Iris Milutinovic:

An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Milutinovic, Iris, 1910-
Title:	Iris Milutinovic Papers
Dates:	1946-1984
Extent:	9 boxes (4 linear feet), 3 galley files
Abstract:	These papers consist chiefly of correspondence and literary manuscripts but also contain published materials, clippings, diaries, scrapbook material, financial information and audio recordings.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-02847
Language:	English
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchase and Gift, 1975-1985
Processed by	Christine R. Mannix, Lisa M. Hendricks, Joan Sibley, 1990-1991
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Iris Milutinovic, born in 1908 or 1910 to a Welsh mother (Florence Medford Burnell) and an English-born father (Frederick Ebenezer Osborne), was brought up in Cooee, Tasmania, where her father managed the Van Dieman Land Company brickworks. She lived in Cooee until her first marriage to Irishman Stanismore Ryan, a marriage Milutinovic describes as a "too-young, very unhappy" one. She then endured a long lonely period before meeting her second husband, a Yugoslavian immigrant named Milor Milutinovic, whom she married in 1951.

Milor, having survived years of fighting and then internment in a German prisoner of war camp during World War II, moved to Australia in 1949 for a fresh start. He later became a naturalized citizen of Australia, but struggled ever after with the language and culture of his adopted country. A substantial portion of Mrs. Milutinovic's literary work is given over to discussion of the language difficulties and cultural clashes experienced by immigrants to Australia.

Mrs. Milutinovic describes herself as "one over-sized, elderly somewhat finicky Tasmanian married to one long, lean infinitely kind but also very alien Serb migrant." She lived with her second husband outside Albany in Western Australia for almost 30 years before retiring in 1977 to a cottage by the Mersey River in East Devenport, Tasmania. Her interests include people, literature, fishing, gardening and writing.

Prior to beginning her career as a writer, Milutinovic worked in Public Service during World War II, was a bookkeeper/receptionist for Ansetts, and a timekeeper/clerk at Cheynes Beach Whaling Station. She was working for the Post Office when she met her husband Milor.

Except for the usual adolescent verse, Milutinovic didn't begin to write seriously until the 1950s when she began writing scripts and recording radio talks for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (A.B.C.). She later sold short stories to various magazines including the *Bulletin, Woman's Day, The Epicurean, The Texas Quarterly* and *Overland*. She has work published in three anthologies and has had two books published, *Talk English Carn't Ya* (a novel, 1978) and *I'm Still Here, Aren't I*? (a short story collection, 1985). The novel, based on her husband Milor's experiences and written from his point of view, is about the hardships and difficulties of being an immigrant without fluency in the language of one's adopted country.

Her literary awards include the 1975 State of Victoria Short Story Award (for "The Guppy") and the Jessie Litchfield Award for Literature for 1978 from the Bread and Cheese Club, a Melbourne literary society. Mrs. Milutinovic was a founding member of the West Australian Writers Fellowship (a branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers), as well a member of the Australian Society of Authors, and the Business and Professional Women's Club of Albany.

Milutinovic suffers from auricular fibrillation, a heart condition that at times made writing, and especially typing, very difficult.

Iris Milutinovic used various pen names during her writing career. Those represented in this collection are Emma Atkins, Bessie Bunter, Janet Burton, Ian Fidler, Jevelyn, Jane Kay, Jay Kay, Janet King, I. Miller, M. Miller, Ivan Millet, Iris Obsorne (her maiden name), I. Maggie Ostin and Joan Todd.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Australian writer Iris Milutinovic (1910-) consist chiefly of correspondence and literary manuscripts documenting her career 1946-1984 (bulk 1955-1978). Also included are published materials, clippings, diaries, scrapbook material, financial information and audio recordings.

The papers are arranged in three series: Correspondence, 1946-1984, Literary Works, 1955-1978, and Miscellaneous, 1963-1980.

Correspondence is subdivided into personal and literary correspondence. Arrangement within these subseries is alphabetical by author with relevant copies of outgoing correspondence filed with the appropriate incoming correspondence. Correspondence specifically related to a manuscript is generally filed outside this subseries with the literary work concerned. All correspondence (888 items) is indexed in the incoming (777 items) or outgoing (111 items) correspondence indexes which form a part of this finding aid.

The personal subseries consists of correspondence from family and friends, as well as letters concerning personal business matters. Mrs. Milutinovic's concerns and opinions are expressed in letters to various newspaper editors, broadcasters and government officials. The correspondence of literary organizations, other Australian and Tasmanian writers, editors, publishers, broadcasters and fans comprise the literary subseries and serves to document Milutinovic's struggle to write and publish despite poor health and economic difficulties. The bulk of the literary correspondence involves Milutinovic's extensive radio scripts aired by the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

Correspondents include a number of persons at the Australian Broadcasting Commission (A.B.C.), Richard Beilby (author), Muriel Binding (step- niece), Irene Burgess (local writer), Mary Durack (author), Phyll Evan (writer and teacher), Zoe Evans (music teacher), Norma Ferris (A.B.C.), Jane M. Fleming (A.B.C.), Irene Gibson (teacher and radio broadcaster), Margaret Giordano (Tasmanian writer), Anne Godden (of Thomas Nelson Australia Ltd.), Cherry Grimm (writer), Dorothy Hewett (poet, playwright), A.J. Holdsworth (editor), Dorrit Hunt (local writer), Nancy Keesing (author), Catherine King (A.B.C.), Dame Enid Muriel Lyons (cousin, writer, politician), Amy Macaulay (artist), John D. McLaren (editor), Oscar Adolf Mendelsohn (writer), Ian Morgan (A.B.C.), Phyllis Moss (artist), Stephen Murray-Smith (editor), Pat Osborne (sister-in-law), Hal Porter (writer), Pamela Relton (columnist), Vincent Serventy (naturalist, writer), Valerie Sisson (writer), Robert Stephens (local historian), Katherine Strehlow, T.G.H. Strehlow (educator), Erica Underwood (A.B.C.), Freda Vines (writer), Beverly Wardle (writer, broadcaster), and Helen Helga Mayne Wilson (writer).

Literary Works are filed alphabetically by title irrespective of genre or whether published or not. Cross references are included for identified variant titles, though the researcher should be aware that much of Milutinovic's writing was autobiographical in nature and many of her works are closely associated or somewhat related to one another. Stories were also sometimes rewritten from one genre to another, so that a radio talk might also appear as a short story, or vice-versa. As is the case with correspondence, any contracts or financial documents relating to a particular work have also been filed with the literary work.

Occupying 7 boxes, this subseries comprises the heart of the collection and consists of articles, short stories, a large number of radio talk manuscripts, a radio play ("Grandmother Pritchard's Victory"), and two novels ("The Street of Seven Tongues" and *Talk English Carn't Ya*) in various stages of production (notes, holograph drafts, typescripts, setting copy, galleys, proofs). There are a small group of unidentified writings and some lists of writings compiled by Milutinovic.

The subject matter of the writings ranges widely among Milutinovic's own experiences in western Australia and Tasmania, local history, family lore, contemporary mores, social issues, current events and such diverse topics as cats, cookery, fishing, gardening, language, immigrants and cultural assimilation, and whaling. Milutinovic believed her *Scope* radio broadcasts in particular would interest Americans because it is virtually "a small, clear window on Australian ideas and beliefs."

The Miscellaneous series includes audio recordings, miscellaneous clippings, and financial information arranged chronologically insofar as possible. Of special interest are the audio recordings, which include a letter recorded by Milutinovic and a taped broadcast of her short story "The Blonde Cat," which is read by Alistair Duncan.

It should be noted that Mrs. Milutinovic selected what she felt were appropriate items to form this collection of papers. Frequently she annotated correspondence, manuscripts and other materials to identify persons, explain circumstances, importance, etc.

For a fuller description of this collection, the following is recommended:

McLaren, John D. "Iris Milutinovic--Between Two Worlds," in *The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin*, New Series, Nos. 42/43 (1988): 143-159. Also issued as *Perspectives on Australia: Essays on Australiana in the Collections of the Harry Ransom Center*, edited by Dave Oliphant.

Separated Material

Sound recordings were transferred to the Ransom Center's Sound Recording collection and are described individually in a list at the end of this finding aid and in a <u>searchable</u> <u>database</u>.

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Australian Broadcasting Commission Beilby, Richard Binding, Muriel Burgess, Irene Durack, Mary Evan, Phyll Evans, Zoe Ferris, Norma Fleming, Jane M. Gibson, Irene Giordano, Margaret Godden, Anne Grimm, Cherry Hewett, Dorothy Holdsworth, A.J. Hunt, Dorrit Keesing, Nancy King,Catherine Lyons, Enid Muriel, Dame, 1897-Macaulay, Amy McLaren, John D. Mendelsohn, Oscar Adolf, 1896-Morgan, Ian Moss, Phyllis Murray-Smith, Stephen Osborne, Pat Porter, Hal Relton, Pamela

Serventy, Vincent Sisson, Valerie Stephens, Robert Strehlow, Katherine Strehlow, T.G.H. (Theodor George Henry), 1908-1978 Underwood, Erica

Subjects

Australia--Emigration and immigration Australian literature--Women authors Australian literature--20th century Authors, Australian Broadcasting, Australia Immigrants--Australia--Cultural assimilation Radio--Australia Radio broadcasting Yugoslavia--Emigration and immigration

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