

E. P. Conkle papers

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1928-1994



Title Statement

E. P. Conkle papersGuide to the E. P. Conkle papers C0157

Subtitle: E. P. Conkle papers

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Publication Statement

Publisher: George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Fenwick Library, MS2FL
4400 University Dr.
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Business Number: 703-993-2220
Fax Number: 703-993-8911
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URL: <https://scrc.gmu.edu>



2006

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-01-28 07:03:15 -0500.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0157

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/90

Unit Date

1928-1994

Mixed Materials

8-9 (box)

Mixed Materials

10-11 (box)

Language

English

Abstract

Included in the E. P. Conkle papers are plays, poetry, short stories, and book manuscripts written by E. P. Conkle, mostly during Conkle's professorship at the University of Texas at Austin (1939-1973).

Creator

Conkle, E. P. (Ellsworth Prouty)

Extent

3.5 Linear Feet 7 boxes

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright and related rights status of this collection have not been evaluated (See <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/CNE/1.0/>)

Acquisition Information

Donated by Virginia McNeal Conkle in 1994.

Processing Information

Processed and finding aid completed by Carol DeAngelo, Barbara Hasse, Robert Vay, Kaycee L. Morgan and Estee L. Dudash. EAD markup completed by Eron Ackerman and Jordan Patty in April 2009.

Preferred Citation

E. P. Conkle papers, C0157, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

Biographical Information

Ellsworth Prouty Conkle (1899-1994) was a prolific playwright and professor of playwriting. Born on July 10, 1899, Conkle grew up on a farm in the small town of Peru, Nebraska. His rural upbringing had an enduring influence on his writing as exemplified in his first published book, *Crick Bottom Plays* (1928), a collection of short plays which dramatize the wit and wisdom of folksy Nebraskans. After high school Conkle went to Peru State Teachers College and completed his undergraduate education in 1923 at the University of Nebraska. Conkle did graduate work at Yale University in 1926-1928 and earned his Ph.D in playwriting from the University of Iowa in 1936. From 1936-1939 Conkle worked as an assistant professor of speech at the University of Iowa. In 1939 he joined the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin as an associate professor where he became a full professor in 1945 and taught until his retirement in 1973. Conkle's former students include Tennessee Williams, Pat Hingle, Tommy Tune, and Fess Parker.

In addition to teaching classes and developing the Department of Drama at the University of Texas, Conkle wrote numerous published and unpublished plays, several short stories, and dozens of poems. Much of his work captures the humor and wisdom of a bygone era in American folk-life, including the short play "Sparkin'" (1928) and the long plays "Johnny Appleseed" (1940) and "No Time for Heaven" (1972). Abraham Lincoln became another favorite subject of Conkle's, and the play "Prologue to Glory" (1938), a fictionalized account of Lincoln's formative years in New Salem, was chosen for production by the Federal Theatre Project and performed across the United States in 1938-1939. Capitalizing on its success, Conkle wrote a radio script based on the play, entitled *Honest Abe*, which was produced by CBS and aired in thirty-six parts between 1940 and 1941. Conkle died in 1994.

Scope and Content

Included in the E. P. Conkle papers are plays, poetry, short stories, and book manuscripts written by E. P. Conkle, mostly during Conkle's professorship at the University of Texas at Austin (1939-1973). Most of the manuscripts in the collection are undated. Thus, specific dates on subsequently published materials typically refer to the date of publication, and date ranges on unpublished materials refer to letterheads indicating

Conkle's employ at the University of Texas or the University of Iowa. The collection also contains playbills and director's notes from various productions of Prologue to Glory, the radio script to the CBS-produced series, Honest Abe (1940-1941), works and notes from former students, and correspondence between Conkle and his wife, Virginia McNeal Conkle.

Series 1: Correspondence and Biographical Material contains letters written to E. P. Conkle and various articles pertaining to Conkle's career as a playwright.

Series 2: Book Manuscripts contains typed and annotated manuscripts of E. P. Conkle's books Grandpa's Little White Rent House, A Hornbook for Playwrights, and Wake Up, Tom Aycup, or, the Tale of a Great Guy.

Series 3: Play Scripts contains typed and annotated play scripts written by Conkle, including "At the Depot," "Day's End," "Good Night, Dear Grandma," "With How Little Wisdom," and a three-volume weekly radio script entitled "Honest Abe." Also included is a play script by Patty Gideon Sloan entitled "Mementos."

Series 4: Poetry contains typed and annotated poems written by Conkle, including the collections Eleven Various Ballads, A Gift of Small Inconsequential Verses, and Thirteen Sonnets Which Speak of Time, and One More.

Series 5: Short Stories contains typed and annotated copies of Conkle's stories "Little Angel of the Backward Look," "Traveller, and General Lee," and "Miss Lute."

Series 6: Miscellaneous contains various items including essays and term papers Conkle wrote as a student.

Related Material

The Special Collections Research Center also holds the [Jay Bradford Fowler, Jr. papers](#).

Keywords

Short stories, American

American poetry -- 20th century

American drama -- 20th century

Poetry

Manuscripts

Creative writing

Correspondence

Theater

Theater programs

Performing arts

Conkle, E. P. (Ellsworth Prouty)

Arrangement

This collection is organized into six series by document type and genre with manuscripts arranged alphabetically by title and correspondence arranged chronologically.

Series

- Series 1: Correspondence and Biographical Material, 1938-1939, 1977-1994 (Box 1)
- Series 2: Book Manuscripts, undated (Box 1)
- Series 3: Play Scripts, 1928-1973, bulk 1939-1973 (Boxes 2-6)
- Series 4: Poetry, 1939-1973 (Box 6)
- Series 5: Short Stories, 1939-1973 (Box 7)
- Series 6: Miscellaneous, 1931-1992 (Box 7)

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 1: Correspondence and Biographical Material

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30821

Unit Date 1938-1939, 1977-1994

Scope and Contents note

This series contains letters written to E. P. Conkle and various articles pertaining to Conkle's career as a playwright.

Personal

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30822

Unit Date circa 1977-1994

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Letter from Patty Gideon Sloan to E. P. Conkle

Unit ID 1.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30823

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

Letter from Mrs. Virginia Conkle to Lorraine Brown

Unit ID 2.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30824

Unit Date September 18, 1994

Scope and Contents note

Brief annotated biography of E. P. Conkle

Unit ID 3.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30825

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Annotated biographical entry from "Contemporary Authors,"

Unit ID 4.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30826

Unit Date 1982

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Biographical write-up of Conkle for "Notable Names in American Theatre,"

Unit ID 5.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30827

Unit Date 1977

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

George Mason University Federal Theatre Tribute Luncheon Guest List

Unit ID 6.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30828

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Prologue to Glory Playbills and Press

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30829

Unit Date 1938-1939

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Playbill for "Prologue to Glory," Portland Production

Unit ID 1.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30830

Unit Date January 1939

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Audience reaction sheet for "Prologue to Glory," Portland Production

Unit ID 2.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30831

Unit Date 1939

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

News article from the New Orleans States entitled "Lincoln drama well received,"

Unit ID 3.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30832

Unit Date January 24, 1939

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Playbill for "Prologue to Glory," Cincinnati Production

Unit ID 4.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30833

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Playbill for "Prologue to Glory," Chicago-Based Road Company

Unit ID 5.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30834

Unit Date January 1939

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Memorandum from the Federal Theatre's Publicity Department entitled "Prologue Tour Praised"

Unit ID 6.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30835

Unit Date 1939

Scope and Contents note

facsimile; address of the Works Progress Administration in heading

Playbill for "Prologue to Glory," San Francisco Production

Unit ID 7.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30836

Unit Date May 1938

Scope and Contents note

facsimile

Director's Report for "Prologue to Glory,"

Unit ID 8.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30837

Unit Date June 1938

Scope and Contents note

facsimile; note in margin indicates "Los Angeles Production,"

Series 2: Book Manuscripts

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30838

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

This series contains typed and annotated manuscripts of books written by E. P. Conkle.

Grandpa's Little White Rent House

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30839

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Austin, Texas; typed manuscript, 292 pages, includes cover with title

Grandpa's Little White Rent House copy

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30840

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

typed manuscript, 292 pages, no cover

A Hornbook for Playwrights

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30841

Unit Date before 1974

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; typed manuscript with annotations, 135 pages

Wake Up, Tom Aycup, or, the Tale of a Great Guy

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30842

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Austin, Texas; typed manuscript with revisions, 266 pages

Series 3: Play Scripts

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30843

Unit Date 1928-1973

Scope and Contents note

This is the largest series of the collection, and it contains typed and annotated play scripts written by E. P. Conkle and includes one play script written by Patty Gideon Sloan entitled "Mementos."

"At the Depot" and Four Other Short Plays; "A Long Journey" (tentative title)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30844

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; includes the plays "Dusk, Dusk, Dusk," "Two Minds with but Two Single Thoughts," "Mr. Map and the Beautiful Hat," "Oak Leaves Burning," and an annotated play script tentatively titled "A Long Journey."

"Day's End" and "Oak Leaves Burning,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30845

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; includes an 18 page annotated manuscript of "Day's End: A Few Words Spoken by Mr. Lincoln, the President," an 11 page typed play script of "Day's End" with no revisions, and an 18 page annotated manuscript for "Oak Leaves Burning."

Five Short Plays for Twenty-Four Elderly Women and a Young Girl

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30846

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; includes typed play scripts for "The Fancy One," "Four Old Ladies and Pansy Potter," "Oak Leaves Burning," "Gatie, or Eight Women on a Toot," and "The Jewel in Papa's Crown," 62 pages.

"Good Night, Dear Grandma,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30847

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; includes two 133 page typed play scripts for "Good Night, Dear Grandma," one of which contains manuscript revisions marked "final."

Honest Abe, vol. 1

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30848

Unit Date broadcast aired on September 14 - December 20, 1940

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS); a radio script divided into 12 parts for weekly broadcasting,

Honest Abe, vol. 2

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30849

Unit Date broadcast aired on December 28, 1940 - March 22, 1941

Mixed Materials 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS); a radio script divided into 12 parts for weekly broadcasting, volume 2 of 3

Honest Abe, vol. 3

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30850

Unit Date broadcast aired on March 29 - June 18, 1941

Mixed Materials 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS); a radio script divided into 12 parts for weekly broadcasting, volume 3 of 3

"Incident on Collander Hill,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30851

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; two copies of the play script, 121 pages each

Johnny Appleseed

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30852

Unit Date circa 1940

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

"Mementos" by Patty Gideon Sloan

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30853

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Texas; typed script of play in three acts by Patty Gideon Sloan; see Box 1, Folder 1 for correspondence with Sloan

"Mr. Lincoln, the President,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30854

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

two annotated scripts with revisions, one titled simply "Mr. President," approximately 120 pages each

"A Murder of Convenience," "Muletail Prime," and "Sparkin',"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30855

Unit Date circa 1928-1949

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Austin, Texas

"A Murder of Convenience,"

Unit ID 1.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30856

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

Austin, Texas; facsimile of typescript

"Muletail Prime,"

Unit ID 2.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30857

Unit Date circa 1949

Scope and Contents note

cast: Clyde Cedars and Arlie Askew; place: Clyde's place

"Sparkin',"

Unit ID 3.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30858

Unit Date circa 1928

Scope and Contents note

"No Time for Heaven,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30859

Unit Date circa 1972

Mixed Materials 4 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

123 pages

"Oxygenator,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30860

Unit Date 1936-1939

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Iowa, Experimental Theatre Seminar; soft-bound copy, 91 pages

Papa Got Us into It, or, There's a New Woman in Town: A Play in Three Acts

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30861

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

two typed manuscripts

"Sam Smith's Oral History of His Times,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30862

Unit Date 1969

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; two copies of the play script, one 65 pages and another with revisions at 69 pages

"Stormy Weather,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30863

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

84 pages

"Waiting for Henry Plummer,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30864

Unit Date 1971

Mixed Materials 5 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; two typed copies, one marked "Final / 1971"

"Way Down in the Paw-Paw Patch: A Grand Guignol,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30865

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

two copies, one 66 pages and the other 67 pages; the former bears a stamp of the author's agent, Frieda Fishbein

"With How Little Wisdom: A Play about War,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30866

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; two copies, 113 pages each

Series 4: Poetry

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30867

Unit Date circa 1939-1973

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains typed and annotated poems written by E. P. Conkle.

"196 Disjointed Thoughts from a Demented Mind,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30868

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

several copies, including one 8 page typed copy with corrections

Eleven Various Ballads

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30869

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Austin, Texas; typed poems with revisions, including "Ballad of the Gay Cavalier," "The Ballad of Henry Plummer," "Ballad to a Wooden Leg," "The Ballad of the Youngster and His Dog," "Ballad of a Hallelujah Marriage," "Ballad of the Merry Miller-Man," "Ballad of the Prairies," "Ballad of Aunt Susan," "Ballad of Mad Beggars," "Ballad of the Happy Milkmaid," and "Ballad of the Cosset Lamb and the Crumpled Cow"

A Gift of Small Inconsequential Verses

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30870

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

two typed 45 page manuscripts of poems including "Birds and Other Animals," "Weather and Scenery," "More and Less Personal," "Just People," and "Philosophy and Other Things"

Poems about My Farm; A Saga of St. Paul; A Gift of Small Verses

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30871

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; these poetry collections are respectively 22 pages, 27 pages, and 41 pages long; folder includes a title page of "Verses for a Year"

Thirteen Sonnets Which Speak of Time, and One More

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30872

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; typed manuscripts with revisions

Verses about My Grandpa; Inconsequential Quatrains for a Year

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30873

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 6 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

small format type scripts

Series 5: Short Stories

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30874

Unit Date circa 1939-1973

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains typed and annotated short stories written by E. P. Conkle.

"Little Angel of the Backward Look,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30875

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 7 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; two copies of the manuscript, 14 pages each, the second alternately titled, "The Littlest Angel of the Backward Look, a Fantasy"

"Traveller, and General Lee"; "Miss Lute,"

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30876

Unit Date 1939-1973

Mixed Materials 7 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; two copies of "Traveller, and General Lee," both 22 pages and one with annotations; one 43 page copy of "Miss Lute"

Series 6: Miscellaneous

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30877

Unit Date 1931-1992

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains various items including essays and term papers Conkle wrote as a student.

Miscellaneous

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30878

Unit Date 1931-1992

Mixed Materials 7 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

"The Element of Comedy in the Towneley Cycle,"

Unit ID 1.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30879

Unit Date December 28, 1931 - January 5, 1932

Scope and Contents note

35 pages including bibliography; described on title page as "a term-paper written for the class in "Chaucer" for Mr. Frantz"; annotated

The Department of Drama - The University of Texas, Austin - M.F.A. Theses and PhD. Dissertations

Unit ID 2.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30880

Unit Date circa 1979

Scope and Contents note

list of University of Texas graduate students and the titles of their theses and dissertations arranged by

date

"Let Him Copy!"

Unit ID 3.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30881

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

University of Texas, Austin; revised three-page essay on education written by Conkle

News article from Sunday World Herald,"

Unit ID 4.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30882

Unit Date October 4, 1992

Scope and Contents note

Lists of play titles and a four-line untitled verse

Unit ID 5.

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/30883

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents note

two pages listing titles of plays by Conkle and four lines of verse, untitled