<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on Use</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Note</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope Note</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Headings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVENTORY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series I: Biographical and Personal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series II: Correspondence</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series III: Writing and Editing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series IV: Writings by Others</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series V: Photographs, Audio and Digital</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive Summary

Identifier ICU.SPCL.MILLSRJ

Title Mills, Ralph J., Jr. Papers

Date 1918-2009

Size 4 linear feet (8 boxes)

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

Abstract Ralph J. Mills, Jr. (1931-2007) was a poet, critic and teacher. The Ralph J. Mills, Jr. Papers span the years 1918-2009, but are concentrated in the 1950s-2000s. The collection documents his work as a poet and critic, and also contains small amounts of material related to teaching and family life. The collection includes correspondence, manuscripts, publications, biographical material, photographs, audio recordings and digital material.

Acknowledgments

The Ralph J. Mills, Jr. Papers were processed and preserved as part of the "Uncovering New Chicago Archives Project," funded with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Information on Use

Access

Series V: Photographs, Audio and Digital, does not include access copies for part of the material in this series. Researchers will need to consult with staff before requesting material from this series.

The remainder of the collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Mills, Ralph J., Jr. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Ralph J. Mills, Jr. (1931-2007) was a poet, critic and teacher. Born on December 16, 1931 to Eileen and Ralph J. Mills, he grew up in Lake Forest, Illinois and was interested in music and poetry as a child. Mills was educated at Lake Forest College (B.A. 1954) and Northwestern
University (M.A. 1956, Ph.D. 1963); he also attended Oxford University during his graduate studies.

Mills began teaching literature in 1957 as a graduate student at Northwestern. Before completing his Ph.D., he moved on to the University of Chicago in 1959, serving on the Committee on Social Thought. It was during his time at University of Chicago that he met Helen Harvey, then a student. They married in 1959. In 1965, Mills left University of Chicago for the University of Illinois-Chicago, where he taught poetry among a variety of other subjects from 1965-1997. He became Professor Emeritus of English in 1997.

As a poet, Mills worked in a terse, observative style influenced by the Objectivist movement. His volumes of poetry won numerous awards, including the the Society of Midland Authors prize for poetry (Living with Distance, 1979), the Carl Sandburg prize for poetry (March Light, 1983) and the Poetry Society of America’s William Carlos Williams Award (Grasses Standing: Selected Poems, 2000). Mills is also noted for his critical essays on twentieth-century poets such as Theodore Roethke and Richard Eberhart. A collected volume of these works, Essays on Poetry, was published in 2003. His other books of criticism include Contemporary American Poetry (1965) and Cry of the Human: Contemporary American Poetry (1975); Mills also published editions of Theodore Roethke and David Ignatow.

Mills passed away on August 18, 2007 in Park Ridge, Illinois. He was survived by his wife, Helen Harvey Mills, and their children and grandchildren.

**Scope Note**

The Ralph J. Mills, Jr. Papers span the years 1918-2009, but are concentrated in the 1950s-2000s. The collection documents his work as a poet and critic, and also contains small amounts of material related to teaching and family life.

Series I: Biographical and Personal, contains biographical statements, curricula vitae, and bibliographies. It also includes lists of books in Mills's library, interviews with Mills, reviews of his work, and a small amount of publicity material from poetry readings. Personal material in this series consists of teaching materials, appointment books, family correspondence, copies of birth certificates, a passport and a nametag.

Series II: Correspondence, spans the years 1958-2009, and contains incoming correspondence along with a small number of outgoing letters. Included in this series are files of correspondence with Richard Eberhart, Theodore Enslin, and Theodore Roethke. A file of general correspondence, arranged chronologically, includes letters and postcards from colleagues such as Wallace Fowlie, Stanley Kunitz, Denise Levertov, John U. Nef, Henry Rago, David Ignatow
and Lucien Stryk. Also included is one folder of correspondence of Helen Harvey Mills, which contains a letter from Ralph Mills, Jr., sent early in their relationship.

Series III: Writing and Editing, documents Mills's work as a poet, critic and editor. Files are arranged chronologically from 1955-2003, and include sample copies of periodicals and monographs, reprints, manuscripts, proofs, notes and associated correspondence.

Series IV: Writings by Others, is arranged alphabetically by author, and includes publications and manuscripts by other authors. Included in this series are typescripts of poems by David Ignatow and Mark Perlberg. Correspondence, annotations, or laid-in notes are included with many of the writings in this series.

Series V: Photographs, Audio and Digital, is organized by format. This series includes photographs of Ralph J. Mills and his friends and family members. There are also several photographs of an unidentified event, possibly at Dumbarton Oaks: Identified are John U. Nef, Jr.; Ward Just and his wife; Ralph and Helen Mills; James Douglas; Charles Moraze and his wife; Bruce Phemister; the wife of Frank Lloyd Wright; Robert Richman; and Jacques de Bourbon-Busset. Audio material includes a 1976 reel tape recording of the WFMT radio program "The Name and Nature of Poetry," hosted by Paul Carroll and with Mills as guest. Also included are CDs of performances of Alexander Nohai-Seaman compositions using Mills's poems, and a DVD produced as a memorial to Mills.

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

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

Anania, Michael. Papers

Subject Headings
• Mills, Ralph J.
• American poetry -- 20th century -- History and criticism
• English poetry -- 20th century -- History and criticism
• Poetry -- study and teaching
• Poets, American

INVENTORY

Series I: Biographical and Personal

Box 1
Folder 1
Curricula vitae, biographical statements and bibliographies, circa 1990s

Box 1
Folder 2
Bibliographies and list of books in personal library, 1994-2000

Box 1
Folder 3
List of books in personal library, circa 2000

Box 1
Folder 4
Interviews, 1988-2003

Box 1
Folder 5
Reviews, 1978-1994

Box 1
Folder 6
Publicity material for poetry readings, circa 1980s-1999

Box 1
Folder 7
Syllabi and teaching evaluations, 1967-circa 1970s

Box 1
Folder 8
Appointment books, 1998-1999

Box 1
Folder 9
Copies of birth certificates, family correspondence, passport and nametag, 1931-circa 1990s

Series II: Correspondence

Box 1
Folder 10
Eberhart, Richard, 1963-1967

Box 1
Folder 11
Enslin, Theodore, 1985-1986

Box 1
Folder 12
Enslin, Theodore, 1987-1990

Box 2
Folder 1
Roethke, Theodore, 1958-1963

Box 2
Folder 2
General, 1962-1967
• Belitt, Ben
• Doggett, Frank
• Fowlie, Wallace
• Gardner, Isabella
• Hartman, Geoffrey
• Kunitz, Stanley
• Levertov, Denise
• Malkoff, Karl
• Nef, John U.
• Pack, Robert
• Rago, Henry
• Taylor, John
• Unidentified correspondents

Box 2
Folder 3
General, 1974-2006
• Berg, Stephen
• Chesterton, Joan
• Elshtain, Eric
• Fay, Steve and Pam
• Goldberg, Bertrand
• Heller, Michael
• Herrera, Miriam
• Ignatow, David
• Jacob, John
• Johnston, Devin
• Just, Ward
• Lake Forest College
• Marshall, Donald G.
• Mechaca family
• Ohio University Press/Swallow Press
• Paschen, Elise
• Rosenberg, Milt
• Schuler, Robert
• Stryk, Lucien
• Taylor, John
• Zawacki, Andrew
• Unidentified correspondents

Box 2
Folder 4
General, undated
• Fowlie, Wallace
• Gardner, Isabella
• Murray, G.E.
• Luisa

Box 2
Folder 5
Helen Harvey Mills, circa 1953-2009
• Canuel, Mark
• Castle, Latham and Georgie
• Jacob, John
• Mack, Donna
• Mills, Ralph J., Jr.
• Riker, Martin

**Series III: Writing and Editing**

**Box 2**
**Folder 6**
- Literary criticism course notes, 1955

**Box 2**
**Folder 7**
- "E.E. Cummings' Attitudes," Gemini, periodical, 1957

**Box 2**
**Folder 8**
- "Faulkner's Essential Vision," Gemini, periodical, 1957

**Box 2**
**Folder 9**

**Box 2**
**Folder 10**

**Box 2**
**Folder 11**

**Box 2**
**Folder 12**
- "Wallace Stevens and the Poem of Earth," Gemini, periodical, 1960

**Box 2**
**Folder 13**
- "Char and Michaux: Magicians of Insecurity," Chicago Review, periodical, 1961

**Box 3**
**Folder 1**

**Box 3**
**Folder 2**
- "Four Voices in Recent American Poetry," The Christian Scholar, periodical, 1963

**Box 3**
**Folder 3**
- "Eden’s Gate: The Later Poetry of Edwin Muir," The Personalist, reprints, 1963

**Box 3**
**Folder 4**
- "Theodore Roethke," University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, periodical, 1963
Folder 5
"Richard Eberhart," University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, periodical, 1966

Box 3
Folder 6

Box 3
Folder 7

Box 3
Folder 8
W.B. Yeat, T.S. Eliot and Edwin Muir, lecture notes, circa 1960s

Box 3
Folder 9
"A Pig, and Several Poets," Poetry, periodical, 1971

Box 3
Folder 10

Box 3
Folder 11

Box 3
Folder 12
"A Last Poem," Crazy Horse, periodical, 1974

Box 3
Folder 13
Inscape, periodical, 1976

Box 3
Folder 14
"A Blessing," Moons and Lion Tailes, periodical, 1976

Box 4
Folder 1

Box 4
Folder 2

Box 4
Folder 3
Living with Distance, monograph, 1979

Box 4
Folder 4
"Gone," Dacotah Territory, periodical, 1980

Box 4
Folder 5

Box 4
Folder 6
March Light, certificate of copyright registration, 1983

Box 4
Folder 7

Box 4
Folder 8
"Was It," Mississippi Valley Review, periodical, 1984

Box 4
Folder 9
"A Fall Song," Sparrow Poverty Pamphlets, periodical, 1984

Box 4
Folder 10
Each Branch, proof, 1986

Box 4
Folder 11

Box 4
Folder 12

Box 4
Folder 13
"7/9," "8/10," Tar River Poetry, periodical, 1988

Box 4
Folder 14
"Low," "Someone Else," Panoply, periodical, 1988

Box 4
Folder 14
A While, proofs, 1989

Box 4
Folder 15
A While, proofs, 1989

Box 5
Folder 1
Manuscripts, circa 1980s

Box 5
Folder 2

Box 5
Folder 3

Box 5
Folder 4
"In this Kind/Of Wind," "First Day of," "A Night's," Private, periodicals, 1991
Box 5
Folder 5
Box 5
Folder 6
tel-let, chapbook, 1993
Box 5
Folder 7
"Dead Poet," "Skeins,/twists," "Yellow/flashes," "Split/twigs," "Moon,/the clear star-,
Object Permanence, periodical, 1995
Box 5
Folder 8
Sky Swept, photocopied manuscript, 1995
Box 5
Folder 9
"October/Cool," Tar River Poetry, periodical, 1997
Box 5
Folder 10
Illinois poetry anthology, correspondence and manuscripts, 1997
Box 5
Folder 11
In Wind’s Edge, photocopied manuscript, circa 1997
Box 5
Folder 12
Notes, circa 1997-1998
Box 5
Folder 13
Manuscripts, 1998-circa 2000
Box 5
Folder 14
Notebook, 1999-2000
Box 5
Folder 15
Manuscripts, circa 1990s
Box 5
Folder 16
Manuscripts, circa 1990s-2000s
Box 5
Folder 17
Manuscripts and notes, circa 1990s-2000s
Box 5
Folder 18
Manuscripts and notes, circa 1990s-2000s
Box 6
Folder 1

Box 6
Folder 2
Grasses Standing: Selected Poems, selections lists and draft tables of contents, circa 2000

Box 6
Folder 3
Grasses Standing: Selected Poems, manuscript, circa 2000

Box 6
Folder 4
Grasses Standing: Selected Poems, manuscript, circa 2000

Box 6
Folder 5
Grasses Standing: Selected Poems, cover design proofs, circa 2000

Box 6
Folder 6
Manuscripts and notes, circa 2001

Box 6
Folder 7
Essays on Poetry, draft table of contents, circa 2003

Box 6
Folder 8
Essays on Poetry, draft front matter, circa 2003

Box 6
Folder 9
Poetry in the 1960s, notes, undated

Series IV: Writings by Others

Box 6
Folder 10

Box 6
Folder 11
Browning, Preston M., Jr., correspondence, drafts, reprints and photocopied article, 2006-2007

Box 6
Folder 12
Doggett, Frank, "This Invented World: Stevens' 'Notes toward a Supreme Fiction,'" reprint, 1961

Box 6
Folder 13

Box 6
Folder 14
Eliot, T.S., Four Quartets, monograph, 1955
Folder 15
   Hartman, Geoffrey H., "The Heroics of Realism," reprint, undated

Box 6
Folder 16
   Heller, Michael, In the Builded Place, monograph, 1989

Box 6
Folder 17
   Ignatow, David, correspondence and manuscripts, 1972

Box 6
Folder 18
   Lawrence, D.H., "Poetry of the Present," photocopied introduction, 1918

Box 6
Folder 19
   Padgett, Abigail, "The Ally Way," review, circa 2004

Box 6
Folder 20
   Perlberg, Mark, "For a Dead Lady," manuscript, undated

Box 7
Folder 1
   Stevens, Wallace, Collected Poems, monograph, 1955

Box 7
Folder 2
   Stryk, Lucien, Where We Are: Selected Poems and Zen Translations, monograph, 1997

Box 7
Folder 3
   Turnbull, Gael, Residues, chapbook, 1976

Box 7
Folder 4
   Yeats, W.B., Collected Poems, 1955

Series V: Photographs, Audio and Digital

Box 8
Folder 1
   Mills family, photographs, circa 1930s-1960s

Box 8
Folder 2
   Unidentified event, photographs, circa 1960s

Box 8
Folder 3
   Ralph J. Mills, Jr., photographs, circa 1974-1977

Box 8
Folder 4
   Ralph J. Mills, Jr., photographs, circa 1970s-1980s

Box 8
Folder 5
   Ralph J. Mills, Jr. with family and friends, photographs, circa 1970s-1990s
Box 8
Folder 6
   Ralph J. Mills, Jr. and friends at party, photographs, 1988
Box 8
Folder 7
   Ralph J. Mills, Jr. and Michael Anania at book signing, photographs, circa 1994
Box 8
Folder 8
   Mills home on Astor Street, Chicago, photograph, undated
Box 8
Folder 9
   Comics display, Musée de la Bande Dessinée, Brussels, photograph, undated
Box 8
Folder 10
   "The Name and Nature of Poetry," reel tape, 1976
Box 8
Folder 11
   Cassette tape, undated
Box 8
Folder 12
   Performances of Alexander Nohai-Seaman compositions, compact discs, undated
Box 8
Folder 13
   "A Celebration of the Life of Ralph J. Mills, Jr.,” DVD, 2007
Box 8
Folder 14