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Descriptive Summary

Identifier        ICU.SPCL.HAMILTONAS
Title            Hamilton, Alfred Starr. Papers
Date             1963-2015
Size             1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository       Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center
                 University of Chicago Library
                 1100 East 57th Street
                 Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract         Alfred Starr Hamilton (1914-2005) poet. The collection contains
biographical information, personal belongings, correspondence, drafted prose
inspired by Hamilton written by family members, book reviews, newspaper
clippings with interviews and biographies, poetry journals and magazines,
books, and Hamilton’s unpublished poetry manuscripts.

Information on Use

Access
The collection is open for research.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: When quoting material
from this collection, the preferred citation is: Hamilton, Alfred Starr. Papers, [Box #, Folder #],
Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note
Alfred Starr Hamilton (June 14, 1914- March 2005) was born to Alfred Sr. and Virginia in
Montclair, New Jersey, where he would live until his death. He had two elder siblings. He did
not finish high school but would go on to serve in the armed forces for 1 year during World War
II. He self-reported himself as AWOL and honorably discharged from the military, though he
would sign his letters as “dishonorably discharged,” something he considered a point of pride in
interviews and recollections. He did not become a poet until he was almost 50, first published
by Cornell in 1960 through one of their poetry magazines. Despite garnering critical praise from
contemporaries and critics, he did not achieve widespread fame and was famous for living on
about $80 a month during his career. Despite coming from an affluent family, Hamilton seemed
to revel in the life of the artist, living a very meager lifestyle. During his lifetime, Hamilton
appeared to be close to his family, especially his niece Jane Huber. He lived and took care of his
sister Katharine during the 1960s and ‘70s, until her hospitalization, and many of his letters to Judith Cruickshank during this time reflect concern for Katharine’s failing health.

Hamilton died in a nursing home in Montclair, New Jersey, and was buried in a Veterans cemetery with full military honors.

**Scope Note**

The Alfred Starr Hamilton Papers are organized into three series: Series I: Personal, Series II: Interviews, and Series III: Writings. The collection contains correspondence, unpublished manuscripts, journals, notes, published articles, books, and booklets, clippings, publications, replica photographs, audio cassettes, and biographical data. Materials date between 1963 and 2015, with the bulk of the material dating between 1967 and 1988. The papers primarily document Hamilton’s poetry, and later efforts by his niece Jane Huber to have a biography of Hamilton published.

Series I, Personal, contains biographical information and photographs; personal copies of Dynamics; clippings about Hamilton; correspondences between Hamilton and family members, and amongst Hamilton’s family regarding him; correspondences from Jane Huber to writers like Jonathan Williams regarding a biography; prose about Hamilton written by family; and articles about Hamilton.

Series II, Interviews, contains recorded interviews with Hamilton and his family.

Series III, Writings, contains published poetry in journals and magazines, books and booklets of Hamilton’s poetry, poetry notebooks, unpublished manuscripts and drafts, and reviews of Hamilton’s prose.

**Subject Headings**

- Hamilton, Alfred Starr, b. 1914
- Poets
- Contemporary Poetry
- Poetry

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: Personal**

- Box 1
- Folder 1
  - Biographical and genealogical documents about Alfred S. Hamilton, 2012-2013
- Box 1
Folder 2
Photographs (photocopies) of Hamilton, circa 1932, undated
Box 1
Folder 3
News articles about Hamilton 1965-2013
Box 1
Folder 4
Weird New Jersey presents: Send This to the Immune Officer: Found Letters to the Montclair Police Department from Poet Alfred Starr Hamilton, 1959-1985, 2010
Box 1
Folder 5
Dynamis, 1971-1972
Box 1
Folder 6
Box 1
Folder 7
Correspondence between A. S. Hamilton and Judith Cruickshank, 1966-1975
Box 1
Folder 8
Correspondence between Katharine Hamilton and Judith Cruickshank, 1975
Box 1
Folder 9
Correspondence from Hamilton preparations for wishes for care and funeral services, to various respondents, circa 1986-1989
Box 1
Folder 10
“Uncle Alfred - Drafts” unpublished handwritten and typed manuscripts by Jane Huber, circa 1985
Box 1
Folder 11
“Writing Notes,” unpublished manuscript by Jane Huber, 1988
Box 1
Folder 12
Correspondence between Hamilton and Judith Cruickshank, notes, and typed manuscripts, possibly from Judith Cruickshank, circa 1975
Box 1
Folder 13
Correspondence between Hamilton and Jane Huber, correspondence regarding Hamilton biography between Huber and others, biography drafts, 1986-2015

Series II: Interviews
Series II contains recorded interviews with Alfred Starr Hamilton and members of his family. The interviews were originally on eight cassette tapes, which have been reformatted onto ten compact discs. The CD recordings are available for listening in the Special Collections Research Center.
Box 2
CD1: ASH Interview: David Cruickshank, Virginia Cruikshank and Jane Huber on November 23, 2012

Box 2
CD2: February 3rd, 5th

Box 2
CD3: February 2-3, 1987

Box 2
CD4: Uncle Alfred, August 13, 1985 in Montclair, NJ

Box 2
CD5: Elmer, February 6th

Box 2
CD6: Elmer, February 16th

Box 2
CD7: ASH, February 23, 1987

Box 2
CD8: Alfred, February 13

Box 2
CD9: Hamiltons, February 19

Box 2
CD10: Feb 1, 1987

Box 2
Eight cassettes. Files have been reformatted onto CDs.

Series III: Writings

Box 3
Folder 1

Box 3
Folder 2

Box 3
Folder 3

Box 3
Folder 4

Box 3
Folder 5
Folder 6

Box 3
Folder 7

Box 3
Folder 8
The Jargon Society, mentions Hamilton’s “Poems” publication 1970.

Box 3
Folder 9

Box 3
Folder 10

Box 3
Folder 11

Box 3
Folder 12

Box 3
Folder 13

Box 3
Folder 14
The Big Parade, a collection of poetry by Hamilton, 1982.

Box 3
Folder 15

Box 3
Folder 16

Box 3
Folder 17

Box 3
Folder 18
Folder 1  

Box 4
Folder 2  
Unpublished Poetry, notebook, undated

Box 4
Folder 3  
Unpublished Poetry, notebook with loose pages, undated

Box 4
Folder 4  
Unpublished Poetry, notebook with loose pages, undated

Box 4
Folder 5  
Unpublished Poetry, typed loose papers, undated

Box 4
Folder 6  