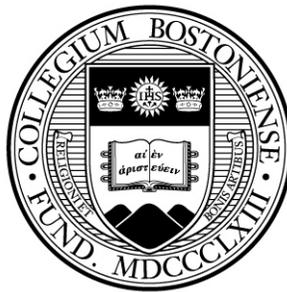


Ethel Mannin - Gilbert Turner Papers

1922-1981, (bulk 1943-1981)

MS.1986.175

<http://hdl.handle.net/2345/2790>



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Summary Information

Title:	Ethel Mannin - Gilbert Turner papers
Collection Identifier:	MS.1986.175
Date [inclusive]:	1922-1981
Date [bulk]:	1943-1981
Physical Description	2 Linear Feet (6 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Collection of materials relating to the life and work of English author Ethel Mannin.

Preferred Citation note

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Ethel Mannin - Gilbert Turner papers, MS.1986.175, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Processed by Finding aid prepared by Edward Copenhagen in Summer-Fall 2001. This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace.

Restrictions on access

Collection is open for research.

Restrictions on use

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Provenance

Because the current accessioning system was not used until January 1986, it is not possible to know exactly the dates of acquisition of materials received before that time.

Related Materials

Related Materials in This Repository

Ethel Mannin - Robert Huxter Papers

Biographical Note of Ethel Mannin

The oldest of three children, Ethel Edith Mannin was born on October 6, 1900 in Clapham, a suburb of London, to Robert Mannin and Edith Gray Mannin. She was author of almost one hundred books (her goal was to publish one novel and one work of nonfiction each year). She published novels, travelogues, autobiographies, children's books, collections of short stories, books on child-rearing as well as articles on pacifism and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

From an early age, Mannin was determined to be a writer and began writing at the young age of seven. Her first short story was written at the age of ten. At age fifteen, Mannin ended her formal education and found employment as a stenographer for the Charles F. Highman Advertising Agency. Two years later, she became the associate editor *The Pelican* (a theatrical and sporting periodical) and held that position until 1919, when the magazine ceased publication.

Mannin married Alexander Porteous in 1919. Porteous wrote copy and later became the general manager of Highman's. Their marriage produced one child, Jean. Mannin spent very little time with her husband, preferring the company and lifestyle of her literary and left-leaning political friends. They would divorce in 1938. Mannin married Reginald Reynolds, a Quaker peace activist and friend of Mahatma Gandhi, that same year.

In 1923, Mannin entered a first-novel competition. Though it did not win the competition, *Martha* was published by the contest's sponsors. Her first commercially and critically successful novel came with the publication of *Sounding Brass* (1925). Mannin's satirical look at life in the twenties was based on her experience in the London advertising world. Critics often compared it to Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* and *Babbitt*. One of her most popular novels was *Late Have I Loved Thee* (1948) which depicted a man's conversion to Catholicism and vocation to the priesthood. Mannin was often praised for her superior character development. She wanted to portray characters whom she described as "real people" who "eluded class distinctions." Critics often faulted her writing for being too concerned with her own personal political and social views, making her novels propagandistic. Her novels often deal with contemporary events. *The Road to Beersheba* is an example of this. Mannin wrote this novel in response to Leon Uris's popular and pro-Israeli novel *Exodus*. She was fervently anti-Zionist and very concerned over the plight of Palestinian refugees.

Even Mannin's nonfiction became controversial. E. F. Allen of the *New York Times* describes her book *Forever Wandering* as a "travel notebook of a British novelist, who takes for granted that the world is interested in her observations and reaction...Although [she] is opinionated to point of irritation, she is honest in her attitudes and exuberant in her style or writing." Her first autobiographical work, *Confessions and Impressions*, was considered shocking at the time of its publication in 1930. The work, which included detailed accounts of extramarital affairs, caused an immediate scandal and earned her a reputation as an "angry woman." The book was written in part to scandalize the older generation and upset their conservative social values. Her profession of modernist sexual mores and advocacy of leftist causes gave Mannin a reputation as being both bohemian and risqué.

Though Mannin's permanent residence was England (for much of her life in Wimbledon and later in Devon), Mannin also maintained a cottage in Connemara, Ireland. Unable to travel to the continent

during World War Two, Mannin spent months at a time in Ireland. One of her more well-known works was *Connemara Journal* (1947), an account of Mannin's pleasure in her isolated existence in Ireland. Her father was of Irish descent and she had a lifelong fondness for Ireland and all things Irish.

Mannin died in 1984 after a decline subsequent to fracturing her pelvis.

Sources: Aspinall, Dana. "Ethel (Edith) Mannin," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 195: British Travel Writers, 1910-1939*. Edited by Barbara Brothers and Julia M. Gergits. (Detroit, MI: The Gale Group, 1998): pp. 216-234. Crosland, Margaret. "Ethel Mannin," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 191: British Novelists Between the Wars*. Edited by George M. Johnson. (Detroit, MI: The Gale Group, 1998): pp. 217-221.

Biographical Note of Gilbert Turner

Gilbert Turner was born in Bournemouth, England in 1911. He was educated at the University of London General School and also received the Fellowship of the Library Association.

Turner started working in libraries in 1927 and spent his first eighteen years working at libraries in Bournemouth, Twickenham and Chelsea. Beginning in 1946, he became the Borough Librarian of the London Borough of Richmond on the Thames. He had a love of classical music and was an instrumental force in bringing record collections to the public libraries under his administration. Remarking on Turner's retirement in 1973, a newspaper noted that he was "one of the last of an older school of public librarians" as a librarian of his day "had to be a scholar, a historian, a literary enthusiast, an art expert and an administrator."

Upon retirement, he moved from Windsor, England and settled in Y Rhiw, Gwynedd, Wales. Turner spoke Welsh and was accepted into this small village in Northern Wales. He spent these years happily gardening both fruits and flowers. Turner's friends knew him as a great correspondent as their letters were promptly answered and his letters were full of detail. He was also a staunch Roman Catholic and lifelong bachelor. Turner died on February 9, 1983.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of materials relating to the life and work of Ethel Mannin. The bulk of the papers are correspondence, nearly all of which is between Mannin and Gilbert Turner, a British librarian. There are also some letters by Reginald Reynolds, Mannin's second husband. The collection also contains photographs of Turner, Mannin and Reynolds and an original drawing of Mannin.

Arrangement Note

Organized into two series: (1) Correspondence and (2) Visual material.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1922-1981 (1942-1981)

() Boxes 1 - 5

Scope and Content Note

"Correspondence" is the largest of the two series contained in the collection. The vast majority of the letters are written to her friend, British librarian Gilbert Turner, between the years 1943 and 1981. They chronicle almost forty years of friendship. Mannin's letters are often requests for information to be used for her research. However, they also reveal Mannin's personal life and her opinions on literary and political subjects. These subjects include the Middle East, Zionism, Ireland, England and the Catholic Church. The letters also contain valuable information regarding her second husband, the Quaker peace activist Reginald Reynolds. The collection also includes a few letters by Mannin that also contain short additional notes written by Reynolds, in his own hand, to Turner. Mannin's letters to Turner are occasionally written on the reverse side of letters sent to her by other recipients. This gives the reader access to a few incoming letters.

Arrangement Note

Arranged in chronological order.

box 3	folder 1-50
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box 2	folder 1-46
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box 4	folder 1-63
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box 1	folder 1-56
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box 5	folder 1-73
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Series II: Visual materials, 1934-1954, undated

() Box 6

Scope and Content Note

Visual Materials is the smallest of the two series and contains thirteen items. The materials are broken up into two subseries "Original Art" and "Photographs." "Original Art" contains a single portrait of Ethel Mannin drawn by Louis Ollier. "Photographs" contains nine photographs of Mannin, Reginald Reynolds, Gilbert Turner, and three unknown women. This subseries also contains two "Photo-Postcards" with Gilbert Turner in group pictures.

Arrangement Note

Organized into two subseries: (2.1). Original artwork and (2.2) Photographs.

Subseries A: Original artwork, 1935

Portrait Drawing of E. Mannin by Louis Ollier, Aug. 1935, 1935	box 6	folder 1
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Subseries B: Photographs, 1934-1954, undated

Gilbert Turner with Unknown Group (2 Photo-Postcards), 1934 February 7, undated	box 6	folder 2
"Ken", 1942	box 6	folder 3
E. Mannin with G. Turner and woman, 1954	box 6	folder 4
E. Mannin and R. Reynolds with G. Turner, 1954	box 6	folder 5
E. Mannin and R. Reynolds with unknown woman, 1954	box 6	folder 6
R. Reynolds with G. Turner and unknown woman (3 photos), 1954	box 6	folder 7
R. Reynolds with G. Turner and unknown woman (2 photos), 1954	box 6	folder 8
G. Turner and two unknown women, undated	box 6	folder 9