Caroline Gordon Papers

1942-1973

MSS 175

Size: .21 linear feet

Special Collections and University Archives
Jean and Alexander Heard Library
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee
Biographical Note:

Caroline Gordon was an American novelist, short story writer, and critic often associated with the Southern Literary Renaissance and the Southern Agrarian Movement. Gordon was born in southern Kentucky near the Tennessee border on her grandmother’s farm, Meriwether. She learned the classics from her father and attended an all boys academy in southern Tennessee. She married poet Allen Tate in 1924 while already five months pregnant with their first child.

Tate and Gordon hosted literary figures such as Katherine Anne Porter and Robert Lowell at their home in southern Tennessee throughout the 1930s. They moved frequently as Gordon spent time at various American universities teaching, lecturing or serving as writer-in-residence. In 1947 as Gordon’s marriage was failing, she converted to Roman Catholicism. Gordon and Tate divorced in 1945, remarried, and divorced again in 1959. Gordon died in 1981 at San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.

Gordon published a total of ten novels throughout her life including *Aleck Maury, Sportsman* in 1924, *None Shall Look Back* in 1937, and *The Women on the Porch* in 1944. Her early fiction was heavily influenced by her association with Southern Agrarianism, and she is best known for her writings which synthesize elements of mythology, Southern History, and Roman Catholicism.

Scope and Content:

This .21 linear foot collection consists of three file folders. It includes one folder of outgoing correspondence from 1942, 1972, and 1973. In addition, the collection contains two of Gordon’s manuscripts: “Old Mrs. Llewellyn” and “The Olive Garden,” both of which are not dated.

Folder List:

1. Correspondence – Outgoing

March 10, 1942 – Caroline Gordon to Mary
July 21, 1972 – Caroline Gordon to Andrew Lytle
September 8, 1972 – Caroline Gordon to Andrew Lytle
May 19, 1973 – Caroline Gordon to Andrew Lytle
Manuscripts

2.
“Old Mrs. Llewellyn,” n.d.

3.
“The Olive Garden,” n.d.