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Guide to the Celia and Delia Austrian Papers 1921-1932



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCLAUSTRIAN
Title	Austrian, Celia and Delia. Papers
Date	1921-1932
Size	6 linear feet (12 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	Celia Austrian(1874 - c.1907). Delia Austrian (1874-1928), journalist. The papers in the Austrian Collection are primarily diaries of the trips to Europe prior to 1915, both by Delia and her mother, working and finished manuscript for novels, stories, plays, and articles, assignments, and college notes. There are a few family pictures, three notebooks by Celia, diplomas from the various schools Delia attended, and one painting by Delia.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Austrian, Celia and Delia. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

S. Solomon Austrian, a merchant from the copper country of Upper Michigan married Julia R. Mann, ten years his junior and not yet out of school, of Natchez, Mississippi, about 1866. Their first home was in Hancock, Michigan. In writing of her mother at a later time, Delia describes the young wife's inexperience as she entered this strange new country, and the difficulties she had learning homemaking from her pioneer neighbors, along with her fear of Indians. Here, their first child, Bertha, was born. After two years of residence, they moved to Cleveland. In 1870, a son, Alfred S., was born in Chicago, but there is no evidence to show they were residents of that city at the time. However, they were still living in Cleveland in 1874 when twin daughters, Celia and Delia, were born.

Delia writes, "I was born into a good, middle-class family and had a happy childhood in Cleveland, . . . but later moved to Chicago, where my girlhood was spent." There is little information about the early life of the twins or their family. A second son, Harvey E. was born

circa 1879. Their father Solomon died in the early 1890's. Alfred graduated from Harvard in 1891 and was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1893.

Delia graduated from the University of Chicago with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree in 1898. After her graduation, she made a career of newspaper writing: "I was a foreign correspondent at twenty, and for eight years I wrote special features for Sunday papers; also served as a science editor, club editor; wrote articles on love, beauty, household, and what not." Sometime during this period, she held the position of Sunday Woman Editor of the Chicago Herald Examiner and worked on the editorial staff of the Chicago Tribune.

"I went to Europe frequently. In Paris I divided my time between acting special correspondent and studying at the Sorbonne." One of the scrapbooks dating from this period is filled with correspondence and mementoes of her interviews with such famous names as Rodin, Morot, Chaminade, Massenet, and Narchesi. Much of her European experiences went into a series of articles for a newspaper syndicate in Baltimore of which the collection has many proof sheets. Also, sometime prior to 1902, Delia published a volume of poetry.

By the time she sailed for Europe in the spring of 1907, Celia had died. A long passage in her diary of that trip describes Delia's feelings about the death as she sailed with her mother. From the description which Delia gave of their early life, the two sisters were very unlike in both appearance and disposition, Delia being the plainer of the two, a fact which she emphasizes strongly in writing about family relationships.

When World War I broke out, Delia and her mother were in Germany and had to make their way back to America under difficulties. But once back, Delia wrote and published *Ways of War and Peace* (1914), a book of essays describing her experiences in war, and the possible influence the war would have on social life in Europe. She then turned to war work, "I was one of the many women who brushed aside all other interests to help my country. I spoke for food conservation, wrote publicity articles, sold Liberty Bonds and war stamps. I also took the four Red Cross courses and worked for the Red Cross in one of the most important canteens in the Navy Department."

Delia settled down in New York after the war to become a freelance writer. Although her chief interest was creative writing, especially short fiction and drama, she found a market only for her articles. In 1922, *Juliette Recamier*, a biography, was published with only average reviews. Throughout this period, she worked very hard trying to learn the technique of writing, taking correspondence and college courses. The papers of the collection contain a large number of her manuscripts, novels, stories, plays, translations, as well as numerous copy books and assignments and all of her notes from her classes at Columbia.

Illness began to plague Delia in 1922 -- an illness that was to last through the remaining six years of her life. As a therapeutic treatment prescribed by her physicians, she took a Master's degree at Columbia in 1923, and for three years lived in comparative physical and mental comfort. But in 1927, while she and her mother were in Germany, she underwent medical treatment, and then spent the summer at the University of Geneva as further therapy. Because the city was becoming crowded with the League of Nations, the mother and daughter were forced to go to Paris, and

immediately the illness took over again. They returned to the United States in the late fall, and Delia began various kinds of medical treatment. The illness was diagnosed as being primarily nervous in origin and she submitted to psychological therapy so that by the end of the following summer, she was well enough to travel through the South with her mother. On October 28, 1928, Delia died in New York.

Her elder brother and mother survived her by only a few years. Alfred had become a nationally known lawyer and a member of the Chicago firm, Mayer, Meyer, Austrian and Platt. He died in 1932. The following year, their mother died. The known descendents of the family are Alfred's daughter, Mrs. Margaret Fuller Bernheimer, and Bertha's two sons, Austin and Frank E. Selz.

Scope Note

The papers in the Austrian Collection are primarily diaries of the trips to Europe prior to 1915, both by Delia and her mother, working and finished manuscript for novels, stories, plays, and articles, assignments, and college notes. There are a few family pictures, three notebooks by Celia, diplomas from the various schools Delia attended, and one painting by Delia.

In 1929 the University received by bequest from Delia Austrian her library of "reference and research books in the fields of the drama and short story writing together with all her paintings, etchings, prints, catalogs, European and American postal card collections" and the right to choose certain furniture. The library consisted almost entirely of late 19th and 20th century publications dealing with the history of the drama, playwriting, theatrical biography and autobiography, stagecraft and related theatre arts, the text of modern English and American dramas, and certain other related materials. An initial endowment fund of \$5,000, later increased to \$10,000, was also given.

Included in the bequest were the personal papers of Celia and Delia Austrian, as outlined in the final paragraph of the preceding page. The manuscript for Juliette Recamier is among these papers, but not the manuscript for Ways of War and Peace.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Austrian, Delia
- Austrian, Celia

INVENTORY

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1902

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1910?

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1914

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1911

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1909

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1907

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1914

Box 1

European Diary, Mrs. Austrian, 1913-14

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, 1913-14

Box 1

European Diary, Delia, unknown

Box 1

Delia's European Mementoes, 1906-09 and autographs (Rodin, Chaminade, Jules Defebvre, etc.)

Box 2

Delia, Paris Diary, Poetry, French lessons

Box 2

Delia, Scrapbook, 1906

Box 2

Delia, Notebook, Phillips Short Story School

Box 2

Delia, Literature Notebooks (2)

Box 2

Delia, Cookbook

Box 2

Delia, Home Economics Notebook

Box 3

Delia, Notes for stories

Box 3

Delia, Cookbook

Box 3

Delia, Workbooks and lessons on the Art of Writing.

Box 3

Delia, Two autobiographical sketches

Box 3

Delia, Miscellaneous photographs from travels

Box 4

Delia, Workbooks and Lessons on the Art of Writing (5)

Box 4

Album of pressed leaves from Crystal Lake

Box 5

Diploma, Delia, named Officier d'Academie des Beaux Arts, France, 1928

Box 5

Diploma, Delia, certification of courses passed 1913-14 at Sorbonne

Box 5

Diploma, Delia, certification of completion of Cours de Vacances de francais moderne at

Box 5

Universite de Geneve, 1922

Box 5

Diploma, Delia, two books of music, printed.

Box 6

Short Stories and Articles in MSS. - Delia

Box 7

The Art of Writing lessons and notes - Delia

Box 8

Short stories and articles in MSS. - Delia

Box 8

Box 9

Box 8

Tear-sheets and proof-sheets of Delia's articles. Celia, Cookbook; School notebooks

Box 10

Two novels in MSS. - Delia

Box 11

Twenty-one plays in MSS. - Delia

Box 12

Twenty-one plays in MSS. - Delia

Box 12

Delia Austrian B.S., Chicago, 1897, Delia Austrian B.S., N.Y.U., 1918, vellum unframed.