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Descriptive Summary

Identifier: ICU.SPCL.CARTERJS

Title: Carter, John Stewart. Papers

Date: 1922-1976

Size: 5.5 linear feet (11 boxes)

Repository: Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract: John Stewart Carter (1911-1965) was an Oak Park-born professor and author. The collection contains correspondence, notes, manuscripts, typescripts, grant applications, and acclaim surrounding Carter’s award winning novel, Full Fathom Five, with the bulk of the material dating between 1960 and 1965. The papers primarily document Carter’s career as an author, however there are documents relating to his educational, personal and professorial life.

Information on Use

Access
The collection is open for research.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Carter, John Stewart. Papers, Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note

John Stewart Carter, (b. March 26, 1912, d. October, 1965), was born and lived most of his life in Oak Park, Illinois. Carter was an author who published two short stories, several poems and a successful novel titled Full Fathom Five. When Carter was a boy the Hemingway family were neighbors and his father was a colleague of Dr. Hemingway. Influenced by the life of Ernest Hemingway, both John Stewart Carter and his brother Albert Howard Carter aspired to become authors. John Stewart Carter was a poet, author and a professor of English at Chicago Teachers College.

Carter achieved his Bachelor’s Degree from the years 1927-1931 at Northwestern University, where he studied English and wrote several pieces for the student literary publication, A Miscellany. Carter also studied English at Harvard University from 1931-1932. He then came
back to Chicago to work on his Masters Degree and Ph.D., both in English, from 1935 to 1941 at the University of Chicago. Carter studied James Shirley and wrote a critical edition of his seventeenth century play, The Traitor.

While completing his studies at the University of Chicago, Carter worked at the Chicago YMCA College as a night reference librarian. In the last year of his research, he was hired at Chicago's Teachers College. He worked at the Teachers College as a professor of English until his death in 1965. During World War II, he served a five-year tour of duty in the Navy as a lieutenant and resumed his position at Chicago's Teachers College upon his return.

Carter was married to a woman named Marie and they had two daughters named Elizabeth and Ann. In 1956, Carter applied for and received a Ford Foundation Grant to research and write a critical work about Edgar Allen Poe. The family followed Carter to Iran in 1961 and 1962 where he was a Fulbright Professor of American Literature at the University of Tehran.

Carter wrote short many stories during his educational career and in the 1950's and 1960's he began to write poetry as well. Carter's only novel, Full Fathom Five, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1964. The novel is about an upper class Chicago family and is told through the perspective of the youngest member of the clan. It is comprised of three parts, the first two of which were published first as short stories in The Kenyon Review under the titles "The Keyhole Eye" and "To a Tenor Dying Old" in the autumn of 1962 and 1963 respectively.

Full Fathom Five was well received and critically acclaimed. Carter received a literary fellowship from Houghton Mifflin for the publication. Carter died only a year after the publication of his first novel in October 1965 after struggling with his health and an eye condition for much of his life. After Carter's death, a selection of his poetry was published titled, Poems: An Handful with Quietness.

Scope Note

The John Stewart Carter Papers are organized into four series: Series I: Personal; Series II: Correspondence; Series III: Writings; and Series IV: Literary Note Cards. The collection contains news clippings, correspondence, notes, manuscripts and typescripts of published and unpublished literary works, and copies of published works dating between 1922 and 1965, with the bulk of the material dating between 1960 and 1965. The papers primarily document Carter's writing career.

Series I, Personal, contains material related to Carter's education, including early writings done during Carter's time at Northwestern University all titled "College Assignments" and arranged alphabetically with each works given title. Biographical information, grant information and papers relating to his work life as a professor at Chicago's Teacher College and University of Tehran are also included.
Series II, Correspondence, contains incoming mail, arranged chronologically under each subseries. The series is broken into four subseries: Publisher Correspondence, Personal Correspondence, Miscellaneous Correspondence and Professional Correspondence. Subseries 1, Publisher Correspondence is arranged chronologically, with publishers of his major works (Kenyon Review and Atlantic Monthly) set aside from that chronology. Subseries 2, Personal Correspondence, contains chronologically ordered letters, with some of Carter’s more prolific correspondents including his brother Albert Howard Carter and Ray Johnson, an artist, kept at together at the end of the subseries. There is also one folder containing outgoing mail sent by Carter to various recipients, most of whom are family. Subseries 3, Miscellaneous Correspondence, contains mail sent after Carter’s death, correspondence with translators and archival repository requests for Carter’s papers. Subseries 4, Professional Correspondence, contains mail relating to his tenure at Chicago Teachers College and drafts of poetry sent to other authors and poets for comment.

Series III, Writings, consists of four subseries; the first is dedicated to Carter’s poetry which he largely wrote after 1950. Carter had an organizational system in which the poems were arranged alphabetically with multiple drafts and many also included submission lists. This order and arrangement has been maintained in the subseries. The second subseries contains: typescripts, manuscripts, publication information, original artwork, fan letters and acclaim surrounding the publication of Full Fathom Five. The third subseries contains: typescripts, manuscripts, publication information and original artwork related to the publication of the short stories "The Keyhole Eye" and "To a Tenor Dying Old." The fourth subseries contains unpublished short stories as well as notes, manuscripts and typescripts of Carter’s work on Edgar Allen Poe and James Shirley.

Series IV contains literary note cards of versification and personal notes.

**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**

- Carter, John Stewart, 1911-1965
- Carter, Albert Howard, 1913-1970
- Johnson, Ray, 1927-1995

**INVENTORY**

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Box 2
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