

# Mary McCarthy:

## Manuscripts for in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** McCarthy, Mary, 1912-1989

**Title:** Mary McCarthy, Manuscripts for *The Group*

**Dates:** 1953-1964

**Extent:** 2 boxes, 1 galley folder (.63 linear feet)

**Abstract:** The Ransom Center's holdings for Mary McCarthy comprise her draft chapters, final manuscript, and galley proofs for the novel *The Group*.

**RLIN Record #:** TXRC05-A10006

**Language:** English.

**Access:** Open for research

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### Administrative Information

**Acquisition:** Purchase, 1968 (R4493)

**Processed by:** Bob Taylor, 2003

**Repository:** [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

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## Biographical Sketch

Born in Seattle on June 21, 1912, Mary McCarthy was the eldest of four children born to Roy and Therese McCarthy. Orphaned upon their parents' deaths in the flu epidemic of 1918, Mary and her brothers eventually found refuge with their maternal grandparents in Seattle.

Following her graduation from Vassar College in 1933, McCarthy, intending to pursue a literary career, moved to New York City, where she soon attracted attention for her essays and dramatic criticism. In the late 1930s she began to write short stories, several of which served as the nucleus of her first novel, *The Company She Keeps*, published in 1942.

As one of the major figures in contemporary American cultural and political thought, Mary McCarthy wrote widely in fiction (*The Oasis*, *Cast a Cold Eye*, *The Groves of Academe*), theater criticism (*Mary McCarthy's Theatre Chronicles, 1937-1962*), memoir (*Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* and *How I Grew*), and broad-ranging commentary (*Venice Observed* and *The Mask of State: Watergate Portraits*). She also taught in the United States and in Britain.

Until her death on October 25, 1989, Mary McCarthy maintained a reputation for unflinching candor, biting wit, and literary grace as her writing gained and (sometimes) provoked a wide readership. Her novel *The Group* (1963), a fictional account of the lives of several members of the Vassar class of 1933, was her major popular success, first as a best-seller, and then as a motion picture.

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## Sources:

*Contemporary Authors*, v. 129. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1990.

*Contemporary Authors. New revision series*, v. 64. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1998.

McCarthy, Mary. *How I Grew*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987.

-----*Intellectual Memoirs: New York, 1936-1938*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.

-----*Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1957.

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## Scope and Contents

The Ransom Center's holdings for Mary McCarthy comprise her draft chapters, final manuscript, and galley proofs for the novel *The Group*. The material was created between 1953 (when the short story "Dottie Makes an Honest Woman of Herself"--later to become chapter 3 of *The Group*--was written) and 1964, when McCarthy donated the manuscript to Spanish Refugee Aid.

The individual chapters in draft include 1-3, 5, 7-9, and 11-13 and indicate extensive revision. The final complete typescript bears both author's and copy editor's manuscript revisions and editorial markings. The galleys accompanying the manuscript likewise bear evidence of extensive revision. A two-page essay entitled "Desperate thoughts about the novel--Bocca di Magra, August 14, 1960" contains the author's critical examination of the nine chapters then written and ponders the question "how to reduce this bulky pile of chapters to coherence?"

Concluding the materials are the author's own typescript synopsis of *The Group* and dust jacket blurb, together with McCarthy's letter of 12 October 1964 to Nancy Macdonald of Spanish Refugee Aid donating "the manuscripts and notes for *The Group*" to the society "to sell ... as you wish." Also present is a letter from Milton Greenstein of *The New Yorker* to Dwight Macdonald, dated 19 October 1964, turning over to the SRA the typescript of "Polly Andrews, Class of '33."

The great majority of Mary McCarthy's papers (including the drafts of chapters 4 and 6 lacking in this collection) are held by the Archives and Special Collections Department of the Vassar College Libraries.

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## Index Terms

### People

McCarthy, Mary, 1912-1989.

### Titles

*The Group*

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Chapters in draft	<b>Box 1 Folder</b>
Chapters 1-3	<b>Folder 1</b>
"Dottie Makes an Honest Woman of Herself" [chapter 3]	<b>Folder 2</b>
Chapters 5, 7-9	<b>Folder 3</b>
Chapters 11-13	<b>Folder 4</b>
Final typescript and carbon	
Typescript	
p. 1-170	<b>Folder 5</b>
p. 171-342 (p.240A-282 in photocopy)	<b>Folder 6</b>
p. 240-283 (chapters 11-12 and (in part) 13, original typescript, unedited)	<b>Folder</b> <b>7</b>
Carbon	<b>Box 2</b>
p. 1-83, 110-220	<b>Folder 1</b>
p. 221-342	<b>Folder 2</b>
Galley proofs [removed to Galley Files]	
Related material	<b>Folder 3</b>
"Desperate thoughts about the novel--Bocca di Magra, August 14, 1960"	<b>Folder</b>
Synopsis and text for jacket plurb, [1963?]	<b>Box</b>
Correspondence, 1964	<b>Folder</b>