

William Goyen:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Goyen, William, 1915-1983
Title:	William Goyen Papers
Dates:	1924-1978, 1994, undated
Extent:	22 document boxes (9.24 linear feet), 1 oversize folder (osf), 2 galley folders (gf)
Abstract:	The papers of the Texas-born American novelist, playwright, and poet Charles William Goyen include manuscripts for his writings, notebooks, correspondence, and works by others about Goyen.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-01681
Language:	English, German
Access:	Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
Use Policies:	Ransom Center collections may contain material with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in the collections without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no responsibility.
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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation	William Goyen Papers (Manuscript Collection MS-01681). Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.
Acquisition:	Purchases, 1974-1976 (R6315, R6316, R6785).
Processed by:	Courtney Welu, 2024. Note: This finding aid replicates and replaces information previously available only in a card catalog. Please see the explanatory note at the end of this finding aid for information regarding the arrangement of the manuscripts as well as the abbreviations commonly used in descriptions.
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Scope and Contents

The papers of the Texas-born American novelist, playwright, and poet Charles William Goyen include manuscripts for his writings, notebooks, correspondence, and works by others about Goyen. The papers, 1924-1978, 1994, comprise 22 boxes of manuscripts and correspondence related to Goyen's life and literary career. This collection was previously accessible only through a card catalog but has been re-cataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.

The material is organized into four series: I. Works (20 boxes), Correspondence (1 box) in series II. Letters and III. Recipient, and IV. Miscellaneous (1 box). Within each series, the material is arranged alphabetically by title or author. See the Indexes for Works, Letters, Recipient, and Miscellaneous in this finding aid to further identify titles of works and correspondent names present in this collection.

Series I. Works is the most extensive series; it includes drafts, typescripts, proofs, notes, and fragments of poems, plays, screenplays, essays, stories, and novels, both published and unpublished. The collection begins with several early attempts at writing in his teenage and college years, including material that he wrote while attending Rice University in Houston, Texas. There are also journals and diary entries written from different locations around the world, including during his World War II service on the U.S.S. Casablanca.

Notable published novels included in the collection are *The House of Breath* (1951), *Ghost and Flesh: Stories and Tales* (1952), *The Fair Sister* (1962), *A Book of Jesus* (1973), *Come, The Restorer* (1974), and *Half a Look of Cain* (1994). Notable play productions include *The House of Breath* (1957), *The Diamond Rattler* (1960), and *Aimee* (1973).

Correspondence in Series II. and III. is more limited in its scope, including only a handful of letters he sent, most notably to Flora Armitage. The incoming correspondence is primarily from various literary publishers and magazines, including The Atlantic Monthly Press, The Bookworks, Dodd, Mead & Company, Doubleday & Company, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Harper's* magazine, Houghton Mifflin Company, Morris (William) Agency, Random House, Inc., Simon and Schuster, Inc., and the Southwest Review. There is also some personal correspondence between Goyen and his literary acquaintances, friends, and family members, and official correspondence from the U.S. government.

Series IV. Miscellaneous includes work from other authors about Goyen, including a 1962-1963 dissertation on Surrealism in William Goyen by Michel Lucazeau. The material in this series also includes Goyen's high school diploma, itineraries, financial papers, reviews, programs, and memory work collected in his childhood.

Related Material

Harry Ransom Center: [Reginald Gibbons Collection of William Goyen and Thomas McGrath](#) (12 boxes)

Harry Ransom Center: Clyde L. Grimm Collection of William Goyen (5 boxes); no online finding aid available

Rice University (Houston, Texas): [William Goyen Papers, 1937-1968](#)

East Carolina University (Greenville, N.C.): [Stuart Collection: William Goyen Papers, 1935-1999](#)

Separated Material

Additional William Goyen materials at the Ransom Center can also be found in his [Literary File Photography Collection](#) (5 boxes), [Art Collection](#) (18 items), and [Library Collection](#) (153 books formerly owned by Goyen). There are also 55 boxes of uncatalogued manuscript material.

Seventy-five audio cassettes were moved to the Ransom Center's [Sound Recordings Collection](#), the Shelton Family Movies, 1947-1952 were moved to the Moving Images Collection; 5 items were moved to the Objects Collection, and printed ephemera (5 boxes and 2 scrapbooks) were moved to the Vertical Files Collection. The latter items are described separately in databases available onsite.

Index Terms

Subjects

Authors, American

American fiction—20th century

American Literature—Texas

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, and Queer Studies

Playwrights

Short stories, American

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Explanatory Note Concerning Manuscript Collections Cataloged in the Card Catalog

Prior to 1990 when archival cataloging procedures were adopted at the Ransom Center, all manuscript collections were described in a card catalog.

Organization of Collections:

- Manuscripts for each author collection were organized into four categories:
- **Works:** manuscripts by the author, arranged alphabetically by title;
- **Letters:** the author's outgoing correspondence, arranged alphabetically by recipient name;
- **Recipient:** the author's incoming correspondence, arranged alphabetically by the author of the letter; and
- **Miscellaneous:** all other manuscripts and correspondence, arranged alphabetically by creator.

Materials that did not fit into these categories, such as art, photographs, books, and near-print materials such as newspaper clippings, were dispersed to other Ransom Center collections for cataloging and storage.

Abbreviations Used in Descriptions:

The symbols below were used in combinations. For example **ALS** means autograph letter signed; **Tccms** means typed carbon copy manuscript, etc.

- **A** = autograph (i.e., handwritten)
- **T** = typed
- **S** = signed
- **I** = initialed
- **Ms** = manuscript
- **Mss** = manuscripts
- **L** = letter
- **FL** = form letter
- **N** = note
- **D** = document
- **C** = card
- **PC** = post card
- **cc** = carbon copy
- **p** = page
- **pp** = pages
- **l** = leaf
- **ll** = leaves
- **nd** = no date
- **inc d** = incomplete date