fonds is arranged into two series

- I. **Manuscript material**
- II. **Researcher material**

Restrictions: There are no restrictions on access.

Edited for formatting by Amy Putnam, 2022.

I. Manuscript Material

1. [holograph letter, signed] Burton A. Robie, Grafton, Mass. To Conrad Aiken. 22nd July, 1970.
2. [typed postcard, signed] Conrad Aiken to Burton A. Robie, 3rd August, 1970. Information on publishing history of Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson, Senlin and Charnel Rose.
3. [typed postcard, signed] Conrad Aiken to Burton A. Robie, 29th August, 1971. Acknowledges his birthday greetings.
- 4.1. [typed letter, signed] Conrad Aiken to John Beaumont, Bromley, Kent, England. 15th April 1971.
- 4.2 Two addressed envelopes in which 4.1 [typed letter, signed] was mailed and received.
5. "A is for Alpha-Alpha is for A." [typescript, signed in ink] Conrad Aiken. 4pp.
6. "At a Concert of Music." [typescript, signed in ink] Conrad Aiken 1960. 1p.
7. "Moritura." [typescript, signed in ink] Conrad Aiken. 1p.
- 8.1. A Clear, Brave, Civilizing Force [:] Hubert Humphrey, n.p.: Committee of Arts and Letters for Humphrey, 1968. Campaign endorsement, [handbill; broadside; single-sheet octavo size] [copy 1].
- 8.2. A Clear, Brave, Civilizing Force, as above 8.1 [copy 2]
9. A.D. 1930 [cover title] n.p., 1930. [Christmas card, inscription in ink] Very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Conrad Aiken. [Card in envelope addressed in ink] Gordon Cairnie Esq., 6 Plympton Street, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.

II. Researcher Material

1. Whitaker, Thomas R. "Repeating is What I am Loving." *Parnassus; Poetry in Review*. Vol. 1.1: 59-68. Photocopy of original article reviewing and analyzing Aiken's *Ushant* (1953). Interlibrary Loan Request Form attached.

2. Costa, Richard Hauer. "Conrad Aiken (1889-1979): The Wages of Neglect." *Fiction International* Vol. 2.1 (1974): 76-80. Photocopy of article recounting the authors interviews with Aiken. Interlibrary Loan Request Form attached.
3. Handa, Carolyn. "'Impulse': Calculated Artistry in Conrad Aiken" *Studies in Short Fiction*, Vol. XIII (Fall, 1975): 375-80. Photocopy of original article which analyzes Aiken's short story "Impulse."
4. Cowley, Malcolm. "Conrad Aiken: From Savannah to Emerson." *Southern Review* (Louisiana State University) Vol. XI.2 (Apr. 1975): 245-59. Photocopy of article dealing with a wide variety of Aiken's works.
5. Waterman, Arthur. "The Evolution of Consciousness: Conrad Aiken's Novella and *Ushant*." *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction*. Vol. 5.2 (1973): 67-81. Photocopy of original article regarding Aiken's use of "consciousness" in his works.
6. Tabachnick, Stephen E. "The Great Circle Voyage of Conrad Aiken's Mr. Arcularis." *American Literature* Vol. 45.4 (Jan 1974): 590-607. Photocopy of original article reading Aiken's Mr. Arcularis using Thoreau's quotation "Our Voyaging is only great-circle sailing."
7. Sanders, Frederic K. "A Chronology of Awarenesses: A Poet's Vision" *Sewanee Review* Vol. 81.1 (Jan-Mar 1973): 172-84. Photocopy of original review of *Ushant* as literary autobiography.
8. Durrant, Geoffrey. "Aiken and Lowry." *Canadian Literature* Vol. 64 (Spring 1975): 24-40. Photocopy of original article suggesting links between Lowry's works and Aiken's.
9. Spivey, Ted. R. "Conrad Aiken: Resident of Savannah." *Southern Review* (Louisiana State University). Vol. 8.4 (Oct 1972): 792-804. Photocopy of article concerned with Aiken's connections to Savannah, Georgia.
10. Mellard, James M. "Symbolism and Demonism: The Lyrical Mode in Fiction." *Southern Humanities Review* Vol. 7: 37-52. Photocopy of article about Aiken's story "Silent Snow, Secret Snow." Interlibrary Loan Request Form attached.
11. Spivey, Ted R. "Archetypal Symbols in the Major Poetry of T.S. Eliot and Conrad Aiken." *International Journal of Symbolology*. Vol. 2.3 (1971): 16-26.

Photocopy of original article giving a Jungian reading of Aiken and Eliot.
Interlibrary Loan Request Form attached.

12. Brow, Calvin S. "The Achievement of Conrad Aiken." *Georgia Review* Vol. 27: 477-88. Photocopy of retrospective article evaluating many of Aiken's works.
Interlibrary Loan Request Form attached.

13. Lorenz, Clarissa. "Appelez ca accident." *Lettres Nouvelles*. May-June 1974: 49-66. Photocopy of original article in French. Interlibrary Loan Request Form attached.

14. Keils, R.M. "From Fiction to Film: Conrad Aiken's 'Silent Snow, Secret Snow.'" By G.R. Barrett and T.L. Erskine." *English Record* 23.2: 97-8. Photocopy of review of article on Aiken's short story "Silent Snow, Secret Snow."

15. MSS finding aid for "Conrad Aiken Collection" stamped with International Bookfinders Inc. logo. "For Univ. of Sask." written on front.

16. Stallman, R.W. "Annotated Checklist on Conrad Aiken: A Critical Study" pp114-121. Photocopy of annotated bibliography broken down by subjects "Books and Essays by Aiken," "Poetry Reviews by Aiken," and "Reviews of Aiken's Poetry," from unknown source.

17. "Tentative Bibliography of Critical Articles on Conrad Aiken the Aiken Collection of the University of Saskatchewan Library (1918-1973)." Compiled by Jerry R. Miner of the Collection Development Department, University of Saskatchewan Library, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1975. MSS on legal size paper, stapled three times on the left. Approximately 60 pages.

18. Harris, Catherine M. "Conrad Aiken: Critical Recognition, 1914-1976, Part I" *Bulletin of Bibliography* 34.1: 29-34. List of works by and about Aiken, designed to update Stallman's 1952 list.

19. Harris, Catharine M. "Conrad Aiken: Critical Recognition, 1914-1976, Part II" *Bulletin of Bibliography* 34.3: 137-14; 156. List of works by and about Aiken, designed to update Stallman's 1952 list.