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Guide to the May Sarton Collection 1950-1954



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.SARTONM
Title	Sarton, May. Collection
Date	1950-1954
Size	0.25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Eleanore Marie Sarton (1912-1995), penname May Sarton, was an American poet, novelist, and memoirist. The collection contains a small group of letters written by the poet to Mrs. John B Kelso and poems in various forms – manuscripts, newspaper clippings and broadsides. The items date from 1950 to 1954.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Saxe, John Godfrey. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note

Eleanore Marie Sarton was born in Wondelgem, Belgium, on May 3, 1912, to science historian George Sarton and artist Mabel Eleanor Elwes. In 1914, after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, her family fled to England. In 1915, they moved again and resettled in Boston, Massachusetts. Sarton was educated in Cambridge, and graduated from Cambridge High and Latin School in 1929. By 1937, she had published her first collection of poetry, *Encounter* in April, under her new penname, May Sarton.

While in New Mexico in 1945, Sarton met Judy Matlock and the two entered a relationship until 1956, when Sarton moved to Nelson, New Hampshire. Sarton continued to publish both poetry, novels, and memoirs about her own life. She is most remembered for her memoirs for their fragile and honest accounts of her life and the issues she faced. Sarton rejected the idea of labeling herself as a “lesbian writer,” citing both an artistic vision of universal human love and

also practical concerns regarding the social attitudes toward homosexuality at the time. In 1958, she was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Sarton later moved to York, Maine. In 1990, she suffered a stroke which severely reduced her ability to read and write. Sarton continued working, however, having begun to use a tape recorder to dictate her final journals. Sarton died of breast cancer on July 16, 1995.

Scope Note

The May Sarton Collection includes correspondence and printed and manuscript poems. The correspondence includes three typed, signed letters and one envelope addressed to Mrs. John B. Kelso (suspected to go with the undated letter). These letters are dated from 1951 and 1952. The letter without a year, dated October 8, is suspected to be from 1951. The letters mention Belgian poet, Jean Dominique (pennname of Marie Marie Closset) and Sarton's classes at Harvard. Placed in the same sleeve as the envelope is an unsigned, undated, handwritten poem. The back of the poem bears the name, Dr. Duffy. Following in the collection are three poems of Sarton's, clipped from newspaper. Finally, two typed poems, autographed by Sarton finish the collection. These final poems, printed in red and green, are dated Christmas, 1954.

The collection was previously part of the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection.

Related Resources

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

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/topics.php>

Subject Headings

- Sarton, May, 1912-1995
-
-
- Poetry
- Poets, American
-
-

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Correspondence, 1951-1952

- Letter from May Sarton to Mrs. Kelso, July 12, 1951
- Letter from May Sarton to Mrs. Kelso, October 8, 1951?
- Letter from May Sarton to Mrs. Kelso, May 18, 1952

- Envelope Addressed to Mrs. John B. Kelso, October 7, 1951

Box 1

Folder 2

Poems, 1950-1954

- Poem, Handwritten, Autographed, Dr. Duffy, undated
- Newspaper Clipping, Evening Music by May Sarton, August 19, 1950
- Newspaper Clipping, The Work of Happiness by May Sarton, undated
- Newspaper Clipping, The Tree by May Sarton, undated
- Autographed broadside, The Tree, Christmas, 1951
- Autographed broadside, Nativity, Christmas, 1954